Philippines' Duterte calls for mass withdrawal from ICC

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Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte on Sunday called for other signatories of the Rome Statute that established the International Criminal Court (ICC) to join his country in withdrawing from the treaty.

Duterte’s comments during a speech to graduating cadets at the Philippine Military Academy in northern Philippines comes after ICC prosecutors last month opened a preliminary examination into the president’s “war on drugs”, which has led to the death of thousands since it began in July 2016.

The Southeast Asian nation last week notified the United Nations secretary-general of its decision to withdraw from the ICC because of what the outspoken Philippine leader called “outrageous” attacks by U.N. officials and violations of due process.

“I will convince everybody now under the treaty to get out, get out,” Duterte said. “It is not a document that was prepared by anybody, it’s EU-sponsored.”

About 4,000 Filipinos have been killed by police in the past 19 months in a brutal crackdown that has alarmed the international community. Activists believe the death toll is far higher.

Police say those thousands of deaths were during legitimate anti-drugs operations in which the suspects had violently resisted arrest.