



EDITORIAL:

Marcos-Duterte conflict only serves US imperialist warmongering agenda

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The intensifying political feud between the Marcos and Duterte factions is being paraded as a spectacle for public consumption, serving to further entrench the interests of the ruling class. This conflict is in reality, a maneuverer that serves to divert the masses from the deeper political and military machinations of US imperialism. As tensions between the US and China escalate in the region, the ruling elites' scramble for power ahead of the 2025 midterm elections and the eventual 2028 presidential race – becomes a convenient smokescreen to deflect attention from US imperialist warmongering versus China.

Philippines is a vital cog in the US “first island chain” containment strategy against China. At present, there are nine EDCA (Enhanced Defence Cooperation Agreement) US bases in strategic areas in the country facing Taiwan and the South China Sea where combat troops, munitions, warplanes, war ships, and missiles are positioned. The recent deployment of the advanced mid-range Typhon missile system capable of reaching targets inside China heightens tensions. Continuing war exercises on land, air and sea are launched with US, Australia, Japan and other western allies further escalate hostility which may lead to a hot war.

The split within the ruling coalition (previously “UNITEAM” alliance in the last presidential elections) has stepped up to the point that Sara Duterte publicly declared that she had made arrangement for assassins to kill the President, the First Lady, and the Speaker of the House, “in case she is killed”. The immediate trigger for such a violent outburst was the continuing investigation of Congress concerning the highly questionable disbursements of hundreds of millions of pesos of the vice president’s “confidential funds”.

An underlying reason behind this brouhaha is the competition between the Marcos and Duterte political dynasties in the forthcoming presidential contest, after Marcos Jr.’s term of office ends in 2028. The Marcos faction uses its control of Congress to expose former President Rodrigo Duterte’s accountability in the latter’s brutal “war on drugs”, and even hinted to enable Duterte’s arrest if the Interpol put up a “red notice” for the arrest of the former president. Duterte’s role in smuggling of illegal drugs in the country and the illegal activities (sex trafficking, money laundering, etc.) related to POGOs (Philippine Overseas Gaming Operations) has also been exposed. The public threat of Sara Duterte to kill the President, First Lady and the Speaker of the House is now the subject of impeachment petition in Congress. After this incident, Marcos Jr. publicly declared that he will not this threat pass and will use his executive power to prosecute the vice president. Several investigations ensued against Sarah Duterte, with the end of establishing legal and administrative cases. Marcos Jr. declared that impeaching the vice president is “not beneficial” to the country. After this pronouncement, Marcos Jr.’s factotums in Congress declared their support to the president’s statement. Now, Congress is sitting on the impeachment complaints.

On the other hand, the Duterte faction still command the loyalty of a significant number of officers and members of the police and the reactionary armed forces, who benefited during Rodrigo Duterte’s presidency. The former president had been publicly agitating policemen and soldiers to withdraw their support to Marcos Jr. It is worth noting that the same issues of widespread graft and corruption being pointed out against Sara Duterte mirror the controversies surrounding Marcos Jr. Both are emblematic of a rotten political system riddled with impunity and patronage, where public funds are used for private gains. Whether it is through dubious projects or excessive allocations, both camps demonstrate the same disregard for transparency and the people’s welfare.

The Filipino masses must see through the facade of this political circus. The Marcos-Duterte feud is nothing more than a battle for control over the state as the primary machinery of class oppression. It is a conflict rooted in self-serving interests exploited by US imperialism and does not align with the interests of the masses. Genuine change will not come from choosing sides in this elite rivalry but from building a unified front of resistance against the broader system of exploitation and imperialism. 

On int’l human rights day, groups hold Duterte, Marcos Jr. accountable

Progressive mass organizations and parties all over the Philippines commemorated the 75th International Human Rights Day on 10 December, 2024, by staging demonstrations and rallies in various cities nationwide. The carried the call “Bring Duterte to justice, hold Marcos accountable,” to highlight the extensive violations of human rights under the two consecutive regimes.

In Manila, sectoral groups marched to Liwasang Bonifacio and in the rally destroyed an effigy they called “People vs. Evil and Darkness,” depicting Ferdinand Marcos Jr and the Duterte family in a trash bin, symbolizing their rottenness.

Karapatan, a nationwide human rights alliance, condemned the Marcos regime’s attempts to deodorize itself amid reports of mounting violations of human rights and international humanitarian law perpetuated by its security forces. On this very day, Marcos unveiled a bogus “Human Rights Action Plan”, which is merely a facade to mislead the international community that “all is well” in the Philippines. Karapatan added, “The US imperialism that designs and funds these bloody schemes must also be held accountable. The US supports regimes that adhere to policies favoring imperialists and suppress the rights of people opposing and uprising against these oppressive puppets.”

In Bicol, Bayan-Camarines Sur gathered in Naga City while Bicolana Gabriela held a protest at the Legazpi City Commission on Human Rights’ office where police assaulted them, preventing the rallyists from taking photos and videos.




image: philippinerevolution.nu

In Cebu, Bebe Allere, chairperson of the Cebu Urban Poor Women's League, and Nick Abasolo, leader of the Cebu Kilusang Magbubukid (Peasant Movement) ng Pilipinas spoke about militarization of peasant communities in their respective areas. Bayan Muna, Selda-Cebu, and Piston-Cebu also joined the protest.

Similar protest rallies were held in other cities. In Iloilo City, Panay Alliance Karapatan members launched a protest outside the municipal hall. In Davao City, Karapatan-SMR held a commemoration at Freedom Park. In Baguio, progressive groups organized an evening of art and unity at Igorot Park.

The Communist Party of the Philippines' organ, Ang Bayan (AB), on 10 December 2024, released a special report citing 508,239 human rights victims under the Marcos regime since it took power on June 30, 2022, until December 1 of this year. AB recorded 232 victims of extrajudicial killings and 79 frustrated killings, mostly farmers; 233 victims of abduction; and 488 illegal arrests and detentions. There are also 179 victims of torture and 241 victims of physical assault.

Additionally, there are 2,343 victims of coercion; 82,723 victims of forced evacuation; and 160,862 victims of threats, harassment, and intimidation. 

Journalist Atom Araullo, others gain landmark victories vs red taggers

Broadcast journalist Atom Araullo and his legal counsels from the Movement Against Disinformation (MAD) said that their legal victory may be used as a reference for future cases against red-tagging, especially for activists and journalists.

In a 27-page court decision dated Dec. 12, 2024, Judge Dolly Rose Bolante-Prado of the Quezon City Regional Trial Court (RTC) Branch 306 said that the right to free speech was abused by the defendants, Lorraine Marie T. Badoy-Partosa and Jeffrey Celiz, by red-tagging the plaintiff, Araullo.

"We want to use this case as a potential defense mechanism for journalists who experienced the same kind of attacks and harassment," said Araullo in a press conference, Dec. 19 in Quezon City.

Araullo recounted that after being subjected to the red-tagging spree of Badoy and Celiz, the effect rippled to the communities that he covered. Araullo's victory is part of a broader wave of landmark victories against red taggers in the country. Just recently, Baguio City passed a historic Human Rights Defenders Ordinance, the first of its kind in the country. Passed with 11 votes and 3 abstentions, the ordinance is intended to protect activists and other human rights advocates in the city from various forms of threats, defamation and harassment.

The ordinance institutionalizes protection mechanisms for human rights defenders, recognizing their vital role in upholding democracy and ensuring accountability. With the growing threats to civil liberties, such legislation is considered a victory by human rights defenders and activists amidst a prevailing climate of repression.



image: philippinerevolution.nu

The ordinance includes provisions penalizing public officials and other state-affiliated parties and agents that engage in “red-tagging” against activists and other individuals in the city.

Red-tagging, a practice where victims are accused of ties to the communist insurgency, is commonly used against activists, at times by state agents. The ordinance’s definition of the practice covers acts, such as tagging groups during school-led activities, spreading defamatory content on social media and government-sanctioned vilification campaigns.

Meanwhile, elderly and sick political detainee Tomas Dominado was allowed hospital admission after strong public clamor. Judge Rommel Leonor of the Regional Trial Court in Mambusao town, Capiz, in an order released on Dec. 12, granted the plea of Tomas Dominado to stay at the hospital while getting treatment for unstable blood pressure and difficulty in breathing.

Dominado, 74, was admitted to the West Visayas State University Medical Center (WVSUMC) in Jaro, Iloilo on December 12. 

FFPS launches global actions abroad to support NDFP, fight fascist attacks



image: philippinerevolution.nu

In time with the birth anniversary of Filipino proletarian revolutionary Andres Bonifacio and the 60th founding anniversary of the Kabataang Makabayan (Patriotic Youth, KM), a broad solidarity for the Philippine struggle has launched global-wide activities in support of the NDFP.

Led by the Friends of the Filipino People in Struggle (FFPS), protest demonstrations, rallies, cultural programs, and study sessions were conducted to condemn the US-Marcos regime, and US imperialist domination of and repression in the Philippines. These actions highlighted the ongoing just revolutionary struggle of the Filipino people for genuine freedom, democracy, social justice and peace, and called for a more vigorous campaign against fascist attacks on the Filipino people.

The solidarity activities took place in the United States, Canada, Netherlands, and Hong Kong.

“These US-backed attacks by the Government of the Republic of the Philippines are futile against a people driven by the profound injustices perpetrated by US foreign domination, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism, and a longing for justice and liberation. The revolutionary resolve of the Filipino people remains firm and our solidarity for their struggle also remains firm,” said Robert Reid, chairperson of FFPS.

“Despite the violent crimes of the US-Marcos regime, the Filipino people are fighting back! The NDFP continues to unite the Filipino people to fight for genuine national liberation and democracy, and has demonstrated to the international community not only the necessity and justness of the national democratic revolution in the Philippines, but that armed struggle is a legitimate exertion of the Filipino people’s inherent right to self-determination, as recognized through International Law,” said Dana from People Organizing for Philippines Solidarity (POPS) in the United States.

The global actions also condemned the US-Marcos regime for its continuous attacks on NDFP peace consultants and the peace negotiations. In October this year alone, three NDFP consultants were illegally arrested in clear violation of the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees (JASIG) signed by the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and the NDFP. Seventeen NDFP consultants and staff are currently imprisoned, according to the human rights group Karapatan.

“We must view the assault on the NDFP consultants as an assault on the Filipino people, particularly the broad masses, who they so selflessly serve. Amid these attacks, our solidarity is crucial. We amplify the call of the Filipino people for justice for the consultants who have been murdered and to free unconditionally those who have been illegally detained. We stand in full solidarity with the Filipino people’s struggles for national and social liberation,” said Reid.

“The Filipino people’s demands are clear: genuine agrarian reform, social change, the abolition of unjust treaties with foreign powers, the expulsion of US military bases, and a program for national industrialization and genuine development. It is precisely the refusal of the US-backed Marcos Jr. regime – and those before it – to sincerely address these demands that has driven the Filipino people to (armed) revolution,” the FFPS stressed, as it called on other peoples and groups to be in solidarity with the Filipino people’s just struggle. 