



EDITORIAL:

Duterte's arrest & ICC trial a significant victory for the Filipino people

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EDITORIAL:

Duterte's arrest and ICC trial a significant victory for the Filipino people

The arrest and trial of former Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte in the International Criminal Court is a significant victory for the Filipino people who have long clamored for justice and retribution for the tyrant's countless crimes during his six-year reign of terror as president, and more as mayor of Davao City.

Despite his arrest, the struggle for justice continues. The Filipino people continues to demand the conviction and punishment of Duterte and his principal military and police cohorts. They continue to pursue their quest for justice for the thousands of victims of unjust killings committed by military, police and vigilantes under the guise of the so-called war on drugs and the brutal and bloody political crackdown unleashed by Duterte's regime.


The arrest of Duterte was long delayed because Marcos, who allied himself with the Dutertes in the 2022 elections, had publicly opposed cooperation with the ICC. The Marcos-Duterte "Uniteam" alliance, however, began to fracture in mid-2023. This Marcos-Duterte conflict heightened further as Marcos pushes to consolidate and monopolize political power, with the start of mid-term elections and the impeachment of Sara Duterte last February 5, 2025.

The cooperation of the Marcos administration with the Interpol to effect Duterte's arrest is also a testament to Marcos' political opportunism, making it serve his strategic aim to undermine the Dutertes and their scheme to return to power in 2028. Nonetheless, this does not negate the fact that the arrest of Duterte is a major outcome of the continuing demand of the people to hold Duterte to account for his crimes.

Under Marcos, the same repressive policies of Duterte and attacks against the revolutionary movement continue. Extrajudicial killings, abductions and enforced disappearances, as well as aerial bombing and strafing, especially in thousands of villages which Marcos ordered to be placed under military rule, remain rampant. Many of these crimes have been documented during the hearings by the International People's Tribunal held in Brussels in May 2024. Since then, several scores of new cases of extrajudicial killings of civilians have been recorded.

The arrest of Duterte emboldens the Filipino people to pursue their struggle for justice and human rights. Amid the continuing bloody crimes perpetrated by state forces, the Filipino people are ever more determined to hold Marcos, like Duterte, accountable for the grave crimes that continue to be committed with impunity by military and police forces behind the veil of the Marcos policy of "counterinsurgency" and "national security."

With Duterte now set to be tried by the ICC, a new frontier of struggle emerges for the Filipino people. Calls to rejoin the International Criminal Court have been put forward and are being amplified, as it serves as an important recourse for the Filipino people to hold accountable all past and future tyrants and their accomplices.

The ultimate recourse for the Filipino people, however, remains to wage revolutionary struggle to overthrow the tyranny of big bourgeois compradors, big landlords and bureaucrat capitalists. Only by putting an end to the fascist state that employs terrorist violence to perpetuate the oppressive and exploitative semicolonial and semifeudal system, can their aspiration for genuine freedom and social justice be fully realized. 

Groups welcome Duterte arrest, demand conviction for crimes against humanity

The sensational arrest and transfer to The Hague of former president Rodrigo Duterte by virtue of a warrant issued by the International Criminal Court (ICC) has been widely hailed both by individuals and organizations in the country and abroad. They also asserted that the struggle for justice continues under the present regime of Ferdinand Marcos Jr.

The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), on 12 March, 2025, urged the Filipino people to push to have Duterte stand trial before the ICC, demand the conviction and punishment of Duterte and his principal military and police cohorts, and pursue their quest for justice for the thousands of victims of unjust killings committed by the military, police and vigilantes under the guise of the so-called war on drugs and the brutal political crackdown unleashed by Dutertes' regime.

But the abuses and crimes committed by state forces are not abated and continue to run rampant under the present Marcos regime, said the CPP. Calls to rejoin the ICC may serve as a crucial recourse for the Filipino people to hold accountable all past and future tyrants and their accomplices, and to bring them to justice for all their crimes and atrocities. But the CPP asserts that the ultimate recourse for the Filipino people remains to wage revolutionary struggle to overthrow the tyranny of big bourgeois compradors, big landlords and bureaucrat capitalists. Only by putting an end to the fascist state that employs terrorist violence to perpetuate the oppressive and exploitative semicolonial and semifeudal system, can their aspiration for genuine freedom and social justice be fully realized.


Meanwhile, The National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP), on 11 March 2025, also hailed the arrest



image: philippinerevolution.nu

of Duterte “as a victory for the Filipino people, particularly the thousands of victims of his bloody ‘war on drugs’, and his fascist attacks on the revolutionary movement. It affirms what the people have long known – that Duterte is a mass murderer who must be held accountable for his crimes. However, this does not absolve Marcos Jr. of his own blood debts as he continues the reactionary state’s counterrevolutionary war against the Filipino people.”

The ICC warrant focuses on Duterte’s “war on drugs,” but his crimes extend far beyond this. His regime carried out the systematic killing of NDFP peace consultants, aerial bombings of civilian communities, and the torture and execution of captured Red fighters (hors de combat), all in blatant disregard of the laws of war. These war crimes were not just Duterte’s policy—they remain central to the Marcos Jr. regime’s counterrevolutionary war against the Filipino people.

Among the many organizations and individuals in the Philippines who welcomed the arrest of Duterte are human rights advocacy organization Karapatan, BAYAN, Ibon Foundation and Nobel laureate Maria Ressa, while abroad are UN Special Rapporteur Mary Lawlor, Amnesty International Secretary General Agnes Callamard, and many others. 

Rev org of Filipino compatriots formally launched

Affirming its role to organize and mobilize Filipino compatriots for the national democratic revolution, Compatriots was launched formally last month participated in by scores of revolutionary Filipino overseas workers in a country in the Asia-Pacific region. Compatriots represents the special sector of Filipino migrants under the National Democratic Front of the Philippines, and joins 17 other revolutionary underground organizations in the NDFP representing all patriotic classes in Philippine society.

Filipino migrants currently number up to 15 million (about 10 percent of the Philippine population), including millions of temporary workers in low-wage jobs (domestic work, child caring, among others). Since 2023, nearly 10,000 Filipinos leave the country every day due to lack of local jobs, absence or insufficient income, and very low wages, land and livelihood disenfranchisement. Through the labor export policy, the reactionary state sacrifices Filipino workers to ease the country’s employment crisis. They are daily fleeced by millions of pesos in the form of fees for basic services that do not even benefit them.

In foreign countries, they endure abuse, labor rights violations, racism or racial discrimination, violence, and very high migration costs. They have no protections, especially female workers in jobs most vulnerable to abuse and crime.

Among the high-profile cases which called worldwide attention to the plight of Filipino overseas workers and the criminal neglect of the reactionary Philippine government, include, among other countless cases, the wrongful murder conviction and execution of Flor Contemplacion in 1995, a domestic worker in Singapore. Sarah Balabagan was 14 years old when she worked as a domestic worker in the Middle East and in self-defense, killed her employer who attempted to rape her. The recent case of Mary Jane Veloso who was wrongfully convicted of drug trafficking and was sentenced to death by the Indonesian government, but has since been repatriated to the Philippines.




image: philippinerevolution.nu

Countless other nameless Filipino overseas workers have suffered abuse, exploitation and mysteriously killed while working and have not been given any justice, yet are ironically extolled as “modern heroes” by the Philippine state if only for the billions of US dollars they contribute to keep the Philippine economy afloat.

During its formal launching, Compatriots emphasized the need: to build organizations among their ranks to promote their democratic rights, including the right to employment and social protections in the countries where they work. Compatriots foresee that the growth of these movements will increase their contribution to anti-imperialist solidarity, as well as the advancement of the international proletarian revolution.

“Being Filipinos, migrants are recognized as integral to the national liberation movement. The solution to their migration is the advancement of the national democratic revolution. The challenge for Compatriots is to strengthen the movement against the exploitative and oppressive puppet reactionary state in the Philippines and to expand support for the protracted people’s war amidst the intensifying fascism worldwide,” the revolutionary organization emphasized.

Compatriots stressed that the only solution to the problems of Filipinos overseas is to tackle them at the roots. “We must upend the semi-colonial and semi-feudal character of Philippine society, and it is only through a people’s democratic revolution under the leadership of the CPP that this can be achieved,” it said. 

Inside the revolutionary elections in the Philippine countryside



image: philippinerevolution.nu

In a remote village deep in the Philippine countryside, the air was festive. Men and women dressed in their finest clothes, some with neatly combed hair, others with bright lipstick, all beaming with anticipation. It was election day—not the kind dictated by the reactionary state, but one rooted in the collective governance of the people. In this revolutionary stronghold, the masses themselves would select the leaders of their local government, a testament to the true exercise of democracy.

For years, the conduct of elections in guerrilla zones has been likened to a town fiesta, not because of extravagant feasts, but due to the sense of unity and determination among the people. This is no ordinary voting exercise—it signifies the strengthening of the masses’ political power through the establishment of a Barrio Revolutionary Council (BRC). The BRC, a grassroots governing body, embodies the masses’ ability to govern their own affairs, marking a significant step in the expansion of the revolutionary movement.

In a region in the Visayas, Ka Indo, a Party cadre, recalls the excitement of election day. At the polling place—a

large tent set up in an open space—blackboards lined the area, displaying the names of nominees for the final tally of votes. A portable projector flashed the candidates’ names on a screen for all to see, an innovation dubbed the “computerized elections ala NPA.”

Voters came from different sitios, most of them members of revolutionary mass organizations of peasants, women, and youth. Even non-members who supported the revolution were welcome to cast their votes. The process was simple yet methodical. The masses nominated trusted community leaders, ensuring that those elected had a proven record of service. No campaign materials, no paid endorsements, just the genuine trust of the people. Voting was conducted via secret ballot, and each sector—revolutionary organizations, middle forces, and Party members—was allocated equal representation in the BRC. The minimum voting age was set at 15, allowing the youth to actively participate in governance.

Unlike reactionary elections plagued with vote-buying, fraud, and intimidation, revolutionary elections are lauded by the people as the cleanest and most transparent. “Lahat pwedeng magbantay, magmonitor sa panahon ng eleksyon pati na sa pagbibilang ng resulta (Everyone can observe and monitor the elections and vote counting),” said Ka Indo. No election protests, no coercion—just the genuine selection of leaders based on merit and service.

Members of the New People’s Army (NPA) play a vital role as impartial facilitators, trusted by the masses to ensure fairness. Some illiterate or elderly voters even preferred NPA members to assist them with their ballots instead of family members, highlighting the people’s trust in the revolutionary army.

The establishment of Barrio Revolutionary Councils across the country is a glimpse into the future—an indication of the People’s Democratic Republic of the Philippines in the making. The revolutionary elections, rooted in the collective strength and unity of the people, serve as a stark contrast to the corrupt and coercive polls of the reactionary state. Indeed, in these hidden corners of the countryside, the seeds of genuine democracy are taking root, growing stronger with each election cycle. 