



EDITORIAL:

Genuine change lies not in the ballot box

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Genuine change lies not in the ballot box

The 2025 mid-term elections have once again laid bare the deep-seated rot at the core of the semifeudal and semicolonial political system in the Philippines. Far from being a genuine exercise of democracy, the elections were marred by systematic and brazen fraud, manipulation, and political machinations orchestrated by entrenched political dynasties and power brokers. These anomalies are not incidental—they are embedded features of a reactionary system designed to serve the interests of the ruling elite, backed by imperialist forces, especially the United States.

The anomalies in the recent elections are staggering. The Commission on Elections (Comelec) oversaw a process riddled with irregularities, particularly involving the South Korean firm Miru Systems, whose counting machines issued receipts that misrepresented voters' choices. The Comelec's eleventh-hour "upgrade" to uncertified software has fueled suspicions of automated vote manipulation. Even watchdogs such as the PPCRV received unprecedented volumes of complaints within hours of voting. Quick count results were delayed, riddled with duplicates, and "corrected" without transparency. Reports of vote-buying, pre-shading of ballots, and widespread disenfranchisement of progressive groups point to an election system utterly hollowed out from within.


At the heart of this decay are the traditional political dynasties—the Marcoses, Dutertes, and their ilk—who treat electoral exercises as turf wars. These dynasties deploy state machinery, social aid funds, troll armies, and paramilitary intimidation to tilt the results in their favor. The US, keen on securing geopolitical leverage in the region, has actively intervened by backing its favored factions. This includes grooming their "reserve horses" in the form of liberal pseudoprogressive groups. The rise of an acceptable "Left" as a result of the elections despite widespread fraud, reveal a reshuffling of US-aligned factions, not a democratic renewal.

Meanwhile, progressive party-lists aligned with the national democratic movement continue to be sidelined and violently repressed. Red-tagging, automated vote-shaving, and military harassment have been weaponized against them. The aim is clear: to eliminate any parliamentary foothold for forces that challenge US imperialism and the local ruling classes' grip on power.

All these point to one conclusion: the electoral arena under the current semifeudal and semicolonial character of Philippine society is a dead end for the vast majority of Filipinos. Genuine democracy—where the voices of workers, peasants, and the toiling masses are heard—cannot flourish under a political order dominated by comprador-landlord dynasties and bureaucrat capitalists beholden to US imperialist interests. The 2025 elections reaffirm that the path to real change lies not in the ballot box, but through mass struggle and revolutionary resistance.

In sharp contrast to the elite-dominated spectacle of the 2025 elections, genuinely democratic processes are unfolding in the countryside where Red political power has been established. Guided by the principle of three-thirds representation—one-third for the basic masses, one-third for the revolutionary forces, and one-third for the other progressive classes—the organs of political power ensure that the most oppressed and exploited classes play a decisive role in governance. These organs form the foundation of the people's democratic government, a government-in-embryo that stands

in stark opposition to the comprador and landlord-dominated bureaucratic state. Here, the political participation of the masses is not reduced to casting a vote every few years but is practiced daily through collective decision-making, mass line consultations, and accountability to the people.

Genuine change will only come when the oppressed themselves take the reins of history—organizing, resisting, and fighting for a society free from imperialism, feudalism, and bureaucrat capitalism. In the face of widespread disenfranchisement and political repression, the Filipino people must see through the illusion of elections under the current system. It is through advancing the people's democratic revolution—not through ballots manipulated by US-backed ruling classes—that genuine societal change can be realized. 

Int'l groups slam irregularities in PH mid-term polls

The Philippine mid-term elections on May 12, 2025, drew sharp criticism from international observers who flagged widespread irregularities. The European Union Election Observation Mission (EOM), deployed to monitor the polls, reported rampant vote-buying, violence, and restricted access to polling centers.

EOM Chief Observer Marta Temido said, "EU observers witnessed several credible indications and received reports of vote-buying through cash and goods, as well as partisan distribution of welfare payouts (ayuda)."

The EOM also documented "unacceptable levels" of election-related violence, with at least 30 people killed during the campaign and 10 more on election day. Violence was especially severe in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM). The EOM further criticized Comelec for denying their observers access to eight



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precincts despite prior written assurances.

Meanwhile, the International Observer Mission (IOM), composed of global human rights advocates, raised concerns over widespread technical issues and voter disenfranchisement. These included malfunctioning automated counting machines (ACMs), invalidated ballots due to alleged overvoting, and suspicious software behavior. In Zamboanga, voters reported discrepancies between their ballots and printed receipts, raising fears of vote tampering.

Besides this, the IOM pointed out the numerous incidents of IOM Commissioner Colleen Moore said, "We've observed a disturbing pattern: escalating violence, red-tagging of candidates and supporters, and coordinated disinformation against progressive voices." She added that the incidents are not isolated incidents, and created a "chilling atmosphere that compromises the safety and freedom of voters."

The IOM cited Vote Report PH's report of 1,445 incidents of red-tagging. The IOM also cited rampant election-related violence, armed attacks, and riots. Commissioner Colleen Moore described a "chilling atmosphere," marked by escalating violence, red-tagging of opposition candidates, and disinformation campaigns targeting progressive voices.

Vote Report PH recorded 1,445 cases of red-tagging during the campaign, with attacks intensifying on election day. Flyers and posters maligning progressive candidates were circulated in the Cordillera region, Southern Luzon, Negros, and Mindanao.

In a related development, the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) condemned President Marcos for aligning with U.S. interests amid rising tensions in the South China Sea. The CPP urged unity among Southeast Asian nations to pressure China to honor the 2016 International Arbitral Tribunal ruling, advocating for peaceful dialogue in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). 

US-Marcos regime delusional and in panic - CPP, NDFP

The US-Marcos regime is delusional in peddling the fantasy that it is about to put an end to the Filipino people's armed resistance, CPP chief information officer Marco Valbuena stressed in a statement last 13 May. The CPP said Marcos and his fascist factotums in the NTC-Elcac (National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict) are only fooling themselves as they unveiled their so-called National Action Plan for Unity, Peace and Development (NAP-UPD), claiming that the New People's Army (NPA) has only one remaining guerrilla front in the country.

"These false claims are readily debunked by their own actions, as they continue to deploy scores of combat battalions against units of the NPA nationwide. They talk of "peace and development" but bring only tyranny and destruction," the CPP emphasized.

"How can there be peace when they continue to refuse to acknowledge and address the problem of landlessness that lie at the root of the armed conflict? Contrary to the claims of the NTF-Elcac, a few road and infrastructure projects will not bring development to peasant communities," the CPP added.



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The CPP said that the NAP-UPD and Marcos' recent Memorandum Circular No. 83, only reveal their plan to further intensify the political repression of progressive organizations and critics to silence all dissent.


"By clamping down on these organizations who seek redress within the bounds of the reactionary constitution, and restrict the legal avenue of struggle, the Marcos regime, in fact, is inciting people to take the path of armed struggle and join or support the New People's Army," the CPP stressed.

"The Red fighters and commanders of the NPA have no intention of being defeated. Inspired and guided by the rectification movement, and by the memory of all their fallen heroes and martyrs, they are determined as ever to frustrate the all-out fascist war being waged by Marcos and his fascist minions," the CPP declared.

In a similar statement, Elias Dipasupil, Secretary-General of the NDFP, said the NAP-UPD and Marcos' Memorandum Circular No. 83, are panic moves of the Marcos fascist regime and its US operatives over the advancing people's armed revolutionary struggle.

Dipasupil said the regime is poised to intensify repression of "legal democratic forces... urban centers, schools, and cyberspace". This he said is "amid the continuous slide of the US-Marcos regime's popularity, the rising people's movement against corruption and political dynasties, the demand for transparency and accountability in government, and the call for pro-people economic policies such as higher wages and lower prices."

Unable to address the roots of the armed conflict, the regime Dipasupil said, will inflict more repression on the people.

"Fascist repression during Martial Law pushed many peace-loving youth to take up arms to continue the fight for democracy. By intentionally shrinking the space for open, legitimate dissent, Marcos junior may yet follow his father's footsteps in becoming the NPA's biggest recruiter," the NDFP official emphasized. 

Groups oppose recently inked PH-Germany defense agreement

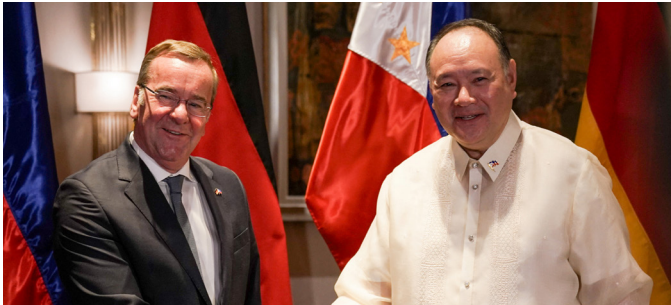


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The International Coalition on Human Rights in the Philippines (ICHRP)- Germany expressed deep concern about the signing of an arrangement on defense cooperation between the Philippines and Germany on May 14, 2025 in Berlin.

After the signing, Philippine Department of National Defense (DND) Secretary Gilberto Teodoro and German Federal Defense Minister Boris Pistorius will convene the 3rd Philippines-Germany Security and Defense Staff Talks to review and concretize proposed joint activities and initiatives to be implemented under the said arrangement in the coming year.

This came in the heels of Balikatan 2025, the biggest joint military exercise of the U.S. and Filipino troops featuring "full battle test" scenarios. The joint drills started on April 21 and ended on May 9. The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and U.S. military troops participated alongside forces from the Australian Defence Force and, for the first time, the Japan Self-Defense Force. Additionally, 16 nations took part in the

AFP-hosted international observer program, including among others, Canada, France, Germany, Netherlands, New Zealand, and United Kingdom.

On April 14, 2025 another US military unit was formally stationed in Philippine territory -- the . US 3rd Marine Littoral Regiment (MLR) which made its "debut" in the Balikatan 2025 as the Littoral Rotational Force-Luzon (LRF-Luzon). Advanced missile systems were deployed in the Philippines. In addition, the US has approved the sale of F-16 fighter jets to the Philippines.

ICHRP - Germany warns that "these developments escalate tensions as China conducts a series of military exercises around Taiwan and intensified its 'gray zone' tactics in the contested West Philippine Sea. A miscalculation can trigger a hot war not only in the Indo-Pacific area, but probably another global war."

Increasingly, the US has been pressuring the European Union (EU) including Germany and other allies to join in its design of containing the geopolitical expansion of China and to retain US sole hegemony in the world.

In a related development, Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) Secretary Manalo disclosed on April 10, that members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and China have agreed to complete a Code of Conduct on the South China Sea by 2026.

ICHRP-Germany, together with ALPAS Pilipinas, Gabriela - Germany and Friends of the Filipinos in Struggle (FFPS) declared that "it is in the best interest of the Filipino people and the German people to seek peaceful resolution of conflicts instead of war." 