

Duterte's ICC arrest a victory for the Filipino people, but struggle for justice continues



People's Struggles

The arrest of former President Rodrigo Duterte by virtue of a warrant issued by the International Criminal Court (ICC) is 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.

While we welcome the ICC’s move against Duterte, we also reiterate the crimes of the Marcos Jr. administration. The 2024 International People’s Tribunal (IPT) found both Duterte and Marcos Jr., as well as the US government, guilty of grave violations of international humanitarian law. The findings of the IPT reinforce the fact that state terror and impunity persist under Marcos Jr. and that the fight for justice must extend beyond Duterte’s arrest—it must challenge the continuing fascist repression being waged by the current regime.

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. Under Marcos Jr., indiscriminate bombings, enforced disappearances, forced evacuations, and extrajudicial killings continue, proving that the reactionary state will stop at nothing to crush the people’s resistance.

Furthermore, Duterte’s crimes were not his alone, nor were they simply the product of local reactionary politics. US imperialism has long propped up Philippine fascist regimes, providing military aid, training and intelligence to the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Philippine National Police (PNP). The US-funded “counterinsurgency” programs directly contributed to Duterte’s reign of terror. Even now, under Marcos Jr., US-backed military operations continue to target both revolutionary forces and the legal democratic mass movement. The people’s movement must continue to expose and resist the imperialist role in enabling fascist rule up to this day.

We call on the international community to sustain pressure for Duterte’s immediate prosecution. At the same time, the ICC must exert all necessary measures to compel the Marcos Jr. government to surrender Duterte to ICC jurisdiction. The NDFP International Office stands firmly with the Filipino masses in their fight for justice and genuine national and social liberation. Duterte and his cronies must face the full weight of their actions—not just for their past crimes but to end the continuing reign of impunity in the Philippines.

Duterte’s arrest, or even his potential conviction, will not dismantle the semicolonial and semifeudal system that breeds fascist rulers and US puppet regimes. Only through a national democratic revolution with a socialist perspective, led by the working class, can the roots of fascist violence be eradicated.