



# UPDATES PHILIPPINES

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## EDITORIAL Toppling dictators

February 1986 was a historic moment for the Filipino people and the rest of the world. The criminal, corrupt and treasonous US-Marcos dictatorship was toppled by massive protest actions of the poor peasants, urban poor, workers, youth & students, professionals and even the bourgeois reactionary politicians. Confronted by the mass of resolutely determined protesters, Marcos, the US and their armed minions were forced to accept defeat and handed over reactionary state power to then more palatable politicians.

What came to be known as the People Power uprising of the Philippines is actually the culmination of almost two decades of fighting against a seemingly invincible US-backed dictatorship. It was the result of arduous, mainly clandestine, political education, organizing and militant mobilization of the grassroots population. Thousands were arrested, detained, tortured, disappeared and assassinated by the fascist regime. The legal protest movement in the urban centers was inspired to fight more resolutely by the expanding strength of the armed revolutionary movement, the achievements in agrarian revolution and the establishment of Red political power in the vast rural areas of the country.

In January 2001, the equally criminal, corrupt and treasonous US-Estrada regime was similarly ousted from power by massive protests across the country, forcing the ruling Estrada clique to hand over reactionary state power to another set of ruling class politicians.

The seemingly 'popular' and 'invincible' Duterte regime is similarly criminal, corrupt and treasonous and deserves the same fate as the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos. The social, political and economic crises of Philippine society will only worsen under the fascist Duterte regime. The Filipino people, inspired and galvanized by the ever growing strength and victories of the armed revolutionary movement, can once again march on the gates of the presidential palace to oust the dictator. **UP**

## Duterte government threatens closure of media giant ABS-CBN

In a move seen by many as an escalated attack against media freedom in the country, President Rodrigo Duterte vowed to block the license renewal of entertainment broadcast group ABS-CBN, which is set to expire on 30 March 2020. Under Philippine law, Congress is empowered to grant and renew mass media's franchise to operate.

Previous to this, online news outfit Rappler and its Executive Director Maria Ressa have been targeted by the Duterte government for its critical reporting on his 'drug war'. Duterte has also attacked foreign media outlets, including the New York Times and The Washington Post.

Duterte has repeatedly accused ABS-CBN of biased reporting and "swindling" during his 2016 presidential campaign because it did not air all of his national campaign ads. Responding to the allegations, ABS-CBN President and CEO Carlo Katigbak revealed that they aired Duterte's national campaign ads worth P117 million, but that P7-million worth of spots were not aired as the network ran out of airtime.

On 10 February, Duterte's Solicitor General Jose Calida filed a petition asking the Supreme Court to revoke the legislative franchise of ABS-CBN and its subsidiary ABS-CBN Convergence. Calida accused the media group of "highly abusive practices benefitting a greedy few at the expense of millions of its loyal subscribers."

On 18 February, Calida also petitioned the Supreme Court to prevent ABS-CBN representatives from discussing the matter in public. This was done ahead of Congressional hearings on ABS-CBN's franchise renewal.

Journalists, movie, TV and radio personalities, human rights defenders, as well as ABS-CBN employees have been holding protest actions against the closure of the media group giant. 11,000 workers stand to lose their jobs if the Duterte government succeeds in closing ABS-CBN.

The National Union of Journalists of the Philippines condemned the actions of the Duterte administration against the network. "This proves without a doubt that this government is hell bent on using all its powers to shut down the broadcasting network," it said. "We must not allow the vindictiveness of one man, no matter how powerful, to run roughshod over the constitutionally guaranteed freedoms of the press and of expression, and the people's right to know." **UP**

## Prof. Sison debunks Duterte 'popularity'

Prof. Jose Maria Sison, Founding Chairman of the Communist Party of the Philippines and Chief Political Consultant of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines on 24 February debunked claims of the 'popularity' of President Rodrigo Duterte, saying that the Duterte regime uses the propaganda machinery of the reactionary government and military, and is paying mainstream media to glorify him, hide his crimes and attack his opponents on a daily basis.

In a [17-point exposition](#), Prof. Sison said that due to "the blatant failures and gross crimes of his regime," Duterte should be described "a demagogue, vulgar ruffian or even a fascist" instead of 'popular' or 'populist'.

Prof. Sison also pointed out that the Manila government employs troll armies in the social media and monopolizes opinion poll survey firms Social Weather Station and Pulse Asia in order to project a false popularity. "The poll surveys," he said, "merely ask a few people about satisfaction and trustworthiness and avoid questions that hold (Duterte) accountable for extrajudicial killings, drug smuggling, corruption, soaring prices, fall of incomes and rise of unemployment, subservience to foreign powers, bombing of rural communities, and other acts that make people suffer and detest him."

Duterte gained the presidency in 2016 after receiving 39% of the total votes, equivalent to about 16 million voters.

Prof. Sison lamented that there are "those who either naively or slavishly say or mechanically echo the line that the Duterte is 'popular' and that there is nothing you can do to topple him from his pedestal."

He said, "Duterte will ultimately fall because of the rapidly worsening crisis of the semicolonial and semifeudal system and the world capitalist system. The longer Duterte stays in power, the wider the latitude for the armed revolutionary movement to gain strength and become the most important factor in his overthrow. He guarantees his own hard fall with his traitorous, tyrannical, genocidal, corrupt and mendacious policies and acts." **UP**

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## Filipinos commemorate 1986 overthrow of Marcos dictatorship

Commemoration posters came out on 25 and 26 February in Metro Manila and other parts of the country with words of warning directed at President Rodrigo Duterte: "We did it once to a dictator, we could do it again!" Thousands joined protest actions on 26 February with placards exclaiming: *Tama na! Sobra na! Wakasan ang papet na pasistang rehimeng Duterte!* (Enough! Too Much! End the puppet fascist regime of Duterte!)

It was 34 years ago on 26 February 1986 when the Filipino people overthrew the dictator Ferdinand Marcos. Millions rose up in Manila and in numerous other cities and towns to confront the dictator's troops and defiantly march to the Presidential Palace. Marcos sought US' help, but was told by the late US Senator Paul Laxalt to "Cut and cut cleanly!" The dictator complied. He hurriedly gathered some of his loot and boarded a US helicopter with his family to flee from the enraged Filipino people. He was brought to Hawaii where he died in 1989.

In observance of the 34th anniversary, various grassroots organizations belonging to the alliance Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (BAYAN, New Patriotic Alliance) staged protest actions in Manila, Cebu and other parts of the country. They said they see similarities in Marcos' martial law regime and the Duterte administration.

Renato Reyes, BAYAN Secretary General said, "EDSA (the highway where millions demonstrated on 22-25 February 1986) remains a beacon of hope for all who resist tyranny today. President Duterte is mistaken if he thinks his reign of terror can last forever." He added, "We live in dangerous times reminiscent of the Martial Law years. Press freedom and freedom of expression are under attack in unprecedented ways. The law has been weaponized to suppress critics of the regime. Anti-terror laws threaten the right to organize as well as free speech."

Sarah Elago, Member of the House of Representatives for the Kabataan youth party, said the presence of many young people in the protest marches indicate the youth's concern to protect democracy and genuine freedom. "The threat of a dictatorship that the generation before us experienced, is still experienced today," Rep. Elago said.

An older protester, Testo Mendoza, 78, said he was at the People Power Revolt in 1986. He narrated about abuses and the disappearance and killing of friends during martial law. He said he will continue to attend rallies until Filipinos achieve true change and freedom. "We are here not only to commemorate the anniversary of the People Power Revolt, but to prevent another dictatorship."

Migrante International, a mass organization representing millions of Filipino migrants and their families, declared: "The Duterte regime will never succeed in stamping out the upsurge of the people's resistance. Like the reprobate Marcos dictator, the fascist Duterte regime will inevitably go down in shame in the annals of history as a despicable tyrant hated and condemned by Filipinos and the entire world." **UP**