

International Coalition
for **Human Rights**
in the Philippines



PHILIPPINE ELECTION 2022
INTERNATIONAL
OBSERVER
MISSION

IOM Bulletin No. 1 | March 1, 2022



PRESENTING:
THE PHILIPPINE
PRESIDENTIABLES



ichrp.net



ICHRPGlobal



The International Observer Mission begins its work on the Philippine Election 2022 with the country already in an atmosphere of widespread, violent political and social repression, which has triggered an International Criminal Court (ICC) investigation of crimes against humanity and ongoing focus in the United National Human Rights Council.

To set the campaign context, the IOM begins with a quick look at the main Presidential candidates. The COMELEC has accredited ten.



Republic of the Philippines
COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS
Intramuros, Manila
MAY 9, 2022 NATIONAL AND LOCAL ELECTIONS

Certified List of Candidates
(NATIONAL)
(PHILIPPINES)

PHILIPPINES

PHILIPPINES

PRESIDENT

#	NAME TO APPEAR ON THE BALLOT	SEX	NAME	POLITICAL PARTY
1	ABELLA, ERNIE (IND)	MALE	ABELLA, ERNESTO CORPUS	INDEPENDENT
2	DE GUZMAN, LEODY (PLM)	MALE	DE GUZMAN, LEODEGARIO QUITAIN	PARTIDO LAKAS NG MASA
3	DOMAGOSO, ISKO MORENO (AKSYON)	MALE	DOMAGOSO, FRANCISCO MORENO	AKSYON DEMOKRATIKO
4	GONZALES, NORBERTO (PDSP)	MALE	GONZALES, NORBERTO BORJA	PARTIDO DEMOKRATIKO SOSYALISTA NG PILIPINAS
5	LACSON, PING (PDR)	MALE	LACSON, PANFILO MORENA	PARTIDO PARA SA DEMOKRATIKONG REPORMA
6	MANGONDATO, FAISAL (KTPNAN)	MALE	MANGONDATO, FAISAL MONTAY	KATIPUNAN NG KAMALAYANG KAYUMANGGI
7	MARCOS, BONGBONG (PFP)	MALE	MARCOS, FERDINAND JR. ROMUALDEZ	PARTIDO FEDERAL NG PILIPINAS
8	MONTEMAYOR, JOSE JR. (DPP)	MALE	MONTEMAYOR, JOSE JR. CABRERA	DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF THE PHILIPPINES
9	PACQUIAO, MANNY PACMAN (PROMDI)	MALE	PACQUIAO, EMMANUEL DAPIDRAN	ABAG PROMDI
10	ROBREDO, LENI (IND)	FEMALE	ROBREDO, MARIA LEONOR GERONA	INDEPENDENT



CANDIDATES' PLATFORMS IN A NUTSHELL

Independent thinktank **IBON Foundation** summarized and rated the six most prominent candidates based on their platforms - Marcos, Lacson, Domagoso, Pacquiao, Robredo and De Guzman. IBON concluded that, apart from De Guzman, they are starkly similar and constitute a conservative market-friendly agenda, which reflects how the country's oligarchs and big capitalist determine economic policy. Three of the country's 10 wealthiest multi-billionaire tycoons are also behind three of the country's five biggest political parties – and are an ever-present fixture in presidential candidacies and governance. The deeper problem, says IBON is that the economy's neoliberal trajectory has been uninterrupted for over four decades despite seemingly wide variations in ruling factions and political regimes.

THE PEOPLE ECONOMICS LITMUS TEST: ECONOMIC PLATFORMS FOR WHOM?



Former senator Marcos, Jr.'s not even bothering to draw up an economic platform shows disinterest in the deepest problems of Filipinos while indicating more concern for a hidden self-serving agenda in aspiring for the presidency.



Read more in the IBON-Bridges 2022 Newsletter Briefing Paper

THE PEOPLE ECONOMICS LITMUS TEST: ECONOMIC PLATFORMS FOR WHOM?



Senator Lacson narrowly and erroneously believes that corruption is the main reason for the country's underdevelopment. This overlooks how neoliberal policies have reduced agriculture and manufacturing to their smallest share of the economy in over 70 years.



Read more in the IBON-Bridges 2022 Newsletter Briefing Paper

THE PEOPLE ECONOMICS LITMUS TEST: ECONOMIC PLATFORMS FOR WHOM?



Mayor Moreno's platform stresses housing, education, health and livelihood projects. It correctly highlights the importance of technological progress, but there is no real plan for agriculture and national industrialization.



Read more in the IBON-Bridges 2022 Newsletter Briefing Paper

THE PEOPLE ECONOMICS LITMUS TEST: ECONOMIC PLATFORMS FOR WHOM?



Senator Pacquiao is earnest in promising free health, education and housing especially for poor and vulnerable Filipinos and also higher wages. There is however no plan to develop agriculture and Filipino industry, and only a stereotypical approach to infrastructure and investments.



Read more in the IBON-Bridges 2022 Newsletter Briefing Paper

THE PEOPLE ECONOMICS LITMUS TEST: ECONOMIC PLATFORMS FOR WHOM?



Vice-president Robredo's platform is the most detailed and offers relief from COVID-19, joblessness and poverty. It unfortunately adheres to ineffective neoliberal globalization policies and substantial changes are needed for just and sustainable development.



Read more in the IBON-Bridges 2022 Newsletter Briefing Paper

THE PEOPLE ECONOMICS LITMUS TEST: ECONOMIC PLATFORMS FOR WHOM?



Trade unionist de Guzman's platform is unique and acknowledges the failure of profit-driven market-oriented neoliberal policies to develop the national economy. It offers the most benefits for ordinary Filipinos and challenges entrenched wealth and economic power.



Read more in the IBON-Bridges 2022 Newsletter Briefing Paper



VICE PRESIDENT LENI ROBREDO

A former human rights lawyer and congresswoman, Maria Leonor Robredo defeated Bongbong Marcos in the 2016 Election for the Vice Presidency.

As Vice President, she criticized and condemned the "senseless killings" in the war on drugs, then she was appointed Duterte's "drugs czar", but was sacked just 18 days later. She also served as Duterte's housing czar for a short period before she was excluded from cabinet meetings.

She is running on a platform of 5 points: restore trust in the government, awaken the strength of the Philippine industry, end employment discrimination, support for small businesses, catch the loss of jobs.

She earned the endorsement of ISambayan, a broad coalition united to ensure Duterte does not stay in power following these elections. She was also endorsed by the progressive Makabayan coalition. Robredo committed to cooperate on Makabayan's key advocacies:

- Promote scientific, pro-people, and non-militaristic approach to the pandemic
- Pushing of the Security of Tenure Law and support employment
- Act on land conversion and help farmers
- Review existing mining laws
- Continue peace talks
- Uphold human rights and amend the Anti-Terrorism Law
- Prioritize reviewing cases of older and sick prisoners and bring back the ABS-CBN
-



SENATOR MANNY PACQUIAO

Emmanuel Dapidran Pacquiao, the world-famous boxer, is running for president under PROMDI with Deputy Speaker Lito Atienza as his running mate. He was formerly affiliated with the PDP-Laban party – the party of current President Rodrigo Duterte – however, a conflict between politicians resulted in the split of the party. Pacquiao has said that he would allow the ICC investigation into the drug war and the killings that took place in Davao while Duterte was Mayor.

Pacquiao's platform focuses on anti-corruption and he will send corrupt government officials to jail if he is made president. As part of his plan to build better infrastructure for economic growth, employment, housing and healthcare in the Philippines he promised to allocate funds to finance micro, small and medium enterprises. While he wants to resolve the West Philippine Sea conflict through a peace panel, he is also ready to strengthen the Visiting Forces Agreement between the Philippines and the United States and go to war with China. With respect to the Philippine civil war, Pacquiao supports the resumption of peace talks with the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) and says that he does not blame those who take up arms because of poverty. In terms of other social issues, Pacquiao has spoken against abortion and LGBTQ people, while reining back his earlier strong stance on the death penalty.



BONGBONG MARCOS

Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr (BBM), 64, a former Senator, and Presidential candidate of the Partido Federal ng Pilipinas, is running with Inday Sara Duterte-Carpio, the daughter of President Duterte and Mayor of Davao City. The Partido Federal ng Pilipinas was established by supporters of incumbent President Duterte in 2018 to promote a federal constitution for the country.

The BBM-Sara campaign is supported by UniTeam, a coalition of four parties: Hugpong ng Pagbabago (Sara Duterte’s regional party in Mindanao), LAKAS-CMD (a combined Christian Democratic and Islamic Democratic Party), Pwersa ng Masang Pilipino (deposed President Joseph Estrada’s party), and Partido Federal ng Pilipinas.

BBM-Sara say vaguely that they will carry on President Duterte’s policies and expand them. That means continuing the War on Poor People in the guise of a “war on drugs”, the War on Dissent in the guise of a counter-insurgency campaign, and the War on the Moro People in the guise of the long-running “war on terror”. It means continuing the Build Build Build program of mega projects funded by borrowings and massive urban demolitions.

On the COVID-19 pandemic, Marcos Jr last November promised an expanded vaccination program, especially for teachers, and more funds for medical research, but not to end the military control and punitive nature of the government’s COVID-19 measures.

As well, Marcos Jr resolutely denies the massive human rights violations and plunder committed by his father, the Dictator Ferdinand Marcos of 1972-86, attempting to rewrite the family’s controversial history.

Both Marcos Jr and Sara Duterte have the most financial resources for the election campaigns and lead the polls survey by far.



PING LACSON

Senator Panfilo “Ping” Lacson, 73, graduated from the Philippine Military Academy and served in the Philippine Constabulary during Martial Law. President Joseph Estrada appointed him to head the Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force and eventually as Philippine National Police Chief in 1999. During the Second EDSA People Power in January 2001, Lacson withdrew his support to President Estrada.

He joined the Senate in 2001 and 2007 for the Estrada party. He also ran for the presidency in 2004, but lost. In December 2013 President Benigno Aquino III appointed him as Presidential Assistant for Rehabilitation and Recovery in December 2013 following typhoon Yolanda / Haiyan but he quit due to frustration over lack of budgetary support.

Lacson is dogged by allegations that he had a hand in the Dacer-Corbito slay case in Cavite on November 24, 2000. Buddy Dacer was a very high-profile publicist said to be delivering some damning evidence of insider-trading to former President Ramos when he and his driver were abducted in Makati City and killed. Lacson was eventually charged with murder in 2010, but the charges were thrown out by the Court of Appeal in 2011. More junior police were prosecuted. Lacson fled the country to avoid arrest.

Lacson is also linked to the Kuratong Baleleng massacre on May 18, 1995, in Quezon City. Lacson was a Police Chief Superintendent when he took part in the press conference claiming that the 11 members of the notorious bank robber gang were killed in a shootout with the Anti-Bank robbery Task Force. But soon after other police testified that the 11 were handcuffed when executed.

Lacson says that hunger, unemployment, education, rising debts and the aftershocks of the pandemic are the national election issues, and that corruption is the main factor holding back the country.

In his first 100 days, Lacson says he would rid government of the inept, the corrupt and the undisciplined, and that he wants a clean technocratic leadership team.

He promised to expand the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps - conditional cash transfer program) and give more support to the hungry and unemployed, and to implement a Universal Healthcare Program, with more health facilities at every level, and to increase the salaries of health care frontliners to dissuade them from leaving the country.



NORBERTO GONZALES

Norberto Gonzales was Defense Secretary under former President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo (PGMA), notorious for political killings and keeping a black list of progressive and vocal Filipinos abroad and foreign nationals. He is now running for president under the Partido Demokratiko Sosyalista ng Pilipinas.

Gonzales served as Presidential Adviser for Special Concerns to PGMA from February 2001 to January 2004. He then served as National Security Adviser and Director General of the National Security Council from February 2005 till the end of President Arroyo's term in June 2010. Concurrently, Secretary Gonzales served briefly as the 32nd Secretary of National Defense in July to August 2007 and back again as the 34th Secretary of National Defense in November 2009 to June 2010. As National Security Adviser, he was ordered detained by the Senate for contempt of Congress in 2005.

In 2006, Belgian, Dutch, and Filipino protesters including members of the Belgian and Flemish Parliaments, denounced him, the Armed Forces of the Philippines, the Philippine National Police, and Arroyo as "the masterminds" behind the hundreds of political killings and forcible disappearances, and as "War Criminals", who should be tried in the Hague. Gonzales was also behind the idea of fabricating a new mass grave to conceal the military's role in the political killings. In 2008, as National Security Adviser he proposed possible ways to defeat the Communist rebellion by 2010: to craft a strong local government counter-insurgency strategy; and extend the presidential term of PGMA.

Gonzales has served as a Peace Panel Member in talks with Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) which signed a Final Peace Agreement with the Government of the Republic of the Philippines in 1996.

He plans to give regions more autonomy, moving the country toward a federal system much like the USA while being open for anyone even with competing ideology as long as it doesn't involve armed struggle.

In a recent debate, he expressed openness to resuming local peace talks with the NDFP.



MANILA MAYOR ISKO MORENO

Francisco Moreno Domagoso, current Mayor of Manila and a former actor, is running with Dr. Willie Ong under AKSYON DEMOKRATIKO, but has been a member of a number of different political parties. He claims that his loyalty is to the Filipino people rather than to a particular party. This is also the tone he takes in his campaign where he presents himself as a better alternative to Leni Robredo and Bongbong Marcos – whom he claims are simply a continuation of the two parties that have ruled the Philippines for decades – the Aquino family and the Marcos family. Although not always allied with Duterte, Moreno has said that he would not turn the current president over to the ICC, and that he would welcome him into the Senate. He said he would, however, have the Philippines return to the ICC.

His economic platform focuses on bigger budgets for social services and the pandemic, helping industry recover, open data, curbing corruption through the use of technology, and developing agriculture. He is in support of the Build Build Build and reclamation projects but would be focusing on social services projects. In terms of international relations, Moreno says he wants to use the Philippine's alliance with the US to increase maritime defense against China in the West Philippine Sea, but still wants to keep China as an economic partner. With respect to the Philippines civil war he says he would restart peace talks with the NDFP. With respect to other social issues, Moreno is supportive of legalizing divorce, but against same-sex marriage and abortion in most cases.



LEODY DE GUZMAN

Leodegario Quitain de Guzman - better known as Ka Leody - is a former factory worker and current progressive labor leader. He is running for president under the party Partido Lakas ng Masa with running mate Walden Bello. They have framed their campaign as overtly anti-Marcos, as they say they are running in the election against the “Marcos-Duterte Axis of Evil”. Ka Leody has said that the Philippines should cooperate with the ICC investigation, and that there should also be a local investigation conducted with respect to extrajudicial killings.

Ka Leody’s campaign focuses on socialist policies, and he promises to raise the minimum wage, abolish labor contractualization, and implement land reform and national industrialization if elected president. He also says he will push for a one-time, 20% wealth tax on the richest families in the Philippines, and that if the law is rejected by Congress he would mobilize a people’s initiative – where all registered voters would have their say on this law. In terms of international relations, he is not for aligning with either the US or China and says that the Philippines should focus on climate action instead. He also says they should build alliances with countries that respect Filipino sovereignty rather than with big capitalist nations. Ka Leody is for resumption of the peace talks with the NDFP and further notes that the previous promises the government had made to the communist rebels – for instance on the issue of land reform -- should be met. In terms of other social issues, Ka Leody is for autonomy for the Moro people, for legalizing divorce and against legalizing abortion.



New COMELEC rules restrict free speech

The Philippine Commission on Elections (COOMELEC) has issued several orders that hinder citizens from exercising their right to freedom of expression.

Section 20 of COMELEC resolution 10730 requires campaign materials posted on private property to comply with the regulation size in the Fair Elections Act. This provision was cited by election officers when they removed posters and tarpaulins from the houses and offices of volunteers who are supporting opposition candidates on February 11.

Detained opposition Senator Leila M. de Lima reminded COMELEC to respect the rights of citizens in enforcing election rules. "The right of citizens to express their electoral preferences through material posted, hung or otherwise set up on their own property and made visible publicly is protected speech."

De Lima also flagged another COMELEC resolution (10732) which requires candidates or their parties to apply for permits first before conducting campaign-related activities. She noted that mere notification should be enough.

"Requiring a permit before undertaking any election campaign activity is to me, more than mere regulation, hence, of dubious validity. Would not mere notification to Comelec of the intended activity suffice, instead of prior authorization?" she asked. Marginalized partylist groups experienced difficulties in going around to campaign because of this restrictive COMELEC rule. A candidate is not allowed to appear and campaign in an area if there is no approved permit from the COMELEC.

The COMELEC said these resolutions were intended to protect public safety during the pandemic. But De Lima asserted that the pandemic should not lead to the curtailment of rights.

"COMELEC might have just gone overboard this time in its zeal to reinforce election rules in coping with the pandemic. But even a pandemic should not be a cause to restrict our democracy and our democratic exercises."

Meanwhile, an election lawyer questioned the COMELEC order requiring non-candidates to seek the approval of the election body before being allowed to ask city officials in organizing election-related activities. Such "Guidelines", according to the poll lawyer, have suddenly become arbitrary restrictions imposed by Comelec "without any basis in law and in fact."

Bulletin Number 2 coming on March 15th.

Reference:

Peter Murphy

+61 418 312 301

chairperson@ichrp.net