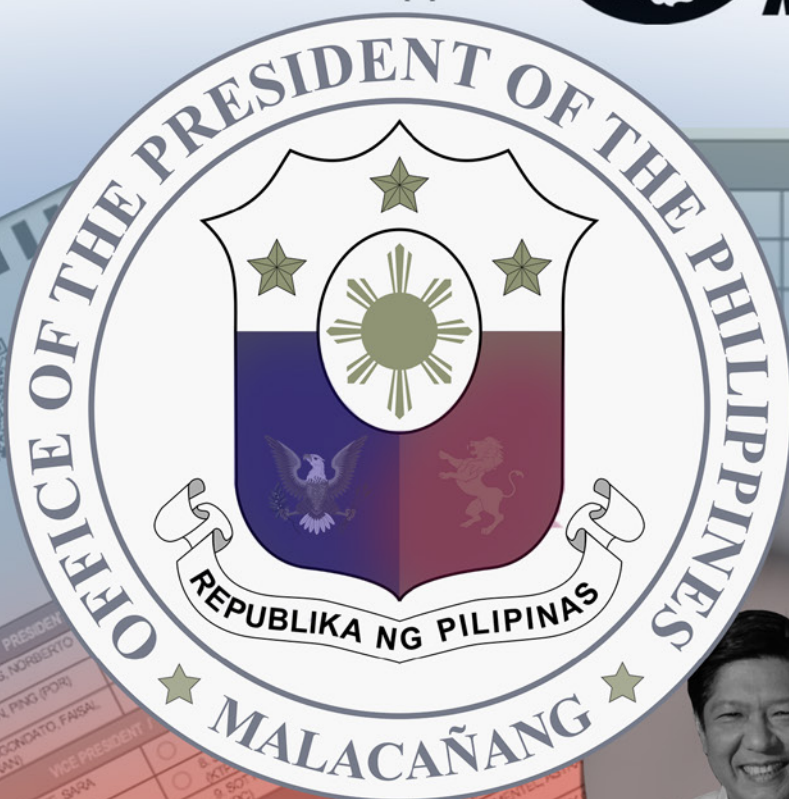


International Coalition  
for **Human Rights**  
in the Philippines



**PHILIPPINE ELECTION 2022**  
**INTERNATIONAL**  
**OBSERVER**  
**MISSION**



# FINAL SPRINT

**IOM Bulletin No. 6 | May 9, 2022**

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## Final Sprint

Three months after politicians criss-crossed the country for an electoral campaign that has trimmed down the rivalry for the highest position in the land between Leni Robredo and Bongbong Marcos Jr., the electoral watch becomes ever more intensely focused on electoral fraud.

It is almost a *déjà vu* of the 2016 vice presidential match between the same arch-rivals with Robredo winning only by a slim margin. Claiming there was massive cheating in the 2016 polls, Marcos Jr. filed an election protest on the eve of Robredo's oath-taking. For three weeks now, Marcos Jr.'s otherwise scant statements on his bid for presidency have been focused on concerns about cheating following reports of irregularities in absentee voting abroad - as if he is not the one with all the machinery, alliances, and track record in stealing.

Meanwhile, the record-breaking crowds gathered by the Robredo campaign in different sorties shows the organic support the leading opposition candidate has amassed across the country. Those warm bodies voluntarily and passionately pouring into the streets singing, dancing, and chanting Leni-Kiko support continue to defy what the mainstream surveys show.

On April 23, 2022, the nationwide militant labor federation Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU), formally endorsed and pledged an all-out campaign for the Robredo-Pangilinan ticket. On Labor Day, Workers for Leni, a broad alliance of workers unions, federations and formations, of which KMU is a key mover, held a May Day march along Cubao-EDSA attended by various sectors and the broad front of the Leni-Kiko supporters. It was, by far, the broadest Labor Day action in recent

years marked by a unity to defend workers rights and defeat the Marcos-Duterte tandem, which embodies political dynasty, mediocre governance, and unimaginable cruelty. Notably, Labor Day 2022's program was held at the Araneta Coliseum, the same site for KMU's founding congress on May 1, 1980. Vice presidential aspirant Kiko Pangilinan, a firebrand activist and student leader of the 80s, led the glorious chanting of "uring manggagawa, hukbong mapagpalaya!" (working class, army of liberation!) same place, same May Day, forty two years after in one of the broadest fronts against tyranny and for progressive reforms ever organized in recent Philippine mainstream politics.

KMU Chair, Elmer "Ka Bong" Labog is aspiring for a senatorial seat along with Atty. Neri Colmenares under the MAKABAYAN Coalition, a progressive political party representing take progressive sectors in parliament since 2000. With KMU's direct participation in the national elections, the militant labor federation also vowed to conduct face-to-face campaigns for the Leni-Kiko tandem in factories and communities. On election day, KMU with the Workers for Leni alliance will take part in poll-watching activities to contribute to the call for maintaining clean, orderly and honest elections.

The same urgent message was echoed by church leaders and election watchdogs in an interfaith prayer gathering on May 6 at the Manila Cathedral that culminated in a march to the Palacio del Gobernador, the main office of the Commission on Elections. It highlighted the need to address social inequality, social injustice, the climate of impunity and the dire conditions of the majority of Filipino electors who are pushed to the margins by anti-people and profit-

oriented development programs rolled out by the government. It was joined by sectoral organizations and civil society groups including the anti-fraud electoral watchdog KONTRA-DAYA, peasant groups, workers formations, Akademya at Bayan Kontra Disimpormasyon at Dayaan (Academe and People Against Disinformation and Fraud), and the Campaign Against the Return of the Marcoses and Martial Law, a campaign network encompassing martial law victims, civil libertarians, peace and freedom advocates, and human rights groups which have their roots in the anti-dictatorship anti-Marcos movement that toppled the dictator Marcos in the 1986 EDSA uprising. Despite the impression in mainstream

and in social media platforms, it would be a mistake to think that engagements by the Marcos-Duterte and Robredo-Pangilinan camps are merely an array of election-related squabbles among divided citizens. This final sprint in the electoral season throws light on the social reality underlying the historical struggle of the Filipino people to challenge the reproduction of elite rule through the ballot. The same struggle for genuine democracy behooves the emergent, broad and oppositional alliance among progressive forces and the Leni-Kiko ticket to get even more organized, weigh in, fight back, take back and win social power beyond election day.

## Human Rights Violations Roundup

*HRVs intensify with upholding of terror law and women's abuse amid red-tagging, abduction, and shooting*

### Disappearance of head of Robredo People's Council in Quezon

Dante Gatdula, the head of the Robredo People's Council for Candelaria City in Quezon province [has been missing since April 23, 2022](#). He left home around 7.00am to attend a meeting with other supporters of Leni Robredo in preparation of Leni's [rally in Lucena](#) on April 28, 2022, and has not returned home since. His wife [received messages](#) from those claiming to be with him, and messages from his cell phone bidding her farewell, but she has not been able to reach him. She also noted that he had been [receiving threatening calls](#) before his disappearance. Police [say they are investigating](#), but have not given any update on his whereabouts as of yet.

### Continued red-tagging of Leni's campaign

In Abra in the Cordillera Region (northern Luzon), campaign posters for Leni Robredo were [tagged with the acronym "NPA" \(New People's Army\)](#) by yet unidentified persons. Commenting on the red tagging of Robredo more generally, former Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) spokesperson, Major General Domingo Tutaan Jr., claimed that Robredo is the number one victim of red tagging, and [said that these attacks have increased alongside her growing popularity](#).

[Here is a summary](#) of what Presidential and Vice-Presidential candidates think about red-tagging and the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC).



## Complaint filed against SMNI for red tagging of Robredo

On May 4, Concepcion Empeño and Erlinda Cadapan along with Secretary General of Karapatan, Cristina Palabay filed administrative complaints [regarding an April 30, 2022 interview](#) aired by Sonshine Media Network International (SMNI) with convicted kidnapper and former military general Jovito Palparan. The charge is the [misuse of the platform](#) for spreading disinformation, and the [violation of COMELEC resolution](#) No. 10730 by Palparan's interview statement that Leni Robredo has [an alliance](#) with local communists.

The program was also used as an opportunity to attack and at the same time to justify these attacks against progressives. The interview was conducted by NTF-ELCAC spokesperson Lorraine Badoy, who is [currently facing eleven complaints](#) for baselessly red tagging human rights defenders, activists and a journalist. She stated that Palparan was invited [to honor and vindicate himself as he is a "victim of communist propaganda,"](#) which seriously undermines the seriousness of Palparan's crimes. He was [convicted of the kidnapping and serious illegal detention](#) of the daughters of Empeño and Cadapan – two University of the Philippines students who have been missing ever since being kidnapped in 2006. The two mothers who helped to file the complaint [criticized Badoy for vindicating Palparan's anti-communist crimes.](#)

## Accusations against Senator Leila de Lima withdrawn by key witnesses

Key witnesses against re-electionist Senator Leila de Lima have [withdrawn their testimonies](#) regarding her alleged involvement with illegal drug trafficking

inside New Bilibid Prison – providing further evidence that she is a political prisoner and a victim of the human rights violations of the Duterte administration. She has been detained since 2017 despite there being no conviction. On April 28, 2022 alleged drug trader Kerwin Espinosa [took back his testimony against de Lima](#) saying he was [threatened and coerced by the police](#) into giving false testimony; while on April 30, 2022, former chief of the Bureau of Corrections, Rafael Ragos, the [star witness in the justice department's case](#) said that his allegations were false. Presidentiables de Guzman, Moreno, Pacquiao, and Robredo and vice presidentiables Bello and Pangilinan have previously [called for due process](#) and de Lima's [release](#). Makabayan senatoriable Neri Colmenares echoed the calls and [urged the police who coerced Espinosa to be charged.](#)

## Supreme Court upholds Anti-Terrorism Law

In a final decision issued on April 26, 2022, the [Supreme Court upheld](#) most of the provisions of the Anti-Terrorism Law (ATL), which was questioned for its unconstitutionality, its broad and nebulous definition of "terrorism," and its granting of absolute power to state forces. All of these allow it to be used as a catch-all to [criminalize and justify persecution of political opposition, peasants, indigenous people,](#) unionists, human rights defenders and others. Although lawyers had [banded together to appeal the law,](#) in this most recent decision the Supreme Court has left the law mostly intact and open to exploitation by the incoming president. The teams of Robredo, Pacquiao and de Guzman have [criticized](#) the ATL, with Robredo saying that such legislation should not be used to ["stifle freedom of expression or legitimate dissent."](#) Vice presidentiables Bello and Pangilinan noted that the ATL has led to violations of human rights.



## Law signed to compensate victims of Marawi siege - five years too late

President Duterte has [signed the Marawi Compensation Act](#), which grants tax-free compensation to those who lost property and to the heirs of those killed during the 2017 Marawi siege. While the move [has been welcomed](#) in Marawi City, it can also be seen as a case of 'too little too late' and as an election motivated stunt as [rehab remains a major election issue](#).

The siege resulted [in civilian deaths, the destruction of property and the displacement of over 400,000 people](#) – of which 127,000 had still not been able to return to Marawi City as of 2021. Now President Duterte signs the compensation act, just as it was about to lapse into effect, and the signing was [not announced until April 27 2022](#) – less than two weeks away from the election in which his daughter is running for vice president.

**Edita Burgos**, mother of disappeared advocate for peasants Jonas Burgos, has called on Leni Robredo to be the voice of the disappeared in an [open letter](#) published on April 28.

## Violation of Women's Rights/ Violence against Women

Gabriela Women's Party (GWP) and [Amihan](#) National Federation of Peasant slammed political candidates for objectifying and degrading women during their political rallies. Former actor turned Quezon City vice mayor, and mayor Senatorial [Herbert Bautista](#) along with actor and Ormoc City Mayor Richard Gomez during a recent Uniteam rally entertained the crowd by "courting", touching and kissing a 23-year old female supporter on stage. GWP Rep. Arlene Brosas said,



Screenshot grabbed from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zulv5fOAJU0>

"This is not about the female supporter agreeing to be kissed but about using her for macho power play to boost the Uniteam campaign rally. Such acts degrade and insult the capacities of Filipino women and normalize sexual harassment guised as crowd's merriment."

It is a violation of the Republic Act 9710 Magna Carta of Women and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. On April 19, a footage of [another lewd number](#) at a Uniteam rally was uploaded by a netizen. Sexy dance group [Sexbomb NewGen](#) regularly performs in Uniteam rallies.



Screenshot grabbed from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7I3R7xFNWJA>



## Peace and Security, Hotspots

*Private armies dismantled, Army to deploy 40,000; some hotspots identified, under Comelec control*

**Military Deployment.** The [AFP](#) is set to deploy some 40,000 field personnel to polling areas around the country. There is no order to arrest critics of the electoral processes, but they will do so upon police orders. The military will be on either election mode, where personnel will simply support the Philippine National Police (PNP) and Comelec; or combat mode - “continuously” on alert versus armed groups such as the NPA. Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) personnel will also be present for any request for assistance. Nearly [6,000 soldiers](#) are deployed in Eastern Visayas, one platoon (20-50 personnel) per precinct or checkpoint in conflict-stricken areas, about 3,000 from the military and 600 from the PCG in [Western Visayas](#), and [4,000](#) throughout Northern Mindanao.

**Hotspots.** As of May 5, eight municipalities, one city and one entire province are now under Comelec control, the newest being the whole [province of Misamis Occidental and the town of Pilar in Abra](#) because of intense rivalry among contending parties that led to violence. [104 municipalities and 14 cities are under grave concern](#). The decision on [Misamis Occidental](#) was “because of their fear that the violence in the province would spill over to other municipalities.”

On the other hand, the inclusion of Pilar is the [Comelec Chair's first exercise of his controversial emergency powers](#) to place an area in the Philippines under the poll body's full control. This means immediate relief and replacement of [all 20-30 town police](#). “Abra is a big problem in every election, that's why it is called the ‘killing fields’ of Northern

Luzon, just like the notorious areas in my province of Lanao del Sur, as well as in Maguindanao, Basilan and Tawi-Tawi,” said Comelec Chair Saldamena Pangarungan.

Earlier, Tubaran, Malabang, Maguing and Marawi City in Lanao del Sur were [under Comelec control](#), as well as the towns of Buluan, Datu Odin Sinsuat, Datu Piang, Mangudadatu, Pandag and Sultan Kudarat in Maguindanao.

Police and the Comelec have [also identified 44 election areas of concern](#) under red and orange categories in Zamboanga peninsula. Most of the areas under the red category or those with intense political rivalry and presence of private armed groups are in Zamboanga del Norte, Zamboanga del Sur and Zamboanga Sibugay.

In Negros Oriental, while Comelec has yet to release approval of recommended hotspots, the Provincial Joint Security Control Center has finalized a joint security plan based on the list of the PNP's nine areas. “[It might be perceived as overkill](#), deploying as many security personnel in these areas, but better be safe than sorry,” he said. “We don't want to under-estimate the assignment of police and military troops in these areas only to find out on election day that more security forces are needed”.

Meanwhile, police claim that around [20 private armed groups](#), mostly in Mindanao, had already been dismantled by the PNP; and that they are continuously conducting investigations on the involvement of local politicians.



## Local Elections and Reports From the Ground

*Vote buying, threats, and violence by political clans intensify; previous and long-standing red-tagging hound current campaigning*

**Camarines Sur.** On May 4, congressional candidate Lray Villafuerte was recorded in a [video](#) openly telling supporters he will personally hand out Php 10,000 while threatening non-supporters. Villafuerte was recently implicated in an [audio recording](#) where he gives orders to manufacture fake news against VP Leni and her allies in Bicol Region. The Department of the Interior and Local Government has earlier [issued notices to a number of politicians](#) to explain their side over allegations of vote buying but, “For now, we are not investigating a formal case,” said Department Secretary Eduardo Ano.



Screenshots grabbed from <https://www.facebook.com/RolandoNonoyAndayaJr/videos/1052120205656906/>

**Ilocos.** [Kabataan Partylist Ilocos](#) on May 3 posted an alert about the University of Northern Philippines students’ Mock E-elections until May 5, which was ordered stopped despite compliance to all prerequisites - for Kabataan Partylist Ilocos, this is a violation of students’ democratic rights. In the Marcos home [city Laoag](#), the citizens group Crusaders for Peace on May 2 condemned the use of “private armies funded by local politicians” and asked bets to desist from disrupting the elections and resorting to intimidation. Fariñas candidates are in fierce rivalry for top local positions with the clan of Marcos Jr. and complained of harassment and threats, such as the April 29 arrest and search on one of their supporters, and police bias. Despite all these, the former Congressman and Governor Rudy Fariñas still support Marcos Jr.’s presidential bid.

**Central Visayas.** The International Observer Mission to Central Visayas have interviewed locals and found out that police intimidation and violence in the 2019 mid-term elections are currently affecting local voters as well as candidates’ mode of campaigns. Their experiences included police coming en masse into the community harassing them, planting weapons in homes, checkpoints set up outside communities; party officials and members having their homes strafed by automatic weapons; having vehicles set on fire; and in one case the murder of a husband and wife in front of their children. These had led to councilors and barangay officials and activists having to go into hiding



during the election period and still have a serious impact on their ability to campaign in the current 2022 elections. This has been further exacerbated by the ongoing use of red tagging and weapon planting in Duterte's "war on drugs" and their similar use against political opposition, development workers, and activists. This has been further exacerbated by the ongoing use of red tagging and weapon planting in Duterte's "war on drugs" and their similar use against political opposition, development workers, and activists.

**Bicol region.** The International Observer Mission to Bicol interviewed a local politician, who said that red-tagging happens all over the province, particularly targeting partylist spokespersons and strong local politicians (especially those who help poor families). Those who accept monies from the army are listed as NPA surrenderees while those who do not are threatened or are actually tortured/killed. Vote buying is very open and enjoyed by the people, and the amount of money given has increased, ranging from P1000 to P4000. Some personal experiences during this campaign period shared with the Observers were the red-tagging and harassment of a Bayan Muna member after she was visited by Robredo, the taking down of Gabriela tarpaulins.

### **OFWs neglected by Duterte admin reject BBM-Sara, place hopes on Leni-Kiko**

On May 3, "OFWs for Leni" trooped to the Leni-Kiko headquarters in Quezon City to present living testimonies of the

Duterte regime's neglect, to present their 14-point agenda, and pledge their support.

[Marvin Rimas](#) from Dubai was a rabid Duterte defender on social media and even reported accounts and pages so they would get suspended. "But that changed when I experienced neglect during the pandemic - from the repatriation to the quarantine period and to reintegration." [Another newly returned OFW](#) from Saudi shared how none of the recruitment and government agencies responded to her plea for help when she fell ill in the hands of her abusive employer, leading her to question the existence of the government. She then expressed her full support for the 14-point agenda earlier presented by Migrante International Chairperson and ISambayan Convener Joanna Concepcion.



Photo grabbed from <https://mb.com.ph/2022/04/25/robredo-pangilinan-vow-protection-social-security-for-ofws/#close>

In a symbolic act, they cast 14 cards stating their demands in a balikbayan box to be sent to Robredo and Pangilinan, who on April 25 had [vowed and signed a covenant](#) to provide better protection and social security benefits to land-based and sea-based OFWs. The 14-point agenda are as follows:

1. Free and comprehensive support and assistance to all OFWs affected by the pandemic.





2. Free RT-PCR testing and adequate quarantine facilities for repatriated OFWs

3. Immediate and safe repatriation of all stranded migrant workers displaced by COVID-19.

4. Comprehensive and accessible reintegration program for returning OFWs.

5. Enhanced social protection and welfare programs by mandated government agencies.

6. Increased budget for additional shelters and welfare services for distressed OFWs.

7. Timely, competent, and continuous legal welfare assistance to detained OFWs.

8. Stronger and effective social protection mechanisms and access to justice for exploited OFWs.

9. Security of tenure for sea-based migrants or seafarers including fishers after one year of working.

10. Recognition of sea-based migrants working in fishing vessels as seafarers.

11. Full protection, health coverage and benefits for illnesses, injuries and death resulting from overseas employment.

12. Full subsidy for social protection and welfare services for distressed overseas Filipinos.

13. Abolition of policies that facilitate labor export; Job creation and job security.

14. Support for OFWs' rights to form and belong to associations and unions that defend their rights.

## Overseas Absentee Voting: No extension despite delays

**In Hong Kong**, Migrante International continues to exercise vigilance for possible irregularities in the conduct of overseas absentee voting in a bid to protect the integrity of the 2022 elections. Its secretary-general Dolores Balladares on April 26 said most of the problems are logistical but other anomalies are possible. The polling precinct only had five VCMs initially, leading to long hours waiting in line, but was eventually **doubled** to accommodate more people. With as many of the over 93,000 Filipino voters based in Hong Kong, mostly domestic helpers who can only go out on weekends, Migrante International has been demanding mobile voting facilities to avoid overwhelmed polling precincts. Other concerns include pre-shaded ballots and defective VCMs.

**In Taiwan**, the Ministry of Labor on May 4 issued a statement urging employers to let their 72,779 registered Filipino employees vote and adjust their shifts or to assist them in taking regular paid leave to cast their votes.

**In Jordan**, only about 6,000 of the 40,000 Filipinos are registered voters. They are often dressed in the color of their candidate of choice, citing domestic economy and transparency as their biggest issues of concern. "We need an economist...A leader who is educated enough for the economy of our country," said Lucy Obedas, a community leader. Minda Obeidat, a dual Filipino and Jordanian citizen and Filipino community advocate, who has lived in Jordan for two years, hopes that if the domestic economy improves, there will be less need for Filipinos to work abroad. "I hope that one day, working abroad will be an option, and not a necessity," she said.

**In Dubai**, the Philippine consulate offers free roundtrip shuttle service for



Northern Emirates voters and said over a hundred from the Northern Emirates of Fujairah, Ras Al Khaimah, Umm Al Quwain, and Ajman have already availed from April 30 - May 1. Interested voters were required to show proof that [they are registered](#) and fill out a pre-registration form to secure their slots. Applications were reviewed on a first-come, first-served basis and results announced on April 28. UAE is the most overseas vote-rich with 290,000 registered voters.

**In both [Washington DC](#) and [New York](#)** the consulate on April 29 announced that poll watchers and accredited media, observers, and members of civil society organizations must undergo rapid antigen tests for COVID-19 before entering the embassy's polling and canvassing area beginning May 2.

**In [Vancouver](#),** Filipino voters who have yet to receive their election packets may now cast their ballots in person. Voters may go to the foreign service post from May 3 to 8, 9.00 am to 5.00 pm.

**In [Russia](#),** where there are 2,594 registered voters, several Filipino voters in Yakutsk, a remote city just 450 kilometers south of the Arctic Circle, were able to vote in a consular mission to the Philippine embassy in Moscow on April 27. The embassy's

outreach mission team flew nearly 5,000 miles to get to Yakutsk. The Department of Foreign Affairs did not specify the number of ballots submitted – only that there were several.

**In [Shanghai](#),** voting remains suspended due to strict “zero Covid-19 policy” lockdown. The Consulate has yet to pick up election materials at the Chinese Customs and its request to operate physically at least for absentee voting has been denied. The option to cast votes in foreign service posts in Xiamen, Hong Kong, and Macau is [tough](#) as it required first filing a manifestation to vote by April 30 and is a long journey involving varying quarantine regulations. Most of the around 1,600 registered Filipino voters in China are in Shanghai.

Overall, the Commission on Elections on Thursday said that [it will not extend the voting period](#), maintaining that all votes must be in by May 9, Philippine time. This is despite election paraphernalia arriving late in some Philippine foreign service posts, which also delayed the mailing of ballots to voters. On May 5, Commissioner George Garcia said that while there are 1.697 million overseas voters, the number of overseas voter turnout is not as promising ...” at only 400,000 more or less.”

## Campaign Trail April 3 - May 5, 2022

*Marcos Jr enjoys local politicians, mainstream pollster, and INC support but is disowned by wife's clan and worries local and foreign press and businesses; Robredo's record-breaking crowd and supporters' volunteerism continue, get more endorsements from investors, religious, and ordinary*

### **Ferdinand Marcos Jr.**

On May 1, “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. and Uniteam held their [last campaign rally](#) in

in Isabela, one of the provinces of the “Solid North” where he enjoys local officials' endorsements; and on May 3 in Iloilo, the first of their three ‘miting de



avances' (culminating campaign rallies).

On May 3, Marcos Jr [was officially endorsed by Iglesia ni Cristo \(INC\)](#), a religious sect known for bloc-voting and consistently supporting Marcos Jr (first in his 2016 vice presidential bid) [and his father](#) during the 1965, 1969, 1981 and 1986 elections. Both Marcos and running-mate Duterte thanked the INC for its endorsement in a pre-recorded video message.

While Marcos Jr's spokesperson now expects a landslide victory, [not all candidates endorsed by the INC won](#) in past elections. In 2010, it endorsed the Aquino III-Roxas tandem, but only Aquino won. In 2016, it endorsed Duterte-Marcos Jr but only Duterte won. In 1986, it endorsed Marcos Sr, who lost to Corazon Aquino. Just like in 1986, [the INC membership is divided](#) with many expressing dismay by flooding social media with hashtag #KakampINC and creating groups like "Mga titiwalag for Leni (Those who will resign (from INC) for Leni)" and "2.6 million minus one."

INC has an estimated 2.6 million member voters. Some [demand an explanation](#), saying that the leadership decided the endorsement on their own.

Moreover, [500 members of his wife's clan - the Ledesma and Araneta clans](#) in Iloilo, Negros Occidental, and Makati City, turned out to rally on April 30 for Robredo-Pangilinan, saying they "stand up and speak up for those who are voiceless against tyranny, kleptocracy, rotten political dynasties, impunity, corruption, plunder, extra-judicial killings, and selfish political interests."

[The Foreign Correspondents Association of the Philippines \(FOCAP\)](#) added themselves to the long list of those criticizing Marcos Jr. for not engaging in public debates or making clear statements on important national issues.

## **Leni Robredo**

The last couple of weeks have brought about three historic endorsements, including that of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. Robredo also secured the [support of Anak Mindanao](#) – a Mindanao-based political party of the marginalized sectors of the youth, women, senior citizens, overseas workers, urban poor, farmers, fisherfolk, workers, and professionals in Mindanao. She also secured the endorsement of three Cordillera-based national artists, some local councilors and a former congressman, and the respected Councils of Elders (of Cordillera indigenous peoples' tribes) of the different Cordillera provinces, and the warm welcome of some 30,000 people [in Baguio City](#).

Observers say no other campaign has achieved the same intensity as Leni-Kiko's, both online and offline. Former Tourism secretary [Enteng Romano summarizes the unstoppable momentum](#) in a Facebook post as "ten times more intense and manifested in ways that defy traditional Philippine politics".

The [highlight](#) of these rallies are the tens of thousands who walked tirelessly and converged at the rally sites, endured the heat, and waited for at least eight hours for Robredo to deliver her speech. Such devoted behavior is also observable online through the Sentiment Analysis on Facebook. Looking at the seven days ending April 24, 2022, the social signals from YouTube, Reddit, forums, blogs, Twitter, podcasts et al., show that netizens prefer Robredo over Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. Over these past few months, Robredo has kept a huge lead over the other presidential candidates on search entries and interest based on Google Trends.

[Economists prefer Robredo](#) according to an April 26 report by consulting firm FocusEconomics because she is seen



as having more policy experience and more detailed policies, compared to Marcos Jr.

On Marcos Jr., more and more religious groups are speaking up - but in favor of Robredo. A group of [over 1,200 Catholic clergymen](#) unprecedentedly declared their support for Robredo-Pangilinan, a day after INC's endorsement of Marcos-Duterte, saying it would be "dangerous" for Marcos and his allies to win as they have weaponized social media to distort the truth and their declaration to stop evil forces from taking hold of the country's leadership.

Almost 30 groups representing [commuters and transport workers](#) also came out May 3 in support of the Robredo-Pangilinan tandem.

### Other Presidentiables

#### Ka Leody De Guzman

Ka Leody and supporters were [barred](#) from marching to and concluding their rally at the Mendiola Peace Arch in Manila, and were allowed in front of Far Eastern University instead. On Labor Day, he challenged other presidential bets to say they are against contractualization and manpower agencies that deprive workers of security of tenure.

#### Manny Pacquiao

On April 30, Pacquiao [offered flowers](#) to honor the 201 slain journalists, vowing not to allow a return to the time of Marcos (Sr.) where the press was controlled by the government" and saying that red-tagging is unconstitutional. He drew [accolades from the media](#) who said Marcos Jr. selected and required mostly neophyte reporters to submit their questions two days ahead.

#### Isko Moreno

Moreno meanwhile, went further down the mainstream polls but remains unfazed, accusing rivals of paying

[people to join motorcades and rallies](#). He is now being sued for [graft](#) over the sale of the Divisoria Public Market without public consultation and consent amid the pandemic, and slammed for handing out [Php 10,000 to fire victims in Cavite](#), which election lawyers say can be considered vote buying. On April 28, at the end of his Panay Island campaign, his party's Iloilo chairperson Bryan Eric Cerebo [resigned](#) citing the national campaign team's ["poor coordination" and his "differences" with Moreno](#) himself, but on the other hand, [secured the endorsement of over 50 BBM-Sara volunteer groups](#) and non-governmental organizations.

### Election Surveys:

*Marcos-Duterte lead in mainstream, corporate surveys increasingly slammed; Robredo-Pangilinan winners in school surveys*

Marcos Jr. [sustained his lead](#) in the April 16-22 [Pulse Asia survey](#) of 2,400 registered voters over 18 years old, with a 56 percent preference, followed by Robredo with 23 per cent. Among the Vice Presidentiables, the President's daughter, Sara Duterte garnered 55 per cent, followed by Sotto III at 18 per cent, and Pangilinan at 16 per cent. However, National Statistical Coordination Board former secretary-general Romulo [Virola pointed out Pulse Asia surveys' numerous "flaws"](#) such as the underrepresentation of certain age groups, the overrepresentation of those who did not reach college, and the disproportionate representation of socioeconomic classes, and their impact on sample representativeness. [Several academics](#) are also now questioning the methodology of the Pulse Asia surveys. Peasant groups AMIHAN and [PAMALAKAYA](#) went as far as saying that Pulse Asia surveys should be considered [fake news](#), as it reflects findings from class ABC when there are



no respondents from said classes, and because it claims of 57 per cent or over 300 respondents from class E favoring Marcos Jr, when the thousands of anti-Marcos farmers belong to class E. Pulse Asia President Ronald Holmes defended the survey but admitted that there are factors that their polls are unable to predict, including actual voter turnout.



Photo grabbed from <https://www.facebook.com/325902704233968/posts/2192522917571928/>

Robredo's spokesperson nonetheless said the survey remains encouraging considering that the period did not cover April 23 during which the record-breaking 412,000-strong campaign rally was held, and April 30 where 280,000 people showed up. Also, the Robredo tandem continues to top an increasingly lengthening list of university mock elections just like on April 3 and April 23, on top of the university heads who have also renewed their support for the tandem. With over 40 schools and more than 15,000 students, faculty, staff, and alumni supporting Robredo and Pangilinan, this campaign season can be considered "unprecedented" for bringing together previously conservative or apolitical groups to take a strong position supporting specific candidates.

Regardless of the results of the surveys and mock elections, pundits and even the Robredo camp have pointed to Jejomar Binay's 2010 victory which

started at 1 per cent voter preference as proof that a last-minute surge is possible.



Photo grabbed from <https://www.facebook.com/up-boutcrop/posts/10159847913219183>

## Fake News / Mis- and Disinformation

*Groups tag Pulse Asia surveys as fake news, urge socmed owners to kill BBM troll army. Journalists wary of Marcos Jr's attitude towards media*

The Filipino-American group called US Filipinos for Good Governance, who had uncovered a network of "trolls" attacking Robredo, have called on Meta's founder Mark Zuckerberg to immediately take down the hundreds of Facebook accounts, pages and groups that consistently red-tag and share fake news about Robredo. They launched TrollExposer.com in response to former Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s challenge to show him "where the trolls are." Using publicly available data and artificial intelligence, the group was able to trace 136 unique pieces of content, many of which are from the government's own anti-insurgency task force and its spokesperson Lorraine Badoy, that had been shared a cumulative 1,976 times across a network of 737 accounts, 77 pages, and many nonpolitical sites.

The Foreign Correspondents Associa-



tion of the Philippines (FOCAP) on May 3, World Press Freedom Day, [expressed concern](#) over the digital siege of journalism, warned about the amplified impact of misinformation and disinformation in the Philippines, and also called on companies behind social media platforms to investigate the attacks including (i) the tagging of Washington Post Manila Correspondent Regine Cabato as a “whorealist” for a well-vetted story she wrote on historical revisionism; (ii) the online abuse and threats to slash the neck of BBC correspondent Howard Johnson’s after he asked on film how Marcos Jr. can be a good president if he does not allow “serious interviews”; and (iii) the obscene and expletives-laden attack by Senatorialable Larry Gadon, an ally of Marcos Jr., on South China Morning Post journalist Raissa Robles after she tweeted about the presidential bet’s past tax conviction.

FOCAP also said Marcos Jr. “has not submitted himself to a free-flowing, open and uncensored press conference during the entire campaign like most other candidates and has stayed away from independent but potentially critical debates and interviews, including those organized by the Commission on Elections.” His media relations team, moreover, does not regularly reply to inquiries, requests for comment, and permissions for use of materials, and that there are incidents when reporters have been roughhoused while trying to get close to him in his campaign trail - all of which “undermine a critical and free press in an Asian bulwark of democracy and have sparked fears of how independent media would be treated under another possible Marcos presidency.”

Teachers have reported to the International Observer Mission to Sorsogon the many ways historical revisionism and political agendas are sown into the education system under the Duterte administration. Philippine

history was removed from the high school curriculum in 2014, teachers are overburdened with non-teaching tasks, social media has become a major medium of information, and representatives from the Philippine National Police project Kabataan Kontra Droga at Terorismo (Youth against Drugs and Terrorism) are allowed to meet with students without the presence of their teachers and red tag the Alliance of Concerned Teachers and other progressive organizations.

For human rights group [Karapatan](#), “how Marcos Jr. banks on an active campaign of grand historical lies and historical revisionism, of fake news and distorted facts, of shutting down criticism and opposition, is only the tip of the iceberg of what a Marcos-Duterte presidency can do—even without a declaration of military rule—to perpetuate power.”

## Commissioners

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