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PHILIPPINE ELECTION 2022
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IOM Bulletin No. 2 | March 15, 2022



ichrp.net



ICHRPGlobal



Philippine Partylist System Original Intention Undermined by Questionable Groups

The Philippine Constitution provides for party list elections to give marginalized and under-represented sectors a voice in the House of Representatives. Republic Act No. 7941, otherwise known as the Party-List System Act, defines the party-list system as a mechanism of proportional representation in the election of representatives to the House of Representatives from national, regional and sectoral parties or organizations or coalitions thereof registered with the Commission on Elections (“COMELEC”). Thus, there are two (2) kinds of representatives which a person may vote for namely: a district representative (for his legislative district) and a party-list group (which has no geographical limitation). The party-list representatives shall constitute twenty per centum of the total number of representatives including those under the party list (1987 Constitution, Art. VI Sec. 5(2)). The party-list garnering at least two percent (2%) of the total votes cast for the party-list system shall be entitled to one (1) seat each.

Originally with noble intent to give voice to the marginalized and under-represented, the Supreme Court in 2013, however, made a ruling that allowed just any political parties and groups to run in the party list elections.

Not only that, this year’s Commission on Elections’ (COMELEC) final list of approved party-list candidates even includes party-list groups earlier denied registration due to temporary restraining order (TRO) from the Supreme Court. These are Alliance for Resilience, Sustainability, and Empowerment; Igorot Warriors International, Inc.; Ang Tinig ng Seniors; Lingkod Bayanihan Party; Mindanao Indigenous Conference for Peace and Development; Apat-Dapat; Uma Ilonggo, Abante Sambayanan, and Ayuda Sa May Kapansanan.

As in the past election cycles, poll watchdog Kontra Daya has analyzed the profiles of the 177 accredited party-list groups - their declared advocacies, track record in public service and background of their party-list nominees.



Their findings: 120 or 70% (around 20% higher than the last partylist election in 2019) are questionable, with (i) at least 44 controlled by political clans; (ii) at least 26 having incumbent local officials running as party-list nominees; (iii) at least 32 have connections with the government or military; (iv) at least 21 have connections with big business; (v) at least 19 have pending court cases or criminal charges; and (vi) at least 34 have unknown or unclear advocacies and representations. Some of them are even “all of the above”!

The Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism (PCIJ) identifies some of the partylists represented by members of regional political clans as follows:

- Ako Ilocano Ako’s first nominee Richelle Singson is the daughter of Ilocos Sur politician Luis “Chavit” Singson. The second and third nominees are former Candon City Mayor Allen Singson, son of Chavit Singson’s brother Eric Singson Sr., and Chavit’s son Christian Singson, respectively.
- ANAC-IP presenting itself as a partylist advocating indigenous peoples’ issues has as its second nominee former Isabela Rep. Napoleon Dy.
- AnaKalusugan (Child Health) has the wife of Batangas Gov. Hermilando Mandanas, Regina as its second nominee.
- Tingog Sinarangan’s first nominee is Yedda Romualdez, wife of Leyte Rep. Martin Romualdez.
- Ang Asosasyon Sang Mangunguma Nga Bisaya-Owa Manguguma Inc. (Aambis-OWA)’s incumbent representative Sharon Garin is winding up her third and final term. In her place, the group’s first nominee is Lex Colada, a brother-in-law of Sharon who is married to Guimbal Mayor Jennifer Garin-Colada. Aambis-OWA registered as representative of Visayan farmers.
- Kusug Tausug’s first nominee is the daughter of Sulu Gov. Abdusakur Tan.



- Duterte Youth's second nominee is Ralph Raymon T. Preza (also known as RR Preza), who is a relative of father and son Tiaong Mayor Ramon Abad Preza and Councilor Amboy Preza. In the 2019 election cycle, the party-list group became controversial for misrepresenting the youth; misusing and abusing government resources; and engaging in red-tagging.

The PCIJ also notes partylists represented by former district representatives and/or government officials who have either reached their term limit or have lost their reelection bids. Some partylists are represented by former representatives of other partylists (in other words, politicians who switched from one 'advocacy' to another).

- Pagtibayin at Palaguin ang Pangkabuhayang Pilipino (4Ps) has as its first nominee former Eastern Samar representative Marcelino Libanan. A strong supporter of the Marcos-Duterte "UniTeam" ticket, Libanan was Immigration Commissioner under President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.
- Malasakit at Bayanihan Foundation Inc. (Malasakit@Bayanihan) is represented by its first nominee Anthony Rolando Golez Jr., a former Bacolod City representative. He was the deputy presidential spokesperson for President Arroyo from 2007 to 2009. Malasakit at Bayanihan is closely tied to Sen. Christopher Lawrence "Bong" Go. Its third nominee, Sittie Fharmina Balt, is the chairperson of Friends of Bong Go (FOBG), while fifth nominee Kerwin Pagaran was the fourth nominee of Duterte Youth party-list group in 2019.
- Ang Senior Citizen's first nominee is former Oriental Mindoro representative Rolileo Ignacio, who served in Congress in the 80s.
- Acts-OFW (seeking to represent overseas Filipino workers) second nominee Orestes Salon is former representative of AGRI party-list.
- Regional partylist group Bicol Saro's first nominee is former IPacman representative Nicolas Enciso VII.

PCIJ cites a number of partylists led by civilian and military officials who worked under the Duterte administration:



- Mothers for Change (MOCHA) partylist is named after and has as its first nominee former Presidential Communications Operations Office assistant secretary and ardent Duterte supporter and redtagger (but not a mother) Esther Margaux “Mocha” Uson. Uson’s mother, Estrellita Uson, is the fourth nominee.
- Newly-accredited partylist group Turismo Isulong Mo for advancing tourism is led by former tourism secretary Wanda Corazon Tulfo-Teo. The nominees include her colleagues from the Department of Tourism (DoT): second nominee Marco Bautista was Tourism undersecretary for farm, faith, ecotourism, and convergence, while fifth nominee Ma. Ana Nuguid was DoT Caraga regional director. Bautista served as municipal mayor of San Juan, Abra, from 2007 to 2016. Teo was forced to resign from the DoT in 2018 after it was revealed that she had favored her brothers’ company in an advertising contract worth P60 million.
- Kilusang Maypagasa’s first nominee is retired colonel Cezar Mancao II, who was appointed by President Duterte in 2020 as head of the Department of Information and Communication Technology’s cybercrime center.
- Act As One Philippines Partylist, seeking to represent frontline health workers, has as its first nominee lawyer Reynold Munsayac. In November 2021, he filed the certificate of candidacy of his Law School classmate Davao City Mayor Sara Duterte-Carpio before the Comelec to substitute for erstwhile Lakas CMD vice-presidential candidate Lyle Uy. Munsayac is former acting chair of Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG), the government agency tasked to go after the Marcoses’ “ill-gotten wealth.” Duterte-Carpio is running mate of presidential aspirant Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr.

A number of party-list groups are fielding former high-ranking officials from the security sector, while some groups advocate for the military’s counterinsurgency program, among them:

- Philippine National Police Retirees Association Inc. (PRAI) is represented by retired police general Reynaldo Velasco, first commander of the Special Action Force.



- Avid Builders of Active Nation's Citizenry Towards Empowered Philippines (Abante Pilipinas) is represented by first nominee retired police general Mao Aplasca, a former commander of Philippine National Police Region 4A and Aviation Security Group.
- Ako Bisdak-Bisayang Dako Inc. (Ako Bisdak), has retired rear admiral Ernesto Enriquez as its first nominee and former National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) director and incumbent San Miguel, Bohol Mayor Virgilio Mendez as its second nominee.
- Nominees of the Public Safety Alliance for Transformation and Rule of Law, Inc. (Patrol) party-list group, meanwhile, are mostly officials and members of the Philippine National Police Academy Alumni Association.
- Rebolusyonaryong Alyansang Makabansa (RAM), originally a group of disgruntled junior military officials that participated in the 1986 EDSA uprising, first ran in 2016, and has Danilo Lim, a retired general, as its first nominee.
- Magdalo Party-list is in the race with former navy intelligence officer Manuel Cabochan as its first nominee and 2003 Oakwood mutineers Ian Luis Badecao and Audie Tocloy as its third and fourth nominees, respectively.

At least two party-list groups have direct connections with the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC):

- Abante Sambayanan's first nominee Jeffrey Celiz is NTF-ELCAC's star witness who linked Makabayan bloc legislators to the communist insurgency. Its second nominee Winefredo Dolbizo Jr. is also an NTF-ELCAC witness against the Makabayan bloc during the Senate hearings on red-tagging. Third nominee Arthur Tariman is convenor of the military-sponsored Victims of Injustice, Criminality and Terrorism in Mindanao;



- Ipeace Epanaw, seeking to represent indigenous peoples' interests, has as its first nominee Reuben Lingating, who is former chair of the National Commission on Indigenous People (NCIP) and head of the indigenous peace panel in 2017. Second nominee Marlon Bosantog, former director for legal affairs of the NCIP and spokesperson of NTF-ELCAC, was declared persona non grata by more than 100 elders and leaders in the Apayao province mainly for red-tagging indigenous people's organizations and leaders as communist fronts in the Cordillera. Fourth nominee Ramcy Astroveza is a former NCIP commissioner. Its fifth nominee Engwan S. Ala, Hawudon Datu and municipal chieftain of an indigenous people's tribe in Carrascal, Surigao del Sur, declared the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) as persona non grata in Surigao del Sur.

Kontra Daya clarifies that several of these party-list groups are flagged to be under suspicion or investigation:

- 2019 top partylist winner ACT-CIS first nominee Edvic G. Yap, together with incumbent ACT-CIS Rep. Eric Yap, was included in Sen. Panfilo Lacson's 2017 expose about the web of corruption at the Bureau of Customs. Its second nominee Jocelyn P. Tulfo is the wife of Raffy Tulfo, an incumbent ACT-CIS party-list representative. Fourth nominee Erwin T. Tulfo is a brother of former Tourism Secretary Wanda Teo who resigned as tourism secretary amid the questionable payment of P60 million for ad placements on the show of brothers Erwin and Ben.
- Wow Pilipinas' first nominee Genevive L. Reyes is vice mayor of Caluya, Antique, who was indicted for graft and violation of the Coconut Preservation Act in April 2018. Its second nominee Peter Paul P. Dy, Jr. is national president of the Philippine Institute of Civil Engineers, managing director of PLD Construction and Development, Inc., president of Mandy Hotmix, Inc., and CEO of Power Frame Development Corporation. He also sits on the board of directors of MAPS Construction, APSI Asphalt Batching Plant Supply, and Mandaue City Green Building Management.



- 4Ps first nominee Marcelino C. Libanan is a former member of the House of Representatives (representing Eastern Samar) and a former Immigration Commissioner during the Macapagal-Arroyo administration. He was accused of violating Republic Act No. 3019 (Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act) in connection with the purchase of 2,164 bags of fertilizer amounting to P3.25 million from Akame Marketing International in April 2004. The fifth nominee is Jonathan Clement M. Abalos II, son of Jonathan Abalos who is a brother of former Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) Chair Benhur Abalos.
- BHW's first nominee is Angelica Natasha A. Co, incumbent party-list representative and daughter of former Ako Bicol Rep. Christopher Co. The second nominee is Martin Aber E. Sicat, a shareholder of Aremar Construction Corp. who was under investigation for allegedly receiving P81.1 million in kickbacks as part of bid-rigging schemes.

COMELEC, which has been urged to give an explanation, has declined to comment on this.

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The Businesses Behind the Automated Elections System

Pursuant to Republic Act 9369, the May 2022 National and Local Elections will again be fully automated, as it was with the May 2010 NLE, 2013 NLE, May 2016 NLE and with the May 2019 NLE, from:

- the counting of votes in the precincts;
- the consolidation of the precinct results;
- the transmission of precinct results to the corresponding city/municipality canvassing board;
- the canvassing of precinct results in the district, city, municipal levels;
- the proclamation of winning candidates in the district, city, municipal levels;
- the transmission of the district, city, municipal canvassing results to the provincial canvassing board, and of the highly urbanized city results to the national canvassing board;
- the canvassing of city/municipal results in the provincial level;
- the proclamation of winning candidates in the provincial level;
- the transmission of the highly urbanized city and provincial results to the national canvassing board; and
- the canvassing of provincial and highly urbanized city results, including overseas results, in the national level.

Despite credibility issues after alleged poll irregularities in past Philippine elections (such as a delayed transmission of results to the transparency server), Smartmatic USA Corp once again, jointly with SMMT-TIM 2016, Inc. has been awarded the contract for the Procurement of Automated Election System (AES) Software for the Election Management System (EMS), Vote Counting Machines (VCMs) and Consolidation and Canvassing System (CCS) to be used in the 2022 NLE.



The EMS compiles the number and profile of registered voters, their geographic locations, polling precinct information, among others, that are necessary for the design of official ballots; while the CCS conducts the automated tallying and monitoring of data received from polling precincts and lower levels of the board of canvassers.

Analysing data from the Comelec's procurement monitoring report for the second half of 2021, as well as contracts posted on the Comelec's website, Rappler found out that Smartmatic USA Corp. since 2010 has bagged the most contracts, totaling over P3 billion:

- Procurement of secure electronic transmission services – P1.057 billion
- Lease of 10,000 additional vote-counting machines (VCMs) – P863.971 million
- Refurbishment of 97,345 VCMs – P637.443 million
- Procurement of automated elections system (AES) software – P402.725 million
- Lease of 97,345 external batteries for the VCMs – P162.088 million

Multinational corporation Smartmatic, according to its website, was established in Florida in 2000; has deployed secure election technologies in more than 30 countries; is an approved US Department of Defense vendor; and a founding member of the Department of Homeland Security Council for the Election Infrastructure Subsector.

In the Philippines, a Filipino lawyer questioned Smartmatic's role in the elections based on ownership, saying that it is not at least 60% Filipino-owned as the law requires.

Ranking second is domestic forwarding company F2 Logistics, the center of controversy over its alleged ties to top Duterte campaign financiers. Comelec signed contracts worth over P500 million covering the following:



- Deployment of election equipment and paraphernalia to North Luzon – P106 million
- Deployment of election equipment and paraphernalia to Metro Manila and South Luzon – P123 million
- Deployment of election equipment and paraphernalia to the Vi sayas – P120.999 million
- Deployment of election equipment and paraphernalia to Mindanao – P185.999 million

Despite this, the Comelec had insisted that Uy's ties to Duterte were not a ground for cancellation of the contract to F2 Logistics, which submitted the lowest calculated bid, besting three other firms.

Smartmatic and F2 Logistics won a combined amount of P3.655 billion, accounting for 61% of the P5.973 billion total price of the 25 individual deals listed under the automated election system category in Comelec's procurement monitoring report at the end of 2021.

The Valenzuela City-based Advance Computer Forms (contract amount P172.811 million) is the new supplier of ballot papers and marking pens, after the poll body grappled with bleeding marking pens in 2019.

The Caloocan City-based printing company Forms International Enterprises Corporation (P149.209 million) was formally tasked by the Comelec to provide packaging materials for the official ballots.

Cofta Mouldings Corporation (P143.906 million) will take charge in providing the Comelec with 48,782 ballot boxes for the 2022 elections.

(Refer to [Rappler article](#) for the list of other companies that secured 2022 automated election contracts as of the second half of 2021)



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Makabayan Cagayan Valley Coordinator, Agnes Mesina Arrested on Out-of-Date Warrant

On February 28, 2022, at around 7:30 PM Agnes Mesina, Makabayan Cagayan Valley Coordinator, was illegally [arrested in Aparri, Cagayan](#), while having dinner, by 32 elements of the Philippine National Police, for murder charges issued by the Tagum Regional Trial Court Branch 30 in Davao del Norte that have already been [dismissed on July 21, 2021](#).

Mesina was with a group led by the United Church of Christ in the Philippines for a Community Outreach Mercy Mission to Brgy. Sta Clara, Gonzaga, Cagayan, in the Cagayan Valley region when they were flagged down and blocked in a checkpoint by elements of the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC). People blocking them held tarpaulins bearing her name and pictures together with the 4th nominee of Anakpawis Partylist, Isabelo Adviento. The two were accused as terrorists, a classic red-tagging. [Mesina was released at around 11:30 PM](#) after her lawyer presented a copy of the court order dismissing the murder charges.

“They arrested me, in the middle of the campaign, in front of so many people for a trumped-up charge that was already dismissed by the courts; they made me look like a criminal, which I am not, that is not right,” she said.

Mesina was arrested in 2012 also on false charges while gearing towards the election campaign period at the time. She recalled that they had just concluded a teacher consultation, the first of its kind in Tuguegarao, introducing ACT Teachers Partylist. She said that she was talking to Rep. Antonio Tinio at a coffee shop when she was taken by the police.

She was arrested then for a frustrated murder charge which was also later dismissed.



According to some residents, some of those who led the blockade were barangay officials from other barangays. The perpetrators harassed the Mercy Mission members, and they were not allowed to enter the Brgy. Sta Clara area, thus denying humanitarian aid to the indigenous community. The officials took pictures of the team members, their vaccination cards and their vehicles. They were tailed by motorcycle riding men when they left the checkpoint.

The Community Outreach Mercy Mission was scheduled to bring humanitarian aid such as relief goods and psychosocial services to the indigenous people (Agta) in the area who were affected by the January 29, 2022, indiscriminate aerial bombing and strafing incident in Gonzaga. This illegal arrest of a Makabayan Bloc regional coordinator is harassment of government critics in the national election campaign period.



Five Massacred by Soldiers at New Bataan, Davao de Oro

At the end of the second week of the national election campaign, [five individuals including two volunteer teachers](#) of the Save Our Schools Network, were killed at Brgy. Andap, New Bataan, Davao de Oro, Mindanao, the Philippines by elements of the 101st Infantry Brigade of the 10th Infantry Division (ID), Philippine Army. These five victims were volunteer teachers Chad Booc and Gelejurain Ngujo II, community health worker Elgyn Balonga and two community volunteer drivers, Tirso Añar and Robert Aragon.

In the context of over five years of repression of the Lumad Schools set up by the indigenous peoples of Mindanao and their allies in churches and the education system, this massacre is aimed at further terrorizing the IPs in the election period.

Around 9:30 PM on February 23, 2022, the victims were travelling on their way back to Davao City after conducting field research at New Bataan, Davao de Oro. Elgyn Balonga was able to send a text message asking her family to fetch them. This was the last known contact with the group. On February 25 the [10th Infantry Division](#) posted a press release on their official Facebook page falsely claiming that the five were killed in an alleged encounter and accusing them as New People's Army fighters. However, [information from locals](#) said no encounter took place in the area. The families of the victims learned about the gruesome incident on February 25 because of the press release of the 10th ID.

[Chad Booc](#) was a cum laude graduate from University of the Philippines-Diliman with a degree in Computer Science. He was also an environmental advocate, a youth leader and a mentor to fellow youth who are calling for climate action. He became a volunteer teacher in the Alternative Learning Center for Agricultural and Livelihood Development (Alcadev) in Surigao del Sur in 2016. In 2020, he joined Lumad students and datus in Cebu where they sought sanctuary in one of the retreat houses of University of San Carlos-Talamban campus. On February 15, 2021, authorities raided the retreat house and arrested Booc and six others.



Police filed trumped up charges against them which were eventually [dismissed by the court](#). He was one of the petitioners against the Anti-Terrorism Law.

Gelejurain Ngujo II was a graduate of Liceo de Davao – Briz Campus in Tagum City with a degree in Secondary Education majoring in English. After graduation, he became a teacher in Community Technical College of Southeastern Mindanao (CTCSM). In 2018, he volunteered to become a teacher for the Bakwit School in Manila and then in Cebu in 2019 and 2020. He was also subjected to threats and intimidation for his work as a volunteer teacher for the Lumad school.

Balonga was a community health worker who served in the United Church of Christ in the Philippines-Haran, a Lumad sanctuary in Davao City, from 2013 to 2018. She facilitated medical students for their internship in UCCP Haran. She was also active in numerous medical missions in remote areas such as Talaingod and Kapalong, Davao del Norte.

Throughout their years of service, Chad, Jurain, and Elgyn had been subjected to threats, harassment, and intimidation, including death threats, red-tagging and terror-tagging, and surveillance, and were a focus of the National Task Force to end Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC).

Photos of their remains were paraded as trophies.

This bloody massacre of the New Bataan 5 Massacre is a violation of human rights and International Humanitarian Law, and demonstrates the intensified state repression in the Philippines even during the election campaign.



CNN Philippines faces DDoS attack

On the evening of 27 February, CNN Philippines hosted the Philippine presidential debate. In attendance was every Presidential candidate except for Senator BongBong Marcos.

At 7:30 p.m. in the midst of the debate, CNN Philippines released in their social media an announcement that their website was down from a DDoS (denial of service) attack. Two hours later, at 9:30 p.m., they released word that their website was back up and running.

This is just the latest in a series of cyberattacks against media outlets with the 2022 Philippine elections approaching. Media outlets including ABS-CBN, Rappler, Vera Files, and Philstar have reportedly repeatedly been targeted by cyberattacks since December 2021. Alternative media websites Bulatlat, Kodao Production and AlterMidya have also been attacked.

DDoS attacks are illegal in the Philippines under E-commerce law. The DDoS attack drew the attention of international bodies including the International Federation of Journalist (IFJ) who said: "Arbitrarily restricting access to news sources restricts vital reporting during a critical period for citizens of the Philippines. The IFJ strongly condemns these cyberattacks against independent news outlets and calls for a full investigation into the sources of these attacks."

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Sen.Ping Lacson “redtags” Sortie Hosted by Supporters of VP Robredo; 12 Activists Arrested Thereafter

Senator Ping Lacson, who is running for president of the Philippines, tweeted on March 6: “This is worrisome. A coalition government with the CPP/NPA/NDF will set back the gains of the government’s efforts to end the country’s decades-old insurgency problem.” While the tweet does not specifically name his competitor it contains an article about the Cavite sortie hosted by Vice President Leni Robredo on the evening of March 4, leaving no doubt whom he was targeting.

In defense of himself, that evening he went on to tweet “With all the bashing I’m getting for the ‘coalition with the CPP/NPA/NDF’ tweet I posted earlier, there must be basis for the age-old quote - ‘truth hurts’. I care for my country that continues to suffer from the longest running insurgency in the world. I just want it to end.”

Sen. Lacson was not the only politician to attack the Robredo event in Cavite. On DZRH, a local radio show, Cavite 7th District Rep. Jesus Crispin “Boying” Remulla claimed that those who attended the campaign rally were paid P500 each. Not stopping there, he went on to red tag those in attendance saying, “They have many students there, the activists from the Left. They were trained by the NDF. They brought banners but these were pink.”

While Rep. Remulla did not name VP Robredo by name, he referred to the event by her campaign color “Pink” and other political leanings.

Attendees took to twitter under the hashtag, #BoyingSinungaling to share the reality of the event. While Robredo herself called on both Sen. Lacson and Rep. Remulla to show proof behind their statements or stop making false accusations.

Shortly thereafter, on March 10, 12 Anakpawis Partylist Cavite members were violently attacked and arrested without warrant by operatives of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Authority (PDEA).



An Anakpawis Partylist member video footage showed police entered the home of Johmelda Lucernas, who was hurt in the arrest. They shot at the wife of Joel Salabanya, the vice chair of Anakpawis Partylist Cavite, and also punched Joel and took his cellphone). The activists arrested in Bacoor have since been released.

In a separate alert, regional rights alliance Defend Southern Tagalog reported that Anakpawis regional coordinator Jonathan Mercado was taken from Silang, Cavite and into the custody of personnel of Police Regional Office 4A. "He was assisting farmers in the area. Mercado is feared to be held incommunicado by Cavite police, as human rights teams have not located Mercado yet," Defend-ST said. Mainstream news outfit Philstar.com has sought comment from Police Maj. Mary Torres Crester, public information officer of Police Regional Office 4A, but she has not responded as of this post.

In an ABS-CBN news report, Anakpawis Partylist said that this is a clear result of the redtagging of the Leni-Kiko campaign sortie, and also of the longstanding redtagging of activists. Vice Presidential candidate Kiko Pangilinan called the incident a clear act of harassment. Despite criticisms, Presidential candidate Ping Lacson continues to justify his redtagging saying over radio program DZRH that he has at least three sources to prove it.

In another Philstar.com article, former Sen. Antonio "Sonny" Trillanes IV, a former Navy officer and among the leaders of the rightist Magdalo group during the Arroyo administration who is now part of the Robredo campaign team, clarified on Thursday that there are no communists in the Robredo campaign. He said Lacson's intel sources are wrong, and that Ka Eric is a fraud. "Trillanes was referring to Jeffrey "Ka Eric" Celiz, who claims to be a former rebel turned agent of the NTF-ELCAC, and now a nominee of Abante Sambayanan, a party-list claiming to represent former rebels.



Philstar.com also cited a separate statement where the Magdalo party-list called the allegations “merely black propaganda” that only “arose after the series of crowd-filled campaign rallies of VP Leni...Further, many former high-ranking officials of the military and police have given their endorsement to VP Leni. With their access to reliable intelligence and reputations on the line, I do not think they would be supporting someone with ties with the NPA.”

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Two Anakpawis Partylist Members Assassinated in Sorsogon

On January 15, 2022, at about 7:45 AM [Rosemarie Galias, 68, and Silvestre Fortades Jr, 70](#), were killed by four motorcycle riding gunmen in Brgy San Vicente, Barcelona, Sorsogon. Both were members of Anakpawis, the progressive partylist which represents the interests of peasants and workers in Congress, as part of the Makabayan Bloc.

This murder of the elderly political activist couple, is the beginning of [state murders in the presidential election campaign](#) period.

[They were in their tricycle](#), which was parked along the road, when two pairs of motorcycle-riding men fired at Fortades. When Galias saw that Fortades was shot, she took their four-year-old granddaughter who was with Fortades, to run for safety. The men, however, also shot Galias.

The child survived and ran away from the scene but was left severely traumatized after witnessing the whole incident.

According to Fortades' daughter, her father called her on Friday, January 14, the night before the incident. He told her that two men, alleged State agents and surrenderees who he named as alias Kambal Daku and Kintoy, together with two other men, went to their house that night. These men told Fortades to turn in one of their children, who was accused of being a member of the New People's Army, to surrender or else something bad will happen to the couple.

Fortades was killed on the spot while Galias was brought to the hospital but eventually died. The elderly couple sold garlic, onion, and other agricultural produce for a living, which they delivered to small stores on weekends. On weekdays, Fortades worked as a mechanic and repaired motorcycles.



The students, peasants, workers and human rights organizations in Sorsogon and the whole Bicol Region have suffered terrible repression during the Duterte period. Up to August 2021, there were 60 political killings in Bicol out of a total of 421 nationwide. There are also 43 political prisoners from the region, 10 of whom are women, and 29 of these were arrested during the Duterte presidency.

The Sorsogon killings come on the heels of the illegal arrest and detention of five residents in an Anakpawis partlylist fishing community in [Patungan Cove in Cavite](#) after a violent demolition on January 13, 2022.