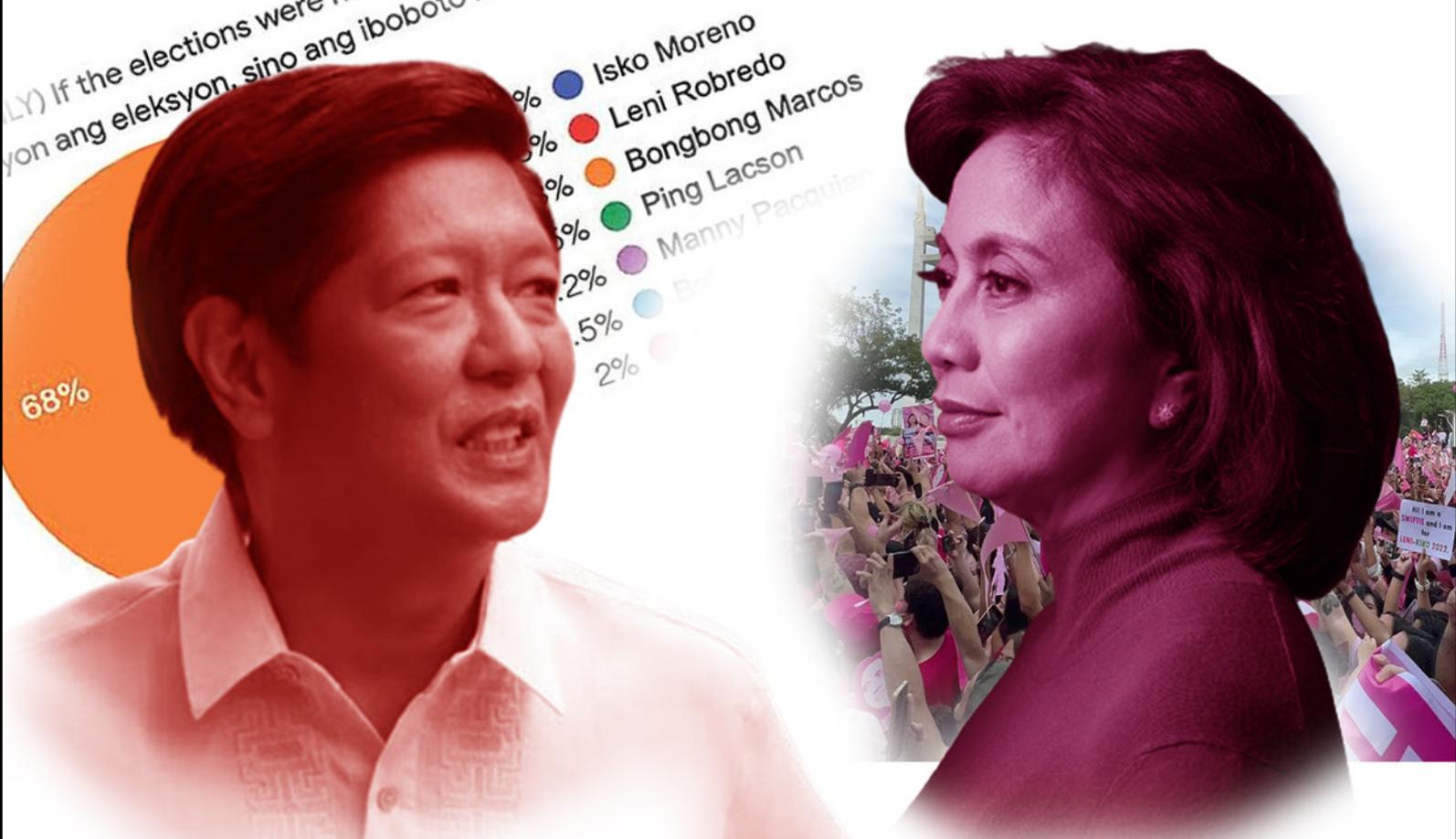




(LY) If the elections were held today, who  
yon ang eleksyon, sino ang iboboto mong Pk.



# MARCOS JR.'S POLLS VS. ROBREDO'S CROWDS

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but Robredo wins  
more allies, draws  
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## Marcos Jr leads poll but Robredo wins more allies, draws never-before seen crowds

While latest survey results still place Marcos Jr. as top pick, it is rarely mentioned that these surveys also indicate percentage gains for Robredo of at least 9%. This is none other than the Leni momentum that started toward the end of March and has since then been unabated.

The huge rallies across regions in the Philippines are unprecedented and predicted to have a multiplier effect in every province and city swept by the “pink tide.” In the Pampanga rally, Robredo candidly pointed out to the 220 thousand-strong Kakampink crowd how she lost in Pampanga in 2016. To which the crowd replied with a chant “babawi kami!” (we will make it up to you!). With all the huge Leni-Kiko rallies and the most recent Pasay rally on Robredo’s birthday (April 23), which has a crowd estimate of at least 502 thousand, shows that the Leni-Kiko ticket is indeed the leading Opposition.

Meanwhile, the Marcos-Duterte rallies and overall machinery have failed to match the energy, creativity and volunteerism that animate the Leni-Kiko rallies, and the new sectoral alliances formed for the Leni-Kiko team among artists, doctors, teachers, academics, lawyers, youth, women, workers, and so on. These huge mobilizations should give us a glimpse to realities underlying it.

First, it shows how the Duterte administration’s red tagging of Robredo and her progressive supporters is not working.

Second, and what precisely binds these huge crowds together, is none other than a people’s deep desire for change amidst the downward-spiral of the economy, health system and other key public institutions. Robredo’s tagline “gobyernong tapat, angat-buhay lahat”

(honest government, a better life for all) resonates with people who have felt and critically understood the deleterious impacts of a corrupt and tyrannical government.

Third, progressive forces have been quick in acting upon the people’s clamor for change. Groups like Kabataan and Anakpawis partylists have started their vote conversion campaign in urban poor areas where they conduct house-to-house conversations that double as voters’ education and the important points in the Robredo platform that aligns with the concrete proposals of peasant, workers, urban and rural poor and other sectors, as well as with MAKABAYAN Coalition’s platform. Residents with Marcos-Duterte posters would signal their conversion to the Opposition by hanging a pink ribbon. For the first time in its entire history as a progressive and militant alliance of workers unions, Kilusang Mayo Uno (May One Movement) has made a public presidential endorsement for VP Leni Robredo.

Private individuals have been sustaining a financial campaign drive for organized groups who undertake house-to-house campaigning. This type of support system has provided financial and moral boost to grassroots efforts not only in the center or in vote-rich areas but especially in remote places where people and organizations have reported a strong politician-support for the Marcos-Duterte ticket. Abroad, Filipinos organize discussion groups, hold pink rallies and pledge their support to organizations here in the Philippines

Radical groups such as the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) have declared support for Leni Robredo. A strong statement condemning the red tagging of Leni Robredo was recently released by National Democratic Front of the Philippines Chief Consultant Jose Maria

Sison, denying all allegations of his role as adviser in the Leni campaign.

A strong show of unity from various sectors and political groups is indeed present in this election season. The broad united front for the Opposition and against Marcos-Duterte can and should only blossom forth beyond this moment of promise. The only way to ensure the Opposition's winning trajectory is through people's vigilance and cooperation as we approach election day and the crucial days thereafter.



Photo grabbed from <https://ph.news.yahoo.com/elections-2022-economists-prefer-robredo-to-marcos-for-presidency-says-think-tank-073624722.html>

## Human Rights Violations Roundup

*Pres. Duterte hopes successor luck in peace nego; HRVs vs activists continue meanwhile*

### Presidential Leody De Guzman and Indigenous leaders shot

On 19 April 2022 at Sitio Kiantig, Barangay San Jose, Quezon, Bukidnon [five farmers were shot and injured during](#) an activity in connection to their battle on the seizure of their ancestral lands by the Kiantig Development Corporation, which has ties to re-electionist Mayor Pablo M. Lorenzo III.

Presidential Leody De Guzman and his senatorial bets had gone there to amplify their landgrabbing case. De Guzman was standing right beside Nanie Abela – a farmer organizer and advocate for indigenous people – who was shot. [Four others were injured](#), including Datu Didilusan Arroyo, who is a leader of the tribe. At least one person was [brought to the Quezon Medical Infirmary](#) for treatment. The shots were

fired without any [warning by a group of about fifty men](#) directly at the protesters for about 10 minutes. On 21 April, the [police confiscated eight firearms](#) from [Kiantig Development Corporation](#) security personnel, who were unlicensed, out of uniform, and with no exemption from the gun ban for the 2022 election. Although these security personnel are the main suspects in this case, [the police have neither arrested nor filed a criminal case against them](#), saying that the confiscation of firearms was only “administrative in nature”. Eyewitness accounts note that the [police and military were](#) 100 meters away and witnessed the entire incident, but [did not respond](#).

COMELEC Commissioner George Erwin M. Garcia [condemned the shooting](#) and noted that “if this is an election-related incident” the Comelec will use all its powers to “hold accountable the culprits and face the full force of the law.”



## **Duterte hopes next admin succeeds in peace talks but ensures unrelenting fight; NDFP consultants arrested, one murdered**

President Rodrigo Duterte recently expressed hopes that his campaign against communist insurgency would be continued by his successor and [ensured](#) that the fight against communist rebels would be relentless until he steps down from office on June 30. At the same time, he has [expressed hope](#) that the next administration would succeed in talking peace with communist rebels, acknowledging that they are right about the feudal setup in the Philippines and recalling being friends with them when he was still a mayor. To this, senatorial aspirant Loren [Legarda expressed her support](#), which she reiterated in a [statement](#) on her website on April 21 urging the government to resume the peace talks and pursue socio-economic reforms. The head of President Duterte's intelligence agency, Alex Paul Monteagudo, has however [spoken against presidential candidates](#) Leni Robredo, Ping Lacson, Isko Moreno and Manny Pacquiao for their support for resuming the peace talks if they were to be elected.

Indeed, attacks against NDFP consultants are unrelenting. According to a [statement](#) issued by the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP)-Southern Mindanao on 2 April 2022 peace consultant Ezequiel "Ka Rey" Cortes Daguman, age 50, was abducted and extrajudicially killed by the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) – not killed in an encounter between the New People's Army (NPA) and the AFP as [claimed by the military](#). Daguman was allegedly unarmed and had [been abducted](#) along with his driver while en route to visit peasant communities in Davao del Norte on 7 March, 2022. On March 8, another consultant, Edwin Al-

cid, [was reportedly abducted](#) by military personnel in Catubig, Northern Samar, along with two other farmers. On 11 April 2022, retired NDFP peace consultants Ernesto Lorenzo and Rosita Serrano [were arrested](#) with three others while waiting for their COVID-19 vaccinations in Parañaque City.

President Duterte unilaterally [terminated peace talks](#) with the NDFP and [declared](#) the CPP and NPA as terrorist organizations, and according to Desaparecidos rights group, is [violating mutually signed agreements](#) like the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL) and the Joint Agreement on Safety Immunity Guarantees (JASIG) which states that peace consultants and peace panel members should be immune from arrests, detention, and harassment.

## **Reporter harassed as safety office reopens for journalists**

Rappler reporter Lian Buan was [harassed by the Marcos camp](#) on 13 April 2022 when she approached Marcos Jr. for an interview after his rally and campaign sortie in Quezon City. One of Marcos' media relations officers shoved her wrist and kept putting down her smartphone – which she was using to take video – while security personnel [pushed her onto the scaffolding](#) causing her to cry out "Ouch! It hurts!" in Filipino. Hours before this, Buan was [red-tagged by a Twitter account](#), which accused her of being a "high ranking official of the CPP-NPA-NDF". On that same day, the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines [relaunched their Safety Office](#) to better monitor, document and respond to violations of the freedom of the press, as three journalists have already been killed since October 2021, and given that journalists have been barred from covering the elections.



## Grassroots and church activists attacked

• **Arrest and detention of church worker Aldeem Yañez.** Following intense red tagging, [Aldeem Yañez](#) of the Iglesia Filipina Independiente (IFI) was arrested in an early morning raid at his home in Cagayan de Oro on Palm Sunday, April 10, 2022. The arresting officers claimed to have found a pistol, a grenade, rifle grenades and “subversive documents”, the standard tactic used against activists and critics of the Duterte government. Yañez is a good-standing IFI member who served as a volunteer to the IFI Visayas-Mindanao Regional Office for Development (VIMROD) and the Philippine Ecumenical Peace Platform, a network that seeks the resumption of the peace talks between the government and the National Democratic Front.

• **Bayan Muna elderly members arrested in Pampanga.** Members of Bayan Muna and civilian organizers, Maria Teresa Buscayno, Erlinda David and Evelyn Munoz [were arrested](#) in a raid in Mabalacat in Pampanga on 13 April 2022. The police and military accuse these elderly women of being high ranking officers of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP).

• **Disappearance and arrest of Negros urban poor organizer and farmer.** [Karapatan sounded alarm](#) over the disappearance of an urban poor community organizer and arrest of a farmer. On 1 April, state elements ransacked the house of Nemfa Delima and illegally arrested her. A caliber .38, ammunition and a rifle grenade were planted in her residence. Meanwhile, Iver Larit, the education officer of Kadamay-Negros, remains missing after he left their residence in Bacolod City, Negros Occidental, around 9 a.m. on Tuesday, 5 April, 2022, and did not arrive at an appointment with an urban poor community which he was helping to organize against threats of demolition.

## From the Ground IOM Observers Report (Southern Luzon)

### State repression, Red-tagging of Teachers

A Regional President of the Alliance of Concerned Teachers (ACT) reported that anonymous plain clothes persons passed to him, on multiple occasions, envelopes with pictures of his family, tracking his whereabouts, meetings with his union, and a copy of Executive Order 70 which formed the NTF-ELCAC (National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict). These anonymous persons are empowered by the impunity of the NTF-ELCAC and the militarization of regional areas through the Memorandum Order 32.

Red-tagging of teachers has intensified across the country, some teacher-leaders either resigned from ACT, or have continued their support only quietly and privately. Similarly, politicians who were once vocal about their support for ACT are now only supporting in private out of fear of being red-tagged and losing popular support. For example, local politicians campaign door-to-door in support of the Makabayan Bloc, which includes ACT, but won't support publicly in speeches or local platforms for fear of being red-tagged.

### The Experience of Organized Peasants

#### Fisher-folk

The fisher-folk are very concerned in general with what the government can do to help them against the monopoly of the fish market exercised by an elected mayor. They are becoming increasingly disenfranchised with the constant cycle of pleading with local officials to hear their problems, and then being red tagged as members of the CPP-NPA for the simple act of opposing this monopoly control. As well, their places



of abode are subject to demolition issues.

### **Coconut Farmers**

When the pandemic started, the local Bayan Muna Spokesperson, a coconut farmer, found that her family and the other peasants could no longer afford the cost of living. To respond to this, she and other members of the People's Organization organized rallies in support of raising the price of coconuts from 5 pesos to 14 pesos so that they could maintain their livelihood. She personally went on the local radio and did a broadcast about their issues and demands of the local government.

A week after speaking on the radio, she was contacted by the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) allegedly to verify information but she was also asked to explain why she attends rallies.

Her husband was harassed when Leni Robredo campaigned in their place in February 2022. Three (3) AFP members and 2 Intelligence agents named Edmond and Kardine harassed her husband for the day to ensure that he would not speak to Robredo. They held her husband and her son at gunpoint and further traumatized her son. The two Intel people in this case were alleged surrenderees who were paid to give information on all of their colleagues to the AFP.

The Bayan Muna spokesperson now fears leaving the community that she is staying in. She recently learned that the AFP has taken out a "shoot-to-kill" order on her because of her alleged involvement with the NPA. NTF-ELCAC and the AFP target the spokespersons and leaders of progressive partylists in the areas, offering P5,000 to those who wants to "surrender". Once someone receives this money, they get marked as a member of the NPA. But if they don't take it, the AFP makes threats of torture or killing.

### **On Traditional Politicians**

Relatively new politicians perceive that traditional politicians stand in the way of progress. If one is on the opposite side, you are nothing even if you are elected. If you don't agree with the mayor, you are powerless.

Local politicians perceive that a big national election issue is about Bongbong Marcos not paying taxes.

### **On Vote-Buying**

Vote-buying allegedly happens during the "last hour" of the election. On the evening of May 8th, people will be waiting for bribes.

The amount of money given reportedly increased from P200 for mayor some years ago, and in the last election, P2000 was allegedly given out by one party, and another reportedly gave out P4000. Businesses take advantage of this, putting on sales after election day. If there is no complaint, there will be no investigation.

Vote-buying is mainly about maintaining a voter base. They already have a list of supporters, so they go through and buy their votes. They call it "token" voting.

### **On the Youth Vote**

There are progressive youth, but there are many who are influenced by the traditional system. Even the minors experience vote-buying in the barangay election, so they feel similar to the adults.

### **About the Comelec**

There is no signal and internet connection. Only some of the teachers are enlisted to serve in the election. It used to be every teacher, but now it's the 5th and 6th grade teachers.

In the past, they had difficulty with the transmission of journal actions for the electronic election machines because there was no signal. They don't know where



the voting machines are being located during the election.

### On the Peace Negotiations

Electorates want candidates pushing for the continuity of the peace negotiations with the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP). They want their issues to be tackled in the Social and Economic agenda.

### Campaign Posters

On April 22, Gabriela Women's Partylist posters were taken down. As well, an identified person broke into the house of a Gabriela Partylist member, none of her belongings were missing, except the campaign posters.



Photo grabbed from <https://cdn4.vectorstock.com/i/1000x1000/55/88/3d-isometric-map-luzon-is-an-island-vector-37605588.jpg>

## Campaign Trail

*Prexy battle down to Marcos vs Robredo;  
Other prexies' Joint Easter presser did more harm than good*

**Ferdinand Marcos Jr.** - The Commission on Elections (COMELEC) First Division [rejected the application for disqualification](#) of the Marcos Jr presidential candidacy over unpaid taxes on April 20, 2022, saying "Regardless of the fact that the non-filing of income tax return was done repeatedly by the respondent, there is still no tax evasion to speak of as no tax was actually intentionally evaded ... The government was not defrauded." This ruling is expected to be appealed to the full COMELEC – the Chairperson and six Commissioners – who were all appointed by President Duterte. A ruling from the full COMELEC can be appealed to the Supreme Court.

On April 20, [Marcos Jr. was campaigning in Mindoro](#) while Duterte-Carpio met with several sectors in Batangas City and Malvar town in Batangas. The two reunited in Lipa City for a "grand rally", [attended by hundreds of supporters](#).

This time Marcos Jr. promised to cut electricity prices, help small businesses and support the agricultural sector for food security reasons – without any substantive program. Again, Marcos Jr. gave no media interviews. Laguna has over 2.04 million voters and Batangas has over 1.82 million voters.

Marcos Jr. and his running mate Sara Duterte-Carpio held their first Cebu campaign rally [in Filinvest Grounds in South Road Properties](#), on the night of April 18, where Governor Gwendolyn F. Garcia promised them a landslide victory. The important One Cebu provincial party endorsed BBM-Sara. There are 3.2 million registered voters in Cebu. At the rally, Marcos Jr. repeated his message of "unity", which has been criticized for lack of substance. "We are not adversaries here. We love each other as Filipinos," he said in Filipino, as he promised jobs and food on the table of every Filipino family. Meanwhile, Marcos



Jr. got his fourth governor endorsement in the Bangsamoro region. [Four of the five Bangsamoro Autonomous Region for Muslim Mindanao \(BARMM\) governors](#) have come out in his support despite the atrocities committed during the regime of Marcos' father, the ousted dictator Ferdinand Sr., including the infamous Jabidah Massacre that sparked the Moro independence movement that also eventually led to the creation of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

The Bangsamoro region has just 2.58 million registered voters, but it proved critical in the 2016 vice-presidential race as Marcos chose to contest poll results there. Marcos lost his electoral protest, with the Presidential Electoral Tribunal voting unanimously against his bid.

The Marcos-Duterte tandem also held a [grand rally in Moreno country](#) simultaneously with the Robredo-Pangilinan rally in Pasay on 23 April. According to the Manila Police District, [around 14,000](#) people attended the event as of early Saturday evening.



Photo grabbed from <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1586951/bongbong-marcos-sara-duterte-rally-in-manila-draws-12000-people-so-far>

**Leni Robredo** - In Cebu, Leni-Kiko supporters decried the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board in Central Visayas region's denial of special permits to volunteer public utility (PUV) vehicles for their April 21 rally, noting that it allowed PUVs to be used for the grand Uniteam rally a few days earlier. This added fuel to Cebu Youth for Leni's social media protests over being roadblocked during their April 9 event while the UniTeam was allowed to use the same route days later. Still, local organizers estimate 250,000 supporters, which exceeds the [220,000 strong April 9 Leni-Kiko rally in Pampanga](#), hometown of Duterte ally former president Gloria Arroyo. This despite Cebu governor and One Cebu Party's endorsement of the Marcos-Duterte tandem.

In Bataan, where Robredo lost to Marcos in the 2016 vice presidential race and where local executives have already endorsed Marcos-Duterte, 65,000 ordinary Bataeños - lawyers, priests, indigenous peoples - showed up. These ordinary people's endorsements are now being weaved into the fabric of their people-led campaign, in a bid to show that "no amount of money or machinery can trump the love that people show to their country"; and make the usual highlights - local allied officials - irrelevant because the people themselves are choosing to fight for their country."

Leni-Kiko have also been earlier endorsed in Zambales by indigenous peoples from the Central Luzon region. Prior to this, the 1Sambubungan coalition of 18 tribes also signed a covenant supporting the Robredo-Pangilinan ticket in hopes that they would uphold the indigenous agenda. Indigenous peoples of Quezon, who are against the China-funded Kaliwa Dam, also attended their April 18 rally, where Robredo promised that she is on their side and that [no project will be implemented against their consent](#).



On her 57th birthday, 23 April, Robredo enjoyed a [502,000-strong Pasay rally](#) and [three historic endorsements](#):

1. Around 1,000 Catholic bishops and priests, who have previously avoided openly endorsing candidates;
2. Major labor group Kilusang Mayo Uno, which had not previously endorsed politicians since its founding in 1980; and
3. The Moro Islamic Liberation Front and its political party, the United Bangsamoro Justice Party, which is crucial to the BARMM.

The MILF and UBJP, which endorsed for the first time its presidential bet, Robredo, gives Robredo a bigger chance of repeating her victory in the Bangsamoro. Moro resistance groups like the MILF and its precursor, the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), were formed during the martial law era in an attempt to defend the Moro people from military abuses. The Moros remember that as former Camarines Sur 3rd District congresswoman, Robredo actively lobbied for the passage of the Bangsamoro bill, and as Vice President delivered a bulk of her Angat Buhay anti-poverty programs to the BARMM.

### **Survey-lagged prexy candidates hold [joint Easter presscon](#); draw flak over “withdraw, Leni” call**

On Easter Sunday, presidential candidates Moreno, Lacson, and Gonzales and their running mates Sotto and Ong, held a [joint press conference in Makati City](#) at the Manila Peninsula Hotel, the subject of which was unannounced. They said Pacquiao also confirmed attendance and was already on his way but did not arrive, while [Abella backed out](#) at the last minute.

The press conference, at the outset, underscored that they will not back out of the race despite consistently poor survey performance. They said they do not believe that 60% of the Filipino



Photo grabbed from <https://ph.news.yahoo.com/ping-lacson-distances-himself-from-iskos-call-for-leni-to-quit-presidential-race-080319258.html>

people based on the big poll companies are Marcos loyalists, speculating that perhaps many were just forced to opt for Marcos Jr simply because they dislike Robredo. They then proceeded to remind the Filipino people that they are there offering themselves to serve the country.

Instead of gaining additional support, which the press conference aimed for, the event drew flak when Moreno accused Robredo of lying about her intent to run for president, and even of threatening destabilization should she not win, ultimately questioning her character and demanding Robredo to withdraw from the race. His supporters, who recently switched to Leni, said they were [offended](#) at the presser's vindictive machismo, and of Moreno's ungratefulness and accusations that they were bought by the Robredo camp. They said the press conference benefited Marcos Jr.'s candidacy. Two more big Isko support groups—the Aksyon Demokratiko-Youth and the Isko Tayo Kabataan—and some conveners of his [AKHRO fraternity](#) also [shifted their allegiance](#) to Robredo. This was preceded by four of Isko's party mates running for councilor in Quezon City. [A Bangsamoro official](#) who also previously endorsed Moreno has also joined MILF in endorsing Robredo. Sen. Franklin [Drilon also slammed](#) Moreno saying he hijacked the event, went off script, and



made it appear that other fellow candidates shared his statement.

[Gonzales apologized](#) to Robredo, [Lacson distanced himself](#) from Moreno, Pacquiao said he [does not support](#) the withdrawal call, Ong and Sotto clarified they were just guests and were not privy to the agenda, while Moreno made [no apology and still keeps repeating](#) his call.

### Local candidates kick-off campaign

The [local campaign season for the 2022 elections kicked off](#) on March 25, or 45 days before the May 9 vote. A total of [46,120 candidates are vying for 18,023 local positions](#), including those of governor, vice governor, provincial board member, congressional district representative, city and municipal mayor, city and municipal vice mayor, and city and municipal councilors. *(The number of candidates already excludes those who have withdrawn but whose names have already been printed on the ballots.)*

The Commission on Elections (Comelec) on March 17 [dropped its requirement for permits for rallies and other activities](#) in practically the entire country after campaign organizers and election lawyers assisting candidates complained that the rules were [open to abuse](#), [sowed confusion](#), and were [impractical](#).

COMELEC and Rappler data reveal [845 unopposed local candidates](#) for various positions, a huge increase from the more than 500 reported in the past 3 elections. In Luzon, they are in the provinces of Ilocos Sur, Apayao, Bataan, and Tarlac; in Visayas in Southern Leyte; and in Mindanao in Davao Occidental, Davao Oriental, Agusan del Sur, and Sulu. Unopposed candidates need only one vote to get elected, and are thus expected to be able to focus on campaigning for their presidential, vice presidential, and other national candidates. 3,380 local candidates are

facing one-on-one battles over 1,690 local posts. [One-on-one gubernatorial fights](#) are in the following 20 provinces:

• **LUZON:** Ilocos Norte, La Union, Batanes, Cagayan, Nueva Vizcaya, Quirino, Mountain Province, Aurora, Nueva Ecija, Pampanga, Romblon, Masbate

• **VISAYAS:** Guimaras, Iloilo, Siquijor, Biliran, Samar

• **MINDANAO:** Davao del Norte, Sultan Kudarat, Dinagat Islands

**La Union.** A non-government organization, Crusaders for Peace, formed by peace-loving people of the Ilocos Region urged the Commission on Elections (Comelec) to [include La Union in the list of “areas of concern”](#) given its history of unresolved political violence, recent political assassination attempts, and recent reports of armed men spotted in the province.

**Ilocos Norte.** [Folks are split](#) between the third generation spawns of the late dictator Marcos and the other dynasty they are very familiar with – the Fariñases led by former governor and former House majority leader Rodolfo “Rudy” Fariñas, who [came out of retirement](#) to challenge reelectionist Governor Matthew Marcos Manotoc, son of Senator Imee Marcos. In Ilocos Norte’s 1st District, Fariñas’ daughter, incumbent congresswoman Ria Fariñas, is running against Marcos Jr’s eldest, 28-year-old England-educated Sandro whose provocative statements in this campaign have raised some eyebrows among local politicians here.

**Abra.** The Abra Provincial Police Office said [additional policemen have been deployed](#) to the capital town of Bangued due to a brewing tension between mayoral candidates.

**Negros Occidental.** Some [1,396 police personnel will be deployed](#), two for each



of the 698 voting precincts, to secure the voting centers in all 31 component cities and municipalities in Negros Occidental on May 9.

**Leyte.** At least 30 [makeshift precincts](#) will be constructed in Leyte and Southern Leyte provinces after recent typhoons damaged several classrooms, the Commission on Elections (Comelec) regional office here said on Friday. Comelec Eastern Visayas assistant regional director Felicisimo Embalsado said they will start the construction of the makeshift structures on April 25 and they will be completed days before the May 9 polls. Meanwhile, the Commission on Elections (Comelec) reminded [candidates to seek an exemption if they want to distribute aid to victims of Tropical Depression Agaton](#) in Eastern Visayas.

#### **Bangsamoro region/BARMM.**

Candidates from the provinces of Basilan, Sulu, and Tawi-Tawi (BaSulTa) [signed an Integrity Pledge](#) initiated by the Commission on Elections (Comelec) vowing to fully respect the laws and democratic process that would redound to the conduct of honest, peaceful, and orderly national and local elections on May 9.

The BARMM election director said they have not yet recorded any violent incident despite intense rivalry in some of the elective posts in these provinces, particularly in Sulu since the top posts—governor, vice governor, and two congressmen— are uncontested. The town of Malabang, Lanao del Sur, however, has already been placed under Comelec control due to a recent election violence.

**Western Mindanao.** The Philippine Army's 1st Infantry Division ([IID](#)) [has activated a provisional battalion](#) to augment security forces that will be ensuring the honest and peaceful conduct of the forthcoming election within its area of responsibility in western

Mindanao. Maj. Gen. Generoso Ponio, IID commander, said that the battalion is composed of organic personnel and soldiers undergoing career and specialization courses at the 1st Division Training School.

**Central Luzon.** [51 cities and municipalities](#) in Central Luzon have been declared election hotspots, of which 29 towns and five cities are classified yellow, while 14 towns and three cities are classified orange. Areas placed under the yellow and orange categories have intense political rivalry, a history of election-related incidents in the last two polls, and the presence of armed men such as gun-for-hire and the New People's Army (NPA), but should not be a cause for concern due to their very limited influence/presence, said the police.

## **Overseas Absentee Voting (OAV)**

*Report by Migrante as of April 20, 2022*

**1. Hong Kong:** Of the 93,000 registered voters, only 3,285 OFWs were able to cast their votes on Day 1 of the OAV as only 5 vote-counting machines (VCMs) were available and the consulate personnel stopped the queue as early as 11:30 am. In previous elections, as many as around 7,000 were able to vote within a single Sunday because there were 10 VCMs. After outcry from OFWs, five more VCMs were added but two were not working and have yet to be replaced. If this remains, an estimate of only 35-40,000 will be able to vote in the next few days, or even lower considering that most OFWs can only vote on Sundays (only four Sundays left).

**2. Dubai:** On Day 1, only the Dubai consulate served as a polling precinct as the Philippines Overseas Labor Office (POLO)/Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) officials said they were not ready to open. There were long lines of voters who waited an ave-



rage five hours under extreme heat due to the small precinct area. Local police officials were reprimanding voters because of the large crowd. In previous elections, there was field and mobile voting conducted in addition to VCMs but 11 days since the start of the election, no field voting has begun. BBM supporters campaigning very near the posts were not reprimanded by the Special Board of Election Inspectors (SBEI). The Philippine Overseas Labor Office (POLO)/OWWA recently opened as a second polling precinct but voters still wait four hours. There were 10 VCMs.

**3. Kingdom of Saudi Arabia:** Election receipts are placed only in a makeshift carton box. There were at least two ballots that were not read and accepted by the machine because there was an unwanted mark in the barcode on the side of the ballot. There were only four VCMs. On April 15 in Riyadh and Jeddah, voters flocked and created long queues that lasted until 7 pm. In Riyadh, many just went home after queuing up for hours.

**4. Australia:** In Sydney, the ballots were mailed out to voters only on Friday, April 8.

**5. Japan:** At the start of the OAV, not one of the 68,639 registered Filipino voters in Japan had received their ballots in the mail. Per email by the Philippine Embassy and COMELEC, the ballots were still not released by Japan customs.

**6. China:** Overseas voting at the Philippine Consulate in Shanghai is suspended due to the COVID-19 lockdown.

**7. United States.** In New York, voters have not yet received their ballots in the mail. VCM testing has been postponed twice and an announcement of actual VCM testing and sealing was made to the public only 1-4 days prior to the testing. The final testing and sealing

was conducted only on April 13. There has been a delay in transporting election materials: a one week delay in mailing ballots from the Embassy in Washington D.C. (with jurisdiction over Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia which have 35,511 registered voters). The postage stamps provided are insufficient to return the ballots to the consulates or embassy. Voters are unaware if there are arrangements made by the consulates and the respective post offices.



Photo grabbed from <https://www.facebook.com/MigranteCanada/photos/2349615835189727>

**8. Canada:** In Vancouver, the Philippines Consulate only received the ballots from COMELEC on April 8; in Toronto, voters will begin to receive their ballots only next week. Advisories and instructions on the accreditation of mass media entities were posted only a day or two before the deadline set by Toronto, Calgary and Vancouver consulates. No advisory was sent out by the Philippines Embassy in Ottawa.

**9. France:** On Day 1, the Embassy was closed and no one was able to vote. A voter was told by the Embassy that they will open for overseas voting only on April 15.

**10. Italy:** On Day 1, there was a delay in the delivery and mailing of ballots to voters for Bologna and Milan. Voters who went to their consulates



in person were told ballots had not arrived yet.

**11. Singapore:** One spoiled ballot was “inadvertently” given to a Filipino voter, according to the Philippine embassy in Singapore.

**12. Swaziland, Africa:** OAV will be via postal voting but there are voters who have yet to receive their ballots.

**13. United Kingdom:** Poll watchers have noted procedural issues, particularly not being shown the SBEI’s log-in minutes which will enable them to know if the poll watchers’ concerns have been registered. The SBEI also ran out of stickers and used signed regular adhesive tapes instead for the VCM. There was also one voter who received two ballots.

**14. Netherlands:** Irregularities include incorrect returned addresses placed on the ballots; registered voters not on the official list; many registered voters have not yet received their ballots; some voters receive incomplete packets. Some have seals and some do not have seals for their ballots.

will endorse the same to the National Bureau of Investigation if it needs further investigation. The video surfaced barely a week after Robredo surged by 9 percentage points in the Pulse Asia survey. She said Aika and her two younger sisters had also become the target of internet trolls after they decided to actively participate in her campaign. The Robredo camp and observers note that attacks on Robredo have [ramped up](#) and the only reason they see is that rival candidates are finally feeling the sting of the lady in pink and her army of volunteers.



Photo grabbed from <https://www.rappler.com/nation/elections/aika-robredo-seeks-nbi-assistance-fake-video-scandal-issue/>

## Mis- and Disinformation (Fake News)

*Sexist and just too much fake news vs family, Robredo mulls taking legal action*

Vice President Leni [Robredo directly accused](#) Marcos Jr., of spreading the alleged video of her eldest daughter, saying fake news has really been his modus since he lost in the 2016 vice presidential race. Kabataan Partylist and Gabriela Women’s Party condemned the sexist, misogynistic attacks and sought a probe to hold liable persons behind such smear tactics. The Department of Justice (DOJ) has started looking into the alleged lewd video adding that they

## Commissioners

**Sharan Burrow**, General Secretary ITUC  
**Canon Barry Naylor**, ICHRP UK  
**Séverine de Laveleye**, Ecolo/Groen Deputy, Belgium Parliament  
**Lee Rhiannon**, Former Australian Senator  
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