



EDITORIAL:

Intense in-fighting in Marcos-Duterte ruling coalition out in the open

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EDITORIAL:

Intense in-fighting in Marcos-Duterte ruling coalition out in the open

Triggered by the severe conflict over the bureaucratic loot in the controversial “confidential funds” of the Office of Vice President (OVP) Sara Duterte (daughter of former President Rodrigo Duterte), the feud between the Marcos Jr. and Duterte factions in the ruling coalition intensifies.

Like a pot calling the kettle black, former President Rodrigo R. Duterte called the Philippine House of Representatives the “most rotten institution” in the country after her daughter Vice-President Sara Duterte-Carpio was stripped of hundreds of millions of pesos in confidential funds for next year. Duterte accused congress of corruption and called for an investigation.

“There is no limit to their pork barrel,” Duterte said, referring to the practice of some lawmakers in appropriating budgets for district projects that the GRP (Government of the Republic of the Philippines) Supreme Court outlawed in 2013.

Duterte’s tirade came after congress stripped several agencies including the OVP of their confidential funds, transferring P1.23 billion worth of these funds to security agencies. Sara Duterte had sought P500 million in confidential funds for her office and another P150 million for the Education department, which she also heads.


Rodrigo Duterte said he told his daughter how ACT Teachers Representative France Castro, a member of the progressive Makabayan Bloc, should be the “first target” of the confidential fund expenses. He declared that his daughter’s intelligence funds should be used “to kill” Castro and “all communists.”

In an unprecedented move, party leaders of the House of Representatives pushed back against former President Rodrigo Duterte’s violent tirades against Congress, its leader Speaker Martin Romualdez (cousin of Marcos Jr.), and for threatening to kill a member of the legislative branch.

Recently, Representatives (former President) Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and Isidro Ungab – both close allies of Duterte – were removed from their position as deputy speakers for not supporting the resolution to support House Speaker Romualdez.

In a related development, General Romeo Brawner, chief-of-Staff of the reactionary Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), said that there is a destabilization plot against the administration of Ferdinand Marcos Jr. Brawner said some of those involved in the destabilization plot against the Marcos administration are former AFP officers. He said they are calling to stage rallies and coup d’etat to oust the president.

Obviously, the escalating conflict between the Marcos Jr. and Duterte factions is in preparation for the 2028 presidential elections.

This infighting for spoils is within the context of increasingly limited economic resources. Growth slowing for three straight quarters confirms economic decline under the Marcos Jr administration. The economic rebound and momentarily fast growth from reopening, which was measured from the worst economic contraction in the country’s history, is over. The economy has returned to its trajectory of slowing growth that started even before the excessive pandemic lock downs. 

Filipinos worldwide join solidarity actions for Palestine

As the US and Zionist-Israel continue their genocidal war crimes against the Palestinian people in Gaza, Filipinos joined various solidarity protests and actions in many parts of the world in support of the Palestinian people.

Hundreds of protesters from progressive Filipino groups carrying Palestinian flags and banners reading: “Stop the genocide”, and “End Israeli occupation of Palestine now!”, rallied in front of the Israeli embassy in Manila last 31 October.

“Filipinos should stand against genocide, Filipinos should stand against the oppression of other peoples as a people who have also suffered colonial occupation, colonial subjugation...It is important that we sympathize with the Palestinians who are also experiencing colonial occupation from Israel,” the protesters said.

Four days earlier, the Philippines, the third-largest buyer of Israeli weapons, abstained from a vote at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on a resolution that called for an immediate humanitarian truce between Israel and Hamas.

120 countries backed the resolution. Filipinos have denounced Marcos Jr.’s abstention as a support for Israel’s genocidal campaign against Palestine.

Meanwhile, last 26 October, thousands of Filipino Muslims rallied at the Luneta grandstand in Manila to manifest their support for the Palestinian people. Around the same time, Filipino Moros in Marawi, South Cotabato, Tawi-tawi and Sulu in southern Philippines, joined rallies for Palestine. In South Cotabato, an estimated 12,000 people joined a peace rally Oktubre 16 protesting the genocide in Gaza.




image: philippinerevolution.nu

Hundreds of Filipinos in the US joined the National March on Washington for a Free Palestine in Washington DC last 4 November. An estimated 300,000 participated in the march calling for freedom for Palestine, an end to the genocide in Gaza, and an end to US support for Israel.

In large protests not seen since the anti-Vietnam war, Filipinos joined throngs of peoples from London, Berlin, Paris, Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and many other cities around the world condemning the US-Zionist Israel genocide in Gaza.

Filipino migrant workers and Filipino residents in the Gaza strip were among those trapped when the US and Zionist Israel started the genocidal bombardment in Gaza. Though many have been able to escape and return to the Philippines, many more have been left trapped.

More than 11,000 Palestinians have been killed in the US-Zionist-Israel genocide in Gaza. Israel's genocidal bombardment of Gaza have already slaughtered 4,104 children according to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). 

Marcos Jr. pushes for more consumer taxes despite inflation, low wages

At least eight economic bills are being proposed by the Marcos Jr. administration to generate additional government income for the next five years. Six of these proposals involve imposing additional taxes, four of which will directly impact common Filipinos. The two other proposals involve taxes on junk food and beverages.

Two proposed plans will impose additional taxes on services -- motor-vehicle road user's tax and value-added tax or VAT for digital services. Another batch of tax policies are set to impose excise taxes for single-use plastics and carbon products. These proposals were also pushed during the previous Duterte regime under then Central Bank of the Philippines and current Department of Finance minister Benjamin Diokno.

If passed, four of the bills will take effect in 2024 and will generate up to P3.7 trillion in 2023 and P6.6 trillion in 2028 all of which will be sourced from consumers and workers who are already suffering from record-low wages and inflationary pressures on basic commodities.

Despite a decrease in the inflation rate down to 4.9% in October compared to 6.1% in September, workers' wages remain below the poverty line as big businesses continue to squeeze more profits from workers while the Marcos Jr. administration refuses to increase the national minimum wage.

Food prices remain high despite Marcos Jr.'s pronouncements of "controlling rice prices." Vegetable prices including those for carrots,

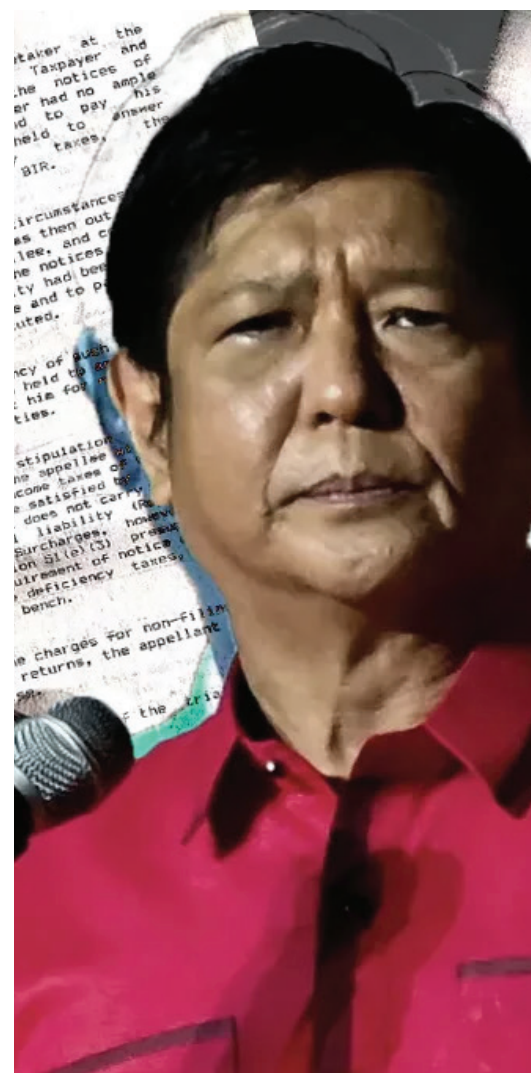


image: philippinerevolution.nu

potatoes, cabbage and garlic remain inflated. Overall, food inflation is currently at 7.1% while rice prices has soared to 13.2%.

According to IBON Foundation, the real daily wage in the National Capital Region amount to only P504 (\$8.99). Last October, a family of five needs at least P1,189 (\$21) every day to survive which is more than double the minimum daily wage. This translates to an average of P25,850 (\$461) every month to live decently.

Other regions have higher living wages based on IBON's computations. According to IBON, the higher figures are due to higher inflation rates in other provinces including the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) where a family of five needs P2,013 (\$36) every day to live which is far from the P341 (\$6) daily minimum wage in the region. [△](#)

Planned joint Japan-PH military agreement criticized



image: philippinerevolution.nu

Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) criticized the plan of the Marcos Jr. regime to sign a military agreement with Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida as Japan and the Philippines started negotiations on a reciprocal troop access deal last 3 November.

According to Bayan, the said agreement is meant to allow the entry of Japanese Self-Defense Forces to the Philippines in the form of war games.

The troop pact would follow a similar deal the Philippines has with the United States called the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA). The VFA has been heavily criticized for providing license to US troops to maintain permanent presence in the Philippines and for violating the nation's sovereignty.

"This security agreement is part of the whole US network in the region where Japan serves as the US stooge and the Philippines is an important part in the war machinery of the US in the region," Bayan said in a statement.

Japan, as one of the United States' closes allies in the Asian region has historically taken a strong line

against China amid decades-old disputes over maritime sovereignty. Japan does not have any claim to the South China Sea, but a separate maritime dispute with China in the East China Sea.

Japan also has Reciprocal Access Agreements with the United Kingdom and Australia and hosts the biggest concentration of US military bases abroad with 120 active bases to date second only to Germany which hosts 119 US bases.

In addition to the "visiting forces agreement" being negotiated, Japan is set to provide military equipment to the Philippines including a maritime surveillance radar as part of Japan's Official Security Assistance. The Philippines is the first country to receive this form of military aid from Japan with at least \$4 million of grants meant to improve the country's coastal radar capability according to reports.

Japan's decision to expand the scope of international aid to military-related projects follows Tokyo's announcement last December of a doubling of defense spending in five years as it boosts efforts to confront China and North Korea upon the prodding of US. Ahead of its visit, Japan announced the delivery of the first air surveillance radar system to the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) as part of a 2020 contract.

According to Bayan, the Philippines must demand Japan to issue an official apology and remunerations for the victims of rape and war crimes committed by Japan to Filipinos during World War II. "How can we accept as a nation to invite Japanese troops to our land when the Filipinos violated and abused during the time of war still have not received justice?" Bayan asked.

In a 19-page decision of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women last March, it criticized the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) for failing to provide justice to "comfort women" who were raped by Japanese soldiers during Japan's occupation of the Philippines. [△](#)