

Philippines' Duterte Administration and His "Anti-drugs War". Towards a Police State

By [Prof. Phoebe Zoe Maria Sanchez](#)

Asia-Pacific Research, December 28, 2018

Region: [South-East Asia](#)

Theme: [Justice](#), [Society](#)

First, are the dualities. Duterte called for peace and the left sat in the peace process. But the country's armed forces continue to attack poor peasant communities.

*Anti-corruption campaigns turned sour when Duterte ordered a hero's burial for dictator President Marcos. He said he will protect small communities, but ordered the bombing of Lumads (national minorities). He said he will stop casualization and contractualization of labor, but he continues to sustain Art. 106-109 of the labor code legitimizing casualization and contractualization of labor. **Rido**, which is a cultural dispute in Muslim society was labeled an ISIS activity. Thereafter, he legitimized aerial bombings and declared Martial Law in Mindanao. He promised land redistribution to farmers, but subjected land reform to the concurrence of landlords in congress.*

An estimated number of 346,000 individuals died in Marawi City under Duterte's Martial Law. Thousands also died in the anti-drugs war. Incidents of political killings grew in number after red tagging, that took place in backward agricultural communities, like Guihulngan City, Negros Oriental. Six civil society political leaders and members were murdered successively at Guihulngan City.

This paper looks into the spate of killings in Philippine society.



In 2016, the literature of death in Philippine reality came with the constant rhetoric of death in president Rodrigo Roa Duterte's public speeches. His speeches corresponded to numbers of deaths in streets, and in far flung communities. An account of 8,000 deaths were recorded toward the end of 2016 (Karapatan 2016). But victims were not all drug traders. Most victims were merely poor individuals and homeless citizens, and some youths mistakenly shot for the sake of the show of the anti-drugs campaign.[i] After two years of Duterte's administration, drug killings had risen to an outstanding 23,000 individuals. Reportedly, most victims died for the reason that *"they fought against their arresting officer/s,"* from reports of police officers themselves.

In the more remote areas, victims were not drug lords or drug users but ordinary farmers or peasants cultivating cadastral lands and non-cadastral lands (Karapatan Central Visayas 2017).

For instance, six civil society political leaders and members were murdered at Guihulngan City, Negros Oriental from late July to early September 2017. The murder of Karapatan human rights defender **Mrs. Emilisa Badayos** and farmer leader **Elioterio Moises** after a fact-finding mission at Bayawan City, Negros Oriental followed thereafter.[ii] The two were gunned down after conducting a fact finding mission despite Negros Provincial Ordinance No. 5, that unconstitutionally prohibits human rights fact finding investigation in communities of Negros Oriental province. In Cebu Province, an average of 3 persons are murdered every day.

A pattern of cases similar to these took place all over Philippine country-side.

Then the president called the attention of the left publicly reprimanding that it was the communists' people's army who violated and sabotaged the peace process victimizing government's military forces.[iii]

All efforts to agree for peace gradually dwindled, while the killings rose in number. The police and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) were later inaugurated as the institutional foundations of the Duterte regime.

Source: [SVSTQC](#)

Hence, Philippine political structure and culture, for the second time in the country's history hoist up the military and police institutions. A design that first took place during the declaration of Martial Law during dictator Marcos' presidential proclamation number 1081 of Sept. 21, 1972. This time without any formal presidential proclamation, the "anti-drugs war" was made a ploy for legitimation. Hence, Duterte's administration uses ambiguation for what is legitimate or illegitimate positioning coercive rule in a populist fascist style governance.

With this norm, Duterte commenced via the burial of dictator **Ferdinand Marcos**, in a hero's burial. The left who suffered most in the Marcos regime, went to court and the streets to oppose Duterte's move with civil society groups. However, drowned with foibles between supporters of Duterte and those of the "yellow administration" of the previous Aquino government, major political scenarios became muddled in turn.



The Unraveling of Duterte's Fascist Rule

In Early 2017, Martial Law was declared at Mindanao to resolve the so-called "Marawi Crisis".[iv] A newsfeed of the Marawi situation was that of the Vietnamese War from the 1960s. Two weeks later, the news headline said the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) assisted civilians to evacuate Marawi City. But the picture at the newsfeed showed Honduran soldiers during a Central American conflict of the 90s. These prove the complexities of the machinery of Duterte regime's ambiguation.

The faking of issues and fabrication of stories made the political and economic life appear impersonal or insulated from public concerns. The norm of half-truth making, not really honest to goodness public service and not really meaningful social relations, or roles that government front line service ought to play have become blurry and incomprehensible. Low talk presidential speeches with the rhetoric of death and swearing, leave the masses to cogitate and disentangle the meaning system of government and governance.



The Marawi conflict is traced to **“rido”**. A rido is a cultural dispute emanating from at least two feuding clans. Until today, Martial Law sustained in Mindanao.[v] Certain areas were flattened by a series of aerial bombardments called “friendly fire” for the intent of Duterte’s “Build, Build, Build” policy supported by loans from China and the IMF-WB.

The drug related deaths continue to rise. Volumes and volumes of deaths take place with Martial Law in Mindanao, as well as deaths of peasants, farmer leaders and many other civil society leaders. In two years’ time, political killings heightened with the inclusion of town mayors, some government officials, police and drug operatives and Catholic priests active in the anti-mining campaigns.

Is Duterte’s Might A Right?

The situation above accounts for a scheme of legitimization by illegitimation and/or schemes of illegitimation by legitimization. As it is, the state’s monopoly of coercion is presented in a manner of misrecognition and/or recognition Duterte style. Whether duality is meant to confuse the means to an end, or against an end of a means what is apparent is that a three-pronged war exists as game plan of Duterte’s Administration. It is where the last two wars (the Anti-Muslim/Minority War and the Anti-Communist War) followed the first “operation tokhang double barrel reloaded”[vi] as Duterte’s *raison d’etre* for a greater usurpation of power and design of a populist authoritarian rule.

Source: [siquey tuvilla](#)

After big drug financier **Peter Lim** and drug comprador and triad leader **Kerwin Espinosa** were freed from jail, presidential son “Paulo” and officer Faeldon were also acquitted of the 6.4 B drug controversy, putting to jail a warehouse man in their stead. Hence, the anti-drugs war comes plainly as a mask for all ambiguities, disambiguities and dramaturgy.[vii] As it appears, Duterte’s anti-drugs war has no intent to formally provide a system of de-judicialization of the poor’s involvement in drug crimes and drug criminals in a scientific criminal procedure, nor does it intend to sincerely apprehend the source and find the faucet of drugs trade. It is on the contrary, a mode of regulation to boost the drugs trade, and facilitate capital accumulation via the heightened demand and supply of drugs in market trade schemes.

Two years passed and the count of deaths and various atrocities had battered daily news feeding Philippine society horrible accounts of bloody “charges” thru breakfast, lunch and dinner. Hence:



As result, the norm today shows liminal predation amidst surface harmony, where constant massacre takes place underneath social relations causing entrenchment of poverty, deprivation and exclusion. A kind of concordant discordance is in the atmosphere where underneath malfunctions of democratic institutions, are tacit arrangements of killings orchestrated through memorandum orders, crackdowns and reward booties for the military and police operations.

Slaughter of the Children

According to the advocacy group Children's Legal Rights and Development Center (CLRDC), at least 74 minors were killed in police operations and vigilante-style attacks from July 2016 to December 2017 alone.

Read more: <https://opinion.inquirer.net/116011/joshua-17#ixzz5SCtBS2EH>
Follow us: [@inquirerdotnet on Twitter](#) | [inquirerdotnet on Facebook](#)

Two of the most prominent cases last year were those of Kian Loyd delos Santos, 17, who was killed by members of the Caloocan City police, and Reynaldo

..

Read more: <https://opinion.inquirer.net/116011/joshua-17#ixzz5SCtBS2EH>
Follow us: [@inquirerdotnet on Twitter](#) | [inquirerdotnet on Facebook](#)

The fascist norm still prevails today, amidst a regressive tax policy appropriating wealth by reverse flow. In 2018, with the first implementation of the recent Tax Reform Acceleration and Inclusion (TRAIN) Program of the Duterte administration, excise taxes on petroleum products and double value added taxes on consumer goods and services hit hard on incomes and food requirements in the massive poor Filipino households. The year 2019 and 2020 will see the second and the third rounds of TRAIN Law implementation and hopes to find if the massive poor people of the country will still survive. This amidst still the on-going killings and continued attacks on human rights. Hence,



*

Note to readers: please click the share buttons above. Forward this article to your email lists. Crosspost on your blog site, internet forums. etc.

Prof. Phoebe Zoe Maria Sanchez is an Associate Prof. of History and Sociology at the University of the Philippines Cebu.

Notes

[i] <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/890257/police-paid-to-kill-drug-suspects-plant-evidence-reuters-report> Downloaded 8/1/18.

<http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/941177/sws-most-filipinos-believe-not-all-summoned-for-oplan-tokhang-are-addicts-pushers-sws-survey-illegal-drugs-oplan-tokhang>. Downloaded 8/1/18,

<http://news.abs-cbn.com/war-on-drugs/part2> Downloaded 8/1/18,

<https://www.hrw.org/report/2017/03/02/license-kill/philippine-police-killings-dutertes-war-drugs> Downloaded 8/1/18

[ii] <https://www.panaynews.net/more-rampant-brutal-fearless-bayawan-shooting-kills-2-hurts-1/> Downloaded 8/2/18.

[iii] http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/867966/dute_rte-lifts-ceasefire-with-npaDownloaded 8/1/18

[iv] <http://news.abs-cbn.com/focus/06/13/17/the-mautes-and-marawi-city-a-familys-quest-for-vengeance>. Downloaded 8/2/18.

<https://www.rappler.com/nation/189922-warning-revenge-killings-clan-feuding-marawi>. Downloaded 8/2/18.

<https://www.sunstar.com.ph/article/156316/Lidasan-Understanding-the-complex-situation-in-Marawi>Downloaded 8/2/18.

[v] <http://cnnphilippines.com/news/2017/05/24/marawi-crisis-timeline.html> . Downloaded 8/2/18

[vi] <http://www.pnp.gov.ph/news-and-information/773-pnp-activates-drug-enforcement-group-double-barrel-reloaded-tokhang-revisited>Downloaded 7/31/18

[vii] <https://www.rappler.com/nation/201598-ombudsman-panel-clears-paolo-duterte-manases-carpio-shabu>. Downloaded 7/31/18.

All images in this article are from the author.

The original source of this article is Asia-Pacific Research
Copyright © [Prof. Phoebe Zoe Maria Sanchez](#), Asia-Pacific Research, 2018

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: **[Prof. Phoebe Zoe Maria Sanchez](#)**

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). Asia-Pacific Research will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. Asia-Pacific Research grants permission to cross-post Asia-Pacific Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Asia-Pacific Research article. For publication of Asia-Pacific Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: editors@asia-pacificresearch.com

www.asia-pacificresearch.com contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: editors@asia-pacificresearch.com