

How will history record the Duterte rule?

Written by Manuel Caballero

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President Rodrigo Duterte, seated at center.



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In fairness, we are not rushing neither history nor historians to memorialize right now the rule of President Rodrigo Duterte.

He barely started his six-year term 15 months ago.

So far, his Philippine National Police and what are referred to as unknown gunmen have killed only an estimated 13,000 poor suspected drug addicts and drug traffickers around the country, according to reports.

Still a long way to go, according to Mr. Duterte himself.

Evidently, there has been an attempt to lessen the numbers killed attributed to the police by dividing the numbers between known gunmen (police) and unknown gunmen, which, according to some sources could also be members of the police force.

Be that as it may, as it is said by people who value life, "one life killed, is one life too many."

It appears, though, that history, not historians, is trying to cut short Duterte's presidency.

And if it ever happens, no one but Duterte himself will be blamed by history.

He seems to be following and imitating the hated footsteps of Ferdinand Marcos' strongman rule.

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He is likewise openly supporting the Marcoses as evidenced by the entombment of the Marcos remains at the Hero's Cemetery 28 years after the dictator's death and four presidents in office.

The latest show of support is the issue of returning part of ill-gotten Marcos wealth with immunity from legal cases.

Duterte continuously makes his people angry at him and his favored friends with actions, words and decisions that insult the intellect of thinking and abuse-sensitive Filipinos.

Today, I received this message from a reader: "I've been praying so hard for this administration (Duterte's) to end very soon."

I replied, "if you want your prayers heard and granted, keep praying. More things are wrought by prayers than this world dreams of."

I was expressing opinions about praying and prayers.

The above is not an isolated feeling against Mr. Duterte.

One has only to read comments of Filipinos in Facebook and in Manila's major newspapers online.

Last Sunday, the Catholic Church in the Philippines, through Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle and other bishops, started to ring the bells of their churches around the country to remember the victims of extrajudicial killings since the start of the Duterte presidency.

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Cardinal Tagle put the Church position and protest in the following words, “We cannot allow the destruction of lives to become normal. We cannot govern the nation by killing. We cannot foster a humane and decent Filipino culture by killing.”

An intelligent and candid open letter to President Duterte is circulating in the Internet written by a former supporter and former believer of the Philippine President’s agenda.

I lifted two paragraphs from the lengthy letter for sharing with our readers.

“I can no longer support and respect a president who bullies us into silence, who insults and publicly shames anyone who disagrees with him, who embarrasses the entire Filipino nation before other countries, unmindful of how this affects our beloved country and our hardworking OFWs who must suffer the consequences of your utter lack of diplomacy.

“But most of all, I refuse to support a despot who has no respect at all for human life. Neither can I respect you for blatantly and arrogantly disrespecting our Constitution that guarantees to all — not just your chosen few — full respect of human rights, due process and the rule of law.”

Even the First Reading in Catholic masses this Sunday seems very timely and relevant to the killings associated with Mr. Duterte’s bloody and brutal drug war.

Wrath and anger are hateful things,

yet the sinner hugs them tight.

The vengeful will suffer the LORD’s vengeance,

for he remembers their sins in detail...

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Remember your last days, set enmity aside;

remember death and decay, and cease from sin!

Think of the commandments, hate not your neighbor;

remember the Most High's covenant, and overlook faults.

The United Methodist Church with 300,000 members around the PH, read last Sunday in their churches around the country the lifting of support for Mr. Duterte's policy of killing people.

The church said the killings have been perpetrated "by police and vigilantes agitated by President Duterte himself."

"What is alarming is that, intentional and deliberate or not, President Duterte's war on drugs kills the poor, not poverty," the United Methodist Church said.

Human rights under Duterte is worth (PH) P1,000 or U.S.\$20

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The burning issue in Manila these days is the appropriation of P1,000 allotted by the Speaker and 113 members of the House of Representatives to the Commission on Human Rights, a Constitutional office created by Executive Order No. 163-A during the time of Mrs. Cory Aquino.

This move by the Duterte allies infuriated the netizens, who are also the citizens.



Commission on Human Rights Chairman Chito Gascon. (Senate PRIB/Joseph Vidal, File)

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President Duterte maliciously shamed publicly CHR Chair Chito Gascon by asking if he was gay or pedophile because the latter, as part of his work, keeps pursuing the killings of Kian Loyd delos Santos, Carl Arnaiz and Reynaldo de Guzman, all children by legal definition.

Facts are, Mr. Gascon is a well-educated lawyer from the University of the Philippines.

He is happily married with a beautiful daughter, according to supporters.

If this president continues with his questionable and embarrassing ways, history and his people will judge him for what he is.

He will wake up one day to the reality that his position is not a license, but merely a privilege.

Before leaving this topic, we wish to point out that the highest law of the Philippines, the Constitution, “values the dignity of every human person and guarantees full respect for human rights.”

(Sec. 11, Article II, Philippine Constitution.)

The PH Congress shall give “highest priority to the enactment of measures that protect and enhance the right of all the people to human dignity, reduce social, economic and political inequalities, and remove cultural inequalities by equitably diffusing wealth and political power for the common good.”

(Sec. 1, Article XIII, Philippine Constitution.)

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And the country's 113 congressmen, led by one Pantaleon Alvarez, want to paralyze the Commission by defunding it!

We view such action as serious and intentional violation of the fundamental law of the land.

Therefore, Alvarez et al. should be made to face the consequences of their action and decision.

Personal. Happy Birthday to my son Adrian.

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