



POPULISM IN THE PHILIPPINES
WOMEN UNDER SIEGE:
Manifestations of Populism and its
Impact on Gender Equality in the Philippines



POPULISM IN THE PHILIPPINES

WOMEN UNDER SIEGE:

Manifestations of populism and its
impact on gender equality in the Philippines

TERESITA QUINTOS DELES



INCITEGov



WOMEN UNDER SIEGE: Manifestations of populism
and its impact on gender equality in the Philippines
Teresita Quintos Deles

September 2020

Published by

The International Center for Innovation, Transformation
and Excellence in Governance (INCITEGov)

3rd Level Cyberpark Tower 1, 60 General Aguinaldo Ave,
Cubao, Quezon City 1109 Philippines

incitegov@incitegov.org.ph | incitegov.org.ph



Copyright © 2020 by Teresita Quintos Deles and INCITEGov

This publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system,
or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical,
photocopying, recording for non-commercial purposes provided
that a due and proper acknowledgment is given to the Publisher.

Editorial Team

Veronica Fenix Villavicencio

Atty. Ma. Cleofe Gettie Sandoval

Joshua Carlo T. Pile

Verlie Q. Retulin

Coordinator

Shebana C. Alqaseer

Layout by Pauline Isabelle A. Fernandez

Cover design by Paul John V. Domalaon

Credits for the images found in the cover:

“Sigaw ng Kababaihan” protest photo (purple cloth overlay): Jire Carreon

Young woman holding the veil: Paul John V. Domalaon

Muslim woman: Balik Marawi Facebook page (fb.com/BalikMarawi)

Sen. Leila de Lima: [Wikimedia Commons/Alex Nuevaespaña](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Alex_Nuevaespa%C3%B1a)

Purple cloth: HiClipart (hiclipart.com)

Cover’s background texture: Canva (canva.com)

All other images in the cover courtesy of Pixabay (pixabay.com).

The National Library of the Philippines

ISBN (PDF) 978-971-93923-3-0

ISBN (Paperback) 978-971-93923-2-3

Publisher's Note

This monograph has two parts: (1) a paper on the impact of populism on gender equality in the Philippines, written by INCITEGov chairperson Teresita Quintos Deles in December 2018; and (2) the two speeches that she delivered before the Subcommittee on International Human Rights (SDIR) of the Canadian House of Commons in April and July 2019, respectively.

INCITEGov presents this monograph in a three-part series: Populism in the Philippines. Up to this date of publication, September 2020, the political force of populism examined in these papers remains and persists to erode the foundation of democratic rights and gender equality. This series of papers serve to bring insights to the discourse on populism and momentum for enlightened citizens to reclaim hard-won democratic rights.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword	i
Manifestations of Populism and its Impact on Gender Equality: The Case of the Philippines	1
Definition of Populism	2
Gender and Populism	3
Impact on Women: 3 Policy Cases	5
Impact on Women: The Populist Presidential Performance	7
Civil Society Response to Duterte Populism and Misogyny	8
Recommendations	10
Conclusion	11
Endnotes	12
Two Speeches on the Defense of Democracy and Women’s Human Rights	17
Insult to Injury: How a Populist President Degrades Women	19
Defending Human Rights in the Philippines is a Dangerous and Heroic Act	29
Afterword	37

FOREWORD

Our collective hope is to have leaders that will carry the genuine aspirations of the people in a democratic, accountable and transparent manner. This is borne out of our experience in the Philippines of a dictatorship and so we say, never again. Yet, the current leadership that ran on a campaign that appealed to the masses conducts a campaign that kills mostly the poor, disregards rule of law that corrupts institutions, capitalizes on the proliferation of fake news, demonizes and jails opposition, among others. Some opine that the country may even be considered in worst condition than that during Martial Law. If not aborted, the ruination that is happening to institutions, people and their values may take lifetimes to reverse. For sure, this period in our history will leave scars that will constantly remind us of a time when the country fell into the hands of this current dispensation, and then answer the constant bewilderment: How did we allow it to happen to us?

This brand of populism is misogynist. Women are aghast, especially those who have been in the forefront of fighting for women's empowerment. Through the years, even within the Martial Law period, women's groups have fought hard, internationally and locally, to provide incremental wins for gender equality and women's empowerment. For sure, the track of the women's movement is to advance in effective implementation of progressive laws and policies, addressing sectoral concerns and issues. There was no scenario for a reversal or, worse, decimation of what has been won through decades of collective hard work. Yet, here we are. Again, we ask: how did this dire situation come to be?

The writings in this monograph present: a) the scenario faced by women leaders in the hands of a populist president who targets strong women, his most critical oppositionists, who stand up to him and his authoritarianism; and b) an analysis of his brand of populism and his misogyny. These writings aim to contribute to the discourse, not only to understand but, more importantly, to start shaping the different tracks that we need to take to heal the country and to regain the victories for equality that women have long worked for.

MA. CLEOFE GETTIE SANDOVAL

Vice Chairperson, INCITEGov

MANIFESTATIONS OF POPULISM AND ITS IMPACT ON GENDER EQUALITY: THE CASE OF THE PHILIPPINES

By Teresita Quintos Deles, INCITEGov

14 December 2018

In the disturbing ascendance of elected populist leaders in the world today, with all its implications on the acceleration of polarized politics and executive excesses including in the use of intimidation and violence, the Philippines arguably stands at Ground Zero in Asia and the Pacific. President Rodrigo Duterte, the former multi-term mayor of Davao City in Mindanao, was voted into power in 2016 on the basis of campaign promises that he would solve the most vexing problems felt by ordinary Filipinos within six months of his taking office. He cast himself as the simple, neighborhood, straight-talking guy out to champion the long-suffering masses against the selfish and arrogant elite classes based in “imperial Manila” who have captured the country’s centers of wealth and power.

Since then, President Duterte’s two-year rule (of a single, six-year term) has resulted in the murder of over 20,000¹ overwhelmingly poor, alleged small-time drug peddlers and users; runaway inflation which has made life even harder especially for the poor; the destruction through carpet bombing of the Philippines’ only Islamic city of Marawi and the subsequent imposition of four iterations of martial law over the entire Mindanao; and the shaming and persecution of national figures, most especially women, who have dared to stand up to question and oppose wrongdoing at the highest levels of government.

President Duterte spouted his first rape joke while still on the campaign trail.² Lewd and vulgar language and behavior have since become the staple of presidential speeches, with Cabinet Secretaries and other high-ranking officials quickly following suit. Yet, despite all these, he continues to chalk up high approval ratings in national surveys and still draws laughter and applause from the audiences of his rambling, invectives-ridden speeches.

It is, thus, imperative to ask: what has been the impact of Duterte populism on women and the Philippines’ heretofore outstanding ranking in global gender equality indicators?

This paper seeks to answer the following questions —

- Are there manifestations of populism in Duterte’s rise to the highest national office and the way he has wielded presidential power? Are there any links between his practice of populism and his misogynistic treatment of women?
- What is his track record in delivering on his campaign promises? What are examples of policy directions and public pronouncements he has pursued which has had significant impact on women’s welfare and status?

- What has been the actual and potential impact of these policy developments and populist behavior or performance on the status of women and gender equality in the Philippines?
- What has been the response of civil society and how effective have these responses been?
- What are recommended actions to address and reverse negative effects on gender equality and women's rights brought about by the ascendance of populist national leadership?

To respond to these questions, the following research methods were used:

- A review of existing literature on the connections between populism and misogyny and current global manifestations of such;
- Compilation and analysis of news coverage on Duterte's public speeches and behavior since the 2016 presidential campaign up to the present time;
- Interviews with selected key information sources, particularly social commentators and pro-democracy and women's rights proponents; and
- One focus group discussion to test research findings and analysis and elicit recommendations moving forward.

Definition of Populism

While there is no single definition of the term that is universally recognized, there is general agreement that populism involves, in varying degrees, the following interrelated features, all of which were embodied in Duterte's presidential campaign and continue to be manifested in his political behavior and presidential leadership:

- **Polarization of society** between the vast majority or the "masses" who are "pure" versus the "corrupt elite": Under Duterte's campaign and, especially with his election to the presidency, Philippine society has been sharply divided between the "yellows" or *dilawan*, referring to the previous Aquino administration and 1986 people power followers, who have been demonized as the corrupt and uncaring elite, on the one hand; and the Duterte Diehard Supporters (DDS) who comprise the majority of Filipinos, the masses who have long suffered neglect and abuse from the rule of "Manila imperialism," which has brought the country to the edge of destruction, on the other hand. He has played to the pent-up grievances of the provinces who feel that they have not received a fair share of the national budget and resources. After discrediting the "yellows," Duterte has tagged all critics with the color, thus, dismissing all criticism as just yellow sour-graping meant to bring down Duterte for challenging the elite. These include: the political opposition — whether or not part of or allied with the past administration; media — both national and international; human rights advocates; and, most recently, Bishops and church leaders;³
- **Projection of the populist leader as an "outsider" to the establishment** who is ready to challenge and defy the rule of the elite: Duterte drew large his

origins from Mindanao, tapping on the emotional aspiration of Mindanao residents to finally, for the very first time, have a Philippine President from the southernmost island region, who would champion the cause of those outside “imperial Manila.” Although he was a scion of a political family (his father was governor of Davao and his mother a highly recognized and influential social leader), he played up his image as a simple man who sleeps under a mosquito net and is not used to the ways of Manila high society.⁴

- **Construction/invention of *crisis***, which must be eradicated and from which the people must, by all means, be protected: Discarding the figures of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA), Duterte inflated the level of drug use in the country and projected the picture of a country ruled by narco-politics and overcome by crime perpetrated by drug-crazed criminals;⁵
- **Personification of the “*strongman*”** with the political will to use all means, including killing and violence, to address all grievances and problems of the people: He promised to end drugs, crime, corruption, traffic, labor contractualization, historical injustice for the Bangsamoro, within six months after taking office. He boasted that he would ride a jet-ski to reclaim the country’s occupied islets from China. He said he would kill-kill-kill to save “my” people. Now, as head of state, strongman Duterte will not brook any dissent or criticism and has invariably chosen authoritarian responses to opposition;⁶
- **“*Performance*” of bad manners and defiance of protocols:** It has been said that populism is as much, if not more, about performance as it is about policy, referring to the public persona that the populist leader creates and “performs.” Cursing, catcalling, public kissing and touching of women, as well as his crumpled barong with folded sleeves and putting his feet up on the table — these are part of Duterte’s performance, which serves to underscore the leader’s image as “outsider” (the *Bisaya* from southern Philippines), who is one of “us” (the oppressed masses) who cannot afford to be genteel and polite. It also serves to provide shock value to his promised “change is coming.”⁷
- **Massive and dominant use of *social media*** to push its narrative, including “fake news,” and its putdown of contrary views: US\$200,000, or PhP10 million was spent by the Duterte camp for a troll army to spread propaganda and target his opposition, according to a study by the University of Oxford published in 2017.^{8,9}

Gender and Populism

While not all scholars agree that populism has a specific relationship to gender, some have argued that, indeed, populism is “enabled by and underpins a gender ideology.” In particular, Australia-based Filipina scholar Maria Tanyag posits that masculinity is closely tied with power and leadership, leading to the “intensification of hypermasculine forms of leadership.” She further outlines three ways in which notions of masculinity drive populism:

- *Hypermasculine populist leadership* focuses on posturing violence and aggression against the enemy or the “other.” Applied to policy, masculine aggression frames issues narrowly, thus necessitating and legitimizing primarily military solutions to issues that, in fact, require complex solutions
- *Hypermasculinity* manifests as the sexual domination of women. Extending from the private sphere to the public sphere, male aggression is used to legitimize political authority especially against external threats and to consolidate support for the populist leader.
- Populist leaders, furthermore, tend to adopt another embodiment of masculinity: “*benevolent paternalism*,” by which they regard their authority as akin to being the father of the nation, who always knows best — and, often, exclusively — what the country needs. Propped up by cultural norms revolving around filial piety and reverence, this restricts democratic deliberation on the public’s true interests and goals.¹⁰

Extensive documentation is available on how Duterte has displayed the full spectrum of negative masculinities in the “gender scripts and roles” he relishes in playing: from “heteronormativity,” which works to regulate social and sexual relations by normalizing and perpetuating gender stereotypes and male superiority; to “hegemonic masculinity,” which promotes and imposes a hierarchy of masculinities “largely by devaluing women and gay men”; to “hypermasculinity,” which “builds on assumed male superiority, overt sexuality, and a willingness to engage in violence”; to “toxic masculinity,” which “foster(s) domination...and (is) thus socially destructive,” exhibiting rage and a “death drive”; and, finally, “masculine bravado,” which involves an “ostentatious display of courage or boldness” or “action intended to intimidate.”¹¹

The bashing of women and gays to the point of inciting abuse and violence against them has become regular fare in current presidential speech and public performance. From jokes about having several wives and mistresses to disclosing how, as a lad, he touched their family’s sleeping house maid¹² to a rape joke most foul regarding a murdered Australian missionary¹³ — there seem to be no limits to Duterte’s misogyny. At the start of the Marawi siege, he encouraged “my” soldiers to fight the enemy by telling them that, if they raped up to three women, it would be on him.¹⁴ Upon terminating peace talks with the communist insurgents, he told the military to shoot female combatants in the vagina so they will become useless.¹⁵ He led the very public and official slut-shaming of Senator Leila De Lima before he had her illegally jailed after she conducted hearings on the Davao Death Squad as chair of the Senate Committee on Justice.¹⁶ He called ICC Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda black and ugly and threatened to slap UN Special Rapporteur for Extra Judicial Killings (EJK) Agnes Callamard after they separately expressed concern over the bloody drug war he had unleashed particularly in urban poor communities.¹⁷

Duterte’s language and behavior towards women bear out Tanyag’s proposition regarding the relationship between populism and gender: The Philippine case illustrates how presidential hypermasculine posturing, based on deep-seated misogyny, enables and drives the prevailing features of populism, among them:

- The polarization of society, as members of the political opposition and dissenters are cursed, slut-shamed, and demonized;
- The projection of the strongman who is not afraid to kill and destroy the enemy in whatever way he sees necessary;
- The chilling of opposition and dissent, respecting no boundaries in bringing down his opponents — he has illegally jailed a woman senator and caused the removal of the first woman Chief Justice through quo warranto, after publicly insulting and shaming them; and
- The consolidation of his support base to be ever ready to rally behind their true champion who is bringing about true change and who needs to be defended against the ire of the elite — who is embedded in their hearts as *Tatay Digong*, the father of the nation (but only for those he considers “my” people).

Impact on Women: 3 Policy Cases

Except for his promise to carry out a violent war against drugs, the first two-and-a-half years of the Duterte presidency have seen none of his campaign promises fulfilled. By his own admission, the war against drugs will not be won within his administration, he cannot end labor contractualization by executive fiat, and Metro Manila traffic has gone from very bad to worse. For Filipino women, life has not improved; it has gotten worse — and it is worse for women than for men. The following three policy cases demonstrate this:

Anti-Drug War. While he has admitted to having failed in delivering on his campaign promise to end drugs and criminality within three-to-six months of his assumption into office¹⁸, Duterte has certainly lived up to his promise to kill-kill-kill under the guise of cleansing the country of its drug problem. The Philippine National Police (PNP) has recorded no less than 22,983 deaths under inquiry (DUI) since the start of Duterte’s anti-drug campaign.¹⁹ EJK victims predominantly come from the poorest urban communities, bolstering claims by studies that the poor are, in fact, most vulnerable in the administration’s war on drugs.²⁰

All available documentation shows that the overwhelming majority of those killed are men. While this seems to show that men have been most disadvantaged in the anti-drug operations, a closer examination of the facts will reveal the severe impact on the women: wives, mothers, sisters, daughters of the men who were killed, who were mostly the sole breadwinners of their family — who are now left to pick up the pieces of their broken lives. Making a livelihood with barely any skills or work experience outside the home, keeping their children in school, addressing health issues now including recovery and healing from trauma — these are the immediate concerns they face, assuming that they have managed to give their dead a decent burial.

A study conducted by the women’s organization PILIPINA to surface the gender impact of drug war-related EJKS, furthermore, underscores the violations on women’s rights and dignity in the way the antidrug operations are carried out:

among others, the violent intrusion into the homes of the poor, which are supposed to be women's safe and sacred space, no matter how lowly; denial of their right to care for their dead or wounded; theft of their few belongings; threats of being taken to substitute for male relatives when they are not found on the premises; vulnerability to sexual harassment and human trafficking. The women who have been left behind by the bloody war on drugs have become a new "underclass among the urban poor: often ostracized and isolated by their neighbors, terrorized by barangay officials and the murderers of their family members, vulnerable to sexual exploitation."²¹

Tax Reforms for Acceleration and Inclusion Act (TRAIN). Deep-seated and radical tax reform has long been advocated by many in the policy-making community in order to fix the "progressivity and fairness of the income tax system" in accordance with the Constitution. Resistance has also been strong, however, from the classes and sectors, particularly from the upper classes of society, that would be adversely affected. Within its first two years in office, the Duterte administration successfully passed the first installment of a comprehensive package of tax reforms. Aside from the avowed reason of needing finally to fix what had become a hodge-podge of the Philippine tax system, the Duterte administration desperately needed to generate over Php300 billion in new resources to help fund its vaunted Build-Build-Build infrastructure program, the centerpiece of the administration's economic agenda.^{22 23}

The government sold the TRAIN to the public by bannerizing the lowering of the withholding tax for low-income earners, thus promising them more take-home pay. In truth, however, this would not benefit the greater number who are working in the informal sector or whose wages fall below taxable income levels. Worse, TRAIN unleashed run-away inflation, from 3.6%²⁴ in November, 2017, to 6.7%²⁵ in October, 2018, after the law was passed in January, 2018. TRAIN imposed higher taxes on cars, fuel, tobacco, and some beverages. Coupled with the 3-year high surge in world oil prices, the weakened peso now at a 12-year low, and government mismanagement of the country's rice supply, this has brought about unprecedented increase in prices of basic goods, transportation, and services, pushing poor families closer to hunger and loss of any safety net. As women have traditionally held the "purse" for the family, they have had to carry the burden of inflationary costs with dwindling pay envelopes or daily earnings turned over to them by their partners, together with all further responsibility to ensure that there is food on the table and bills are paid.^{26 27 28}

Marawi Siege. On 12 December, 2016, following the seizure of the town of Butig, Lanao del Sur, by the Maute Group, an ISIL-inspired local armed band, Duterte challenged the same group to come down from the mountains and burn Marawi, Lanao's historical, intellectual, cultural, and economic capital. In the President's words: "Go ahead, be my guest. We will wait for you there."²⁹ The truth is no one was waiting, and it took five months — from May to October, 2017 — for the government to end the Maute Group's siege of the city. As reported by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, 77,170 families were displaced in the armed operations that ensued.³⁰ The center of the city was completely demolished, ancestral homes looted, properties destroyed, hundreds of lives lost including at least 45 civilians.

Families were sundered and, more than one year after Duterte declared the “liberation” of Marawi, residents have not been allowed to return to the Most Affected Areas. Adding to their heartbreak, those who have lost all in the war have been excluded from any participation in the planning of the rehabilitation of their city.^{31 32}

That war and displacement place a higher burden on women than on men is well documented worldwide. Previously untouched by war within their own premises and in the wake of the peace momentum under the Aquino government, Marawi women today find themselves needing to deal with a new reality of scarcity, marginalization, and physical and psychological insecurity, including unverified reports of sexual abuse. For the young women of Marawi, born decades after Marcos’ martial law, it is the first time to encounter the harsh face of militarization.

Impact on Women: The Populist Presidential Performance

The impact on women of Duterte populism is not limited to the effects of policies, whether implemented or not, whether distorted or not. As indicated earlier, populism involves both policies and performance or behavior, of which, in the case of Duterte, misogyny plays a dominant part. Daily doses of lewd and vulgar, anti-women speech and conduct unbecoming of a President, replicated by copy-cat presidential subalterns, have had the following impact, among others:

- Rape and violence against women have been trivialized and rationalized, accepted as understandable and forgivable if the woman is beautiful.
- Sexual harassment has been normalized.
- Cursing of mothers has been routinized.
- Marriage vows and equal and respectful human relations have been assaulted.
- Women’s competence and capacity for public service and leadership have been publicly diminished and ridiculed.
- A succession of women in senior public positions have been subjected to political persecution:
 - Publicly insulted and/or sexually harassed: Vice-President Leni Robredo, Former Ombudsman Conchita Carpio Morales;³³
 - Sued in court on ridiculous charges: Senator Risa Hontiveros;³⁴
 - Forcibly removed from office: Chief Justice Ma. Lourdes Sereno, Chair of the Commission on Higher Education Patricia Licuanan;^{35 36}
 - Slut-shamed and jailed: Senator Leila De Lima.³⁷
- Women leaders outside of government who have expressed public criticism of Duterte are now facing public persecution, led by Maria Ressa, the editor-in-chief of online media outfit Rappler, who has just been named one of the cover pages of Time Magazine’s 2018 Person of the Year.³⁸

While the data still need to be examined and explained, the Global Gender Gap

report released by the World Economic Forum has already reported the fall of the Philippines from 7th rank in 2015³⁹ and 2016 to 10th rank in 2017, a 3-point drop.⁴⁰ One may, furthermore, surmise that significant violations of the Philippines' state commitments to international conventions, led by the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, have been committed in the last two-and-a-half years.

In the face of this dramatic assault on women's rights and dignity, the established government mechanisms to ensure government compliance with national laws and international treaty commitments, most notably the Philippine Commission on Women and Congressional oversight bodies, have been perceived to be disappointingly muted. It is clear that the officially mandated bodies are unable or unwilling to call out the Chief Executive even for the most serious lapses and willful violation of women's rights.

Civil Society Response to Duterte Populism and Misogyny

Civil society responses to Duterte populism, particularly its assault on women's rights and dignity, have been both creative and bold but also very inadequate. While an anti-Duterte women's campaign was immediately launched in the wake of the candidate's first rape joke assaulting the memory of an Australian missionary who had been gang raped and killed, the truth is, as with other civil society "sectors," women's organizations were divided in their 2016 presidential vote. Duterte's following drew mainly, but not exclusively, from the Mindanao and Visayas sections of their membership and from the women's wing of the national democratic/extreme left bloc, which had secured Duterte's commitment to give them positions in his Cabinet.

- *EveryWoman*: EveryWoman was born out of the efforts of women leaders, many of them "retired" from activist engagement, to come to the defense and support of Duterte's first political target, Senator Leila De Lima. As a coalition of organizations, EveryWoman is now composed of twelve organizations and selected non-aligned individuals, with a multi-sectoral, inter-generational constituency and reach outside of Metro Manila. It has focused its actions on four main areas: (1) Defense of women defenders of democracy, (2) Support for women victims/surviving families of the drug war; (3) Campaign against the proliferation of lewd and vulgar language and behavior of public personalities, inspired by the President, primarily centered on its secondary FaceBook page *Bantay Bastos*; and (4) Surfacing the gendered perspective of all issues of the resistance. With the approach of the midterm electoral season, it is mobilizing support for selected candidates in the Opposition Coalition senatorial slate, including the only woman on the slate who is a civil society leader and humanitarian activist from Marawi. EveryWoman maintains a primary FaceBook page with over 109,000 followers. It constitutes one of the civil society hubs of *Tindig Pilipinas*, arguably the largest pro-democracy formation in the

country today, constituting a coalition between opposition political parties/formations and multi-sectoral civil society coalitions.⁴¹

- *Samahan ng Nagkakaisang Pamilya ng Pantawid (SNPP)*: SNPP was organized early in this administration as an effort of the beneficiaries of the Aquino government's centerpiece social protection measure, the Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) program or *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps)*, to protect the program in light of indications that it would be diminished under the Duterte administration. Now 25,000 women-strong, SNPP has taken action both on the streets and in the hallways of government offices and Congress to successfully oppose detrimental changes to the program while also pushing, in close coordination with opposition allies in Congress, for the enactment of a CCT law, now on second reading in the Senate, to ensure its sustainability through changes in political leadership.⁴²
- *Issue-based organized women's actions*: Sectoral and local actions have been carried out by women specifically focusing on two issues:
 - *Drug-related EJKs*: Actions include direct assistance to family-survivors of EJK, including assistance in legal documentation (for possible legal cases in the future) and psycho-social and socio-economic support, sometimes undertaken in coordination with church groups. This may be occasion-based, as in Christmas or school opening gift-giving, with several EveryWoman member-organizations pursuing the effort on a continuing basis, with a couple also conducting research on the gender impact of the anti-drug war. In October 2017, in conjunction with the country's national commemoration of All Saints Day, EveryWoman started its annual offering of *Undas ng Kababaihan*, in prayer and remembrance of those killed by EJK. In one provincial municipality, it was reported that local women leaders took up the practice of patrolling their streets in the evening to keep the residents safe from violent police operations.⁴³
 - *TRAIN*: This economic issue has become a rallying point for organized urban poor women. Marches and rallies have been held, most recently to mark International Working Women's Day on 5 December. Creative street action on the issue was also carried out by urban poor women to mark the opening of the school year to highlight the increased hardship for mothers to send their children to school.⁴⁴
- *#BabaeAko*: In May, 2018, a group of women leaders launched this hugely successful social media campaign, with "I am Woman" hashtag, in protest of Duterte forcing a married Filipina to kiss him on the lips during his meeting with overseas Filipinos in Seoul. The campaign caught widespread public attention and participation and was recognized by Time magazine as one of the most successful social media campaigns for the period.⁴⁵ There were indications that *#BabaeAko* would pursue more organizational work beyond social media but, to date, it has been limited to occasional statements and joining mass actions in small, though colorful, attention-getting contingents. It has not been able to repeat its initial social media success.⁴⁶

- *Promotion of anti-misogyny discourse:* On another level has been the effort to try to understand better what has happened in terms of the seeming acceptance by Filipinos of the dramatic turn-around and assault on women's rights and dignity, considering their much-vaunted respect for women and superior ranking on gender equality indicators. Since the election of Duterte, fora have been held by media practitioners, student organizations, party-list organizations, and academic centers covering different aspects of issues of misogyny. A forum series has been initiated exploring, in particular, the nexus between misogyny and authoritarianism.

Current civil society responses to Duterte populism have covered the full range of actions, including street action, both mass-based and more intimate and creative; organizing and coalition-building; theory-building and discourse; issuance of statements and social media campaigns; direct assistance to victims of human rights violations, especially EJK; lobbying with Congress; and an emerging electoral project. Impact has been limited, however, with severe logistic constraints and considering the multiple fronts of resistance which have to be maintained arising from the serial crises emanating from the prevailing scandal-ridden (mis) governance.

Recommendations

Considering the lack of serious openings for constructive engagement with government, recommendations are more focused on creating other, including parallel, centers for pushback and resistance:

- Back-to-basics, reinventing organizing. As it was at the beginning, women have to go back to rigorous base organizing, both community and sector-based. What has become clear from the onslaught of Duterte is that base organizing by civil society has been weakened through the years, as more civil society efforts have been moved to public advocacy and constructive engagement with government and other institutions. Constructive engagement bears fruit with a democratic government; resistance and pushback will need to build a renewed base. Organizing will have to be reinvented to be more responsive and appropriate to the changed times and technologies. Feminist discourse will need to be brought back to the center of women's organizing. A special recommendation is made to study and pursue the intertwined organizing of the two generational book-ends of the women's movement:
 - The millennials, who will need to define the challenge and the feminist response that is true for their time and their ways, drawing out the youthful energy and sharpness needed by the resistance.
 - The seniors (or "milleniors") who bring the lessons and experience of the past, with new time and resources at hand, and who, hopefully, are wise enough to know that the torch has passed.
- Developing a Women's Electoral and Political Project. A women's political

project needs to be developed and pursued to build a strong electoral base and winning strategy for women politicians; to reopen and regain lost space for women's meaningful participation in politics at local and national levels; and to develop and conduct political education for women's political engagement that is sharp, strategic, ethical, and feminist, whether inside or outside government

- Building an effective *Bantay Bastos* program. An effective advocacy and watchdog program to guard against misogyny has to be developed that will be able to draw sustained and expanding public engagement in calling out anti-women behavior and pushing back against assaults on women's rights and dignity.
- Developing a parallel civil society mechanism to fill the gap of public oversight over women's rights and status. In light of the inability of the mandated government mechanisms to hold the line for women, it is proposed that a civil society mechanism be set up to monitor compliance with and condemn and address violations against laws and international treaties, particularly focused on women's civil and political participation and violence against women. This may be a collaboration of women's organizations and academic institutions or think-tanks. Participation should be multi-sectoral and inclusive in terms of faith, ethnicity, age, and geography. It is expected that substantial international support will be needed to set it up and ensure its effective operation. It is proposed that a small committee be set up, convened by selected former chairs of the past and present national machinery for women, to think through and propose its possible parameters and terms of reference.

Though these recommendations emerged in the specific context of populism in the Philippines, these remain worth exploring elsewhere because similar movement across these fronts — including the reinvention and reinvigoration of organizing, the recovery of democratic spaces, the assertion of feminist politics, and the initiative of civil society to plug the gaps where work on women's rights is lacking — will do much to counter the rise of populist leaders in other countries around the world.

Conclusion

This paper set out to examine the manifestations of populism in Duterte's politics, its impact on policy and people — especially women, given the special brand of misogynist populist politics he practices — and the response of civil society in the country. What emerges is a near-textbook case of populism, with grim implications on people and policy, especially women. But while this account is sobering, cases of civil society resistance show small but encouraging signs of hope, and several recommendations are offered here for further examination and, hopefully, for use, moving forward.

The literature on populism is growing, and is likely to grow even more in the coming years given the speed and extent of its spread. By examining populist politics in the Philippines through the lens of gender, this paper contributes to this body of literature by offering a richer and sharper firsthand examination of the

phenomenon. In doing so, it hopes to help point the way forward to stem the tide and loosen the grip of populist politics not just in the Philippines, but elsewhere in the world.

Endnotes

- ¹Gutierrez, J. (2019, April 2). Philippine Supreme Court Orders Release of Documents in Duterte's Drug War. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/02/world/asia/philippines-duterte-drug-war.html>
- ²Villamor, F. (2018, August 31). Duterte Jokes About Rape, Again. Philippine Women Aren't Laughing. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/31/world/asia/philippines-rodrigo-duterte-rape-joke.html>
- ³Heydarian, R. (2018, March 20). Understanding Duterte's mind-boggling rise to power. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldpost/wp/2018/03/20/duterte/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.b90b015c76bf
- ⁴Philippines election: populism, celebrity, and ugly realities. (2016, May 8). *BBC News*. Retrieved from <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-36223755>
- ⁵Putzel, J. (2018, May 25). The Philippines as an Extreme Case in the Worldwide Rise of Populist Politics. *Medium*. <https://medium.com/@lseac/the-philippines-as-an-extreme-case-in-the-worldwide-rise-of-populist-politics-6cdd248a079b>
- ⁶Reed, J. (2018, July 26). Rodrigo Duterte and the populist playbook. *Financial Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.ft.com/content/98589db0-8132-11e8-bc55-50daf11b720d>
- ⁷Magcamit, M. & Arugay, A. (2017, March 17). Rodrigo Duterte and the making of the Populist Demigod: Part 1. *The Asia Dialogue*. Retrieved from <http://theasiadialogue.com/2017/03/17/rodrigo-duterte-and-the-making-of-a-populist-demigod-part-1/?fbclid=IwAR3yvTKB3Bq0I2x8IGrh6EbB53SAh-3vV1UqVuCOzZ3yZlAgpQms49oowMg>
- ⁸Matsuzawa, M. (2017, July 24). Duterte camp spent \$200,000 for troll army, Oxford study finds. *Philippine Star*. https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2017/07/24/1721044/duterte-camp-spent-200000-troll-army-oxford-study-finds?fbclid=IwAR3HL9WPNYmM8qm5L1XgWHQxBlkDitdJ-XfdMM-i2bxtK7Kic_mRvIz8Hg#jH5jMyHOVPMc81iS.99
- ⁹Moffitt, B. (2018, October 19). Populists are winning the social media war—aren't they?. *ABC*. Retrieved from https://abc.net.au/news/2018-10-19/populists-and-social-media-benjamin-moffitt-top-5/10355200?fbclid=IwAR1qmtF7A6kzuCjcMJpoFH4t7ySMftx6yIjsT2R7_XFRNXzCQLM4lm-vcfA
- ¹⁰Tanyag, M. (2018, March 6). Duterte, Hypermasculinity, and the Key to Populism. *International Affairs*. <http://www.internationalaffairs.org.au/australianoutlook/duterte-governing-hypermasculinity-philippines>
- ¹¹Alqaseer, S. & Pile, J. (2020). The President's Monologues: Duterte's Rhetoric and Toxic Masculinities. *Philippine Journal of Social Development*, 13, 35-51. Retrieved from https://cswcd.upd.edu.ph/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/PJSD-2020-Vol-13_Final-for-website.pdf
- ¹²Gutierrez, J. (2018, December 31). Philippine President Says He Sexually Abused Housemaid as a Teenager. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/31/world/asia/philippines-rodrigo-duterte-sexual-abuse.html>
- ¹³Ranada, P. (2018, February 14). From 'fragrant' Filipinas to shooting vaginas: Duterte's top 6 sexist remarks. *Rappler*. Retrieved from <https://www.rappler.com/nation/195934-rodrigo-duterte-most-sexist-remarks>
- ¹⁴Macas, T. (2017, May 26) Duterte backs soldiers under martial law, jokes, 'Maka-rape ka, akin yun'. *GMA News Online*. Retrieved from <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/nation/612266/duterte-backs-soldiers-under-martial-law-jokes-maka-rape-ka-akin-yun/story/>
- ¹⁵Ellis-Petersen, H. (2018, February 13). Philippines: Rodrigo Duterte orders soldiers to shoot female rebels 'in the vagina'. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/feb/13/philippines-rodrigo-duterte-orders-soldiers-to-shoot-female-rebels-in-the-vagina>

- ¹⁶Sullivan, M. (2017, June 21). Duterte Political Opponent Jailed In Philippines. *National Public Radio*. Retrieved from <https://www.npr.org/2017/06/21/533764283/duterte-political-opponent-jailed-in-philippines>
- ¹⁷ Duterte attacks rights officials Callamard and Bensouda. (2018, March 9). *Al Jazeera News*. Retrieved from <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/03/duterte-attacks-rights-officials-callamard-bensouda-180309091927105.html>
- ¹⁸Duterte says he'll 'finish drugs' two years after '3 to 6 months' promise. (2018, November 16). *Philippine Star*. Retrieved from <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2018/11/16/1869195/duterte-says-hell-finish-drugs-two-years-after-3-6-months-promise>
- ¹⁹Philippine Events of 2018 (2018). *Human Rights Watch*. Retrieved from <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2019/country-chapters/philippines>
- ²⁰Dionisio, E. (2018). Confronting Tokhang: Narratives of Women's Survival. Forum on Misogyny and Authoritarianism: Interrogating the Current Patterns of Political Leadership. Unpublished proceedings.
- ²¹Ibid.
- ²²Ranada, P. (2017, December 19). Duterte signs 1st tax reform package into law. *Rappler*. Retrieved from <https://www.rappler.com/nation/191729-rodrigo-duterte-signs-tax-reform-law>
- ²³Mendoza, R. (2019). Unmasking Duterte's Populism: Populist Rhetoric versus Policies in the Philippines. *Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung*. Retrieved from https://www.kas.de/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=39baa4c5-70d0-74b2-320a-66301ea411a7&groupId=252038
- ²⁴Summary Inflation Report Consumer Price Index: November 2017. (2017, December 5). *Philippine Statistics Authority*. Retrieved from <https://psa.gov.ph/statistics/survey/price/summary-inflation-report-consumer-price-index-2006100-november-2017>
- ²⁵Summary Inflation Report Consumer Price Index: October 2018. (2018, November 6). *Philippine Statistics Authority*. Retrieved from <https://psa.gov.ph/statistics/survey/price/summary-inflation-report-consumer-price-index-2012100-october-2018>
- ²⁶Punongbayan, J. (2018, June 2). Higher inflation: is TRAIN to blame? (Part 1). *Rappler*. Retrieved from <https://www.rappler.com/thought-leaders/203964-higher-inflation-is-train-to-blame-part-1>
- ²⁷Punongbayan, J. (2018, June 3). Higher inflation: is TRAIN to blame? (Part 2). *Rappler*. Retrieved from <https://www.rappler.com/thought-leaders/203966-higher-inflation-is-train-to-blame-part-2>
- ²⁸TRAIN law burdens majority of Filipino families, say study. (2018, October 6). *Asian Journal Press*. Retrieved from <http://www.asianjournal.com/philippines/across-the-islands/train-law-burdens-majority-of-filipino-families-say-study/>
- ²⁹Macas, T. (2016, December 12). Duterte rebuffs Maute Group on threat to burn Marawi if AFP attacks won't stop. *GMA News Online*. Retrieved from <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/nation/592213/duterte-rebuffs-maute-group-on-threat-to-burn-marawi-if-afp-attacks-won-t-stop/story/>
- ³⁰IDP Protection Assessment Report. (2017, May 23) *UN High Commissioner for Refugees*. Retrieved from http://www.protectionclusterphilippines.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/IDPPAR-Marawi-Displacement_Issue-06.pdf
- ³¹Betteridge-Moes, M. (2017, October 30). What happened in Marawi?. *Al Jazeera*. Retrieved from <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2017/10/happened-marawi-171029085314348.html>
- ³²Sarmiento, B.S. (2019, April 8). Nearly 18 months after 'liberation' Marawi has yet to rise from the ashes of war. *Minda News*. Retrieved from <https://www.mindanews.com/special-reports/2019/04/nearly-18-months-after-liberation-marawi-has-yet-to-rise-from-the-ashes-of-war/>
- ³³Cabato, R. (2018, March 2). Robredo: Women in gov't most vocal, pressed under Duterte admin. *CNN Philippines*. Retrieved from <http://cnnphilippines.com/news/2018/03/01/Robredo-women-most-vocal-pressed-under-Duterte-admin.html>
- ³⁴Ayalin, A. (2017, September 26). Wiretapping, kidnapping raps filed vs Hontiveros. *ABS-CBN News*. Retrieved from <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/09/25/17/wiretapping-kidnapping-raps-filed-vs-hontiveros>
- ³⁵Orellana, F. (2018, January 15). Licuanan resigns as CHED chair. *Philippine Daily Inquirer*. Retrieved

from <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/960262/breaking-licuanan-resigns-as-ched-chair>

³⁶Reformina, I. (2018, June 19) Supreme Court rules CJ Sereno ouster final. *ABS-CBN News*. Retrieved from <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/06/19/18/supreme-court-rules-cj-sereno-ouster-final>

³⁷Sherwell, P. (2016, October 20). How President Duterte is using rumours of a sex tape to slut-shame a senator. *The Independent*. Retrieved from <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/politics/how-president-duterte-is-using-rumours-of-a-sex-tape-to-slut-shame-a-senator-a7367381.html>

³⁸Albright, M. (2019) Maria Ressa. *Time.com*. Retrieved from <https://time.com/collection/100-most-influential-people-2019/5567672/maria-ressa/>

³⁹The Global Gender Gap Report 2015. (2015). *World Economic Forum*. Retrieved from <http://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2015/>

⁴⁰The Global Gender Gap Report 2017. (2017, November 2). *World Economic Forum*. Retrieved from <https://www.weforum.org/reports/the-global-gender-gap-report-2017>

⁴¹State of Democracy Report Philippines – Populism in the Philippines: Responses of Civil Society. (2018). *International Center for Innovation, Transformation and Excellence in Governance*.

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³Lopez, E. (2017, October 31). A different Undas: Remembering the victims of the drug war. *Rappler*. Retrieved from <https://www.rappler.com/nation/features/186897-different-undas-remembrance-victims-drug-war-sampaloc>

⁴⁴Gonzales, N. (2018, March 11) Women march against Train Law. *Northern Dispatch Online*. Retrieved from <http://www.nordis.net/2018/03/women-march-against-train-law/>

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶#BabaeAko campaign: Filipino women fight back against Duterte's misogyny. (2018, May 21). *Rappler*. Retrieved from <https://www.rappler.com/move-ph/202990-babae-ako-social-media-campaign-filipino-women-fight-duterte-misogyny>

TWO SPEECHES ON THE DEFENSE OF DEMOCRACY AND WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS



INCITEGov chairperson Teresita Quintos Deles was invited to speak before the Subcommittee on International Human Rights (SDIR) of the Canadian House of Commons in April 2019 as part of its then on-going study on the gender-specific challenges faced by women human rights defenders all over the world. In her speech, Deles gave an overview of the human rights situation in the Philippines, particularly the continuing targeting and victimization of women both in the political arena and in local communities. The full video of the SDIR meeting can be accessed here: <https://www.bit.ly/SDIR04Apr2019>

INSULT TO INJURY: HOW A POPULIST PRESIDENT DEGRADES WOMEN

Statement delivered before the Subcommittee on International Human Rights (SDIR) of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development of the Canadian House of Commons

By Teresita Quintos Deles, International Center for Innovation, Transformation and Excellence in Governance (INCITEGov), Philippines
4 April 2019

To the Honorable Chair and Members of the Subcommittee, thank-you for inviting me to appear before you this afternoon in relation to the study you are conducting on the gender-specific challenges faced by Women Human Rights Defenders.

Madame Chair, it is with some reluctance but also great urgency that I have come from the other side of the globe to speak on the human rights situation in the Philippines, particularly the disturbing climate of unreserved and blatant targeting and victimization of women that today prevails under the Duterte regime, which has blurred, if not obliterated, the distinction between women human rights victims and women human rights defenders.

Reluctance because, to be frank, human rights has not been the focus of my work over the past several decades. Since 1987, following the downfall of the Marcos dictatorship, my major efforts have focused on the field of conflict resolution and peacebuilding. And, while, as a “founding mother” of the present day Philippine women’s movement, I have dealt with the issues of women’s economic rights, political empowerment, child care support, and violence against women, the attacks faced by Filipino women today are different: they are vulgar, carried out publicly and without restraint and outside of any personal relationship with the targets.

The vilification of women human rights advocates appears to be without any moral or social mooring or justification, transgressing everything that Filipinos have been taught generation after generation: that is, to respect and honor women. Most tellingly, it is done without any provocation, other than what is well-known and documented: that women have been among the first, most vocal, and most consistent in speaking up against the abuses of this regime.

In short, this period is unique in our history. Having lived through the

Marcos dictatorship, we had thought then that Marcos' statement, directed against Cory Aquino, that "women belong in the bedroom," was already the height of misogyny.

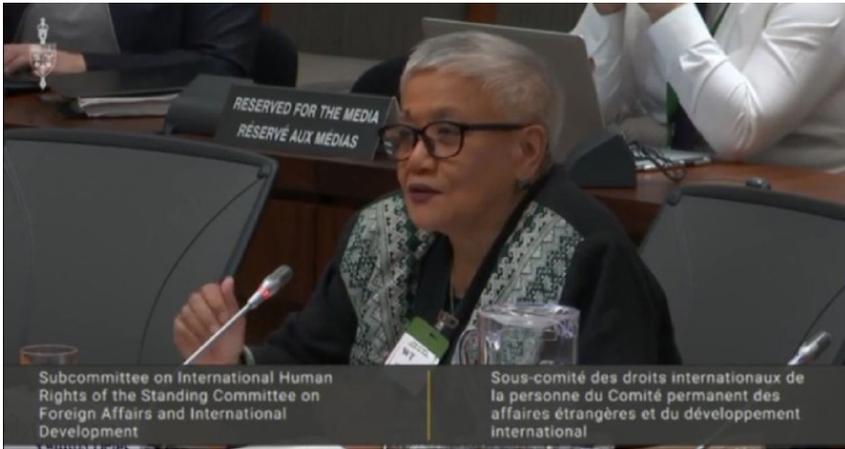
The intervening years and the many gains that the women's movement has attained — including broader political and social participation in government and in the private sector, and the passage of laws such as the Magna Carta of Women, the Anti-Violence Against Women and their Children Law, the Anti-Sexual Harassment Act, amendments to the Anti-Rape Law, the Reproductive Health Law finally enacted in 2012, and a host of other legislation — contributed to our confidence, even complacency, that attacks against women of the sort, gravity, frequency, flagrancy, and willfulness, as is now being perpetrated by Duterte and his minions, are not even a thing of the past in Philippine society — it was never acceptable and, we believed, it never would be.

And yet, here we are, just two and a half years into his presidency, and Duterte has already succeeded in victimizing every single woman who has heard him order soldiers to shoot women rebels in the vagina to make them worthless, reminisce about his sexually violating their family helper while she slept, opine that rape and sexual assault are only to be expected if a woman is attractive, trivialize the trauma of sexual violence when he called his own daughter "a drama queen" when she spoke up about being raped. Early in his presidential campaign, he joked that the "mayor should have been first" in raping a murdered Australian nun. He has called women who oppose him "sluts" and "immoral women" in order to undermine the truth that they dare speak to his power.

Thus, I also come before you today with a sense of urgency, because perhaps the most dangerous thing we can do is to think that: (1) this behavior by the President only affects women; and (2) Duterte is simply unhinged when he makes these statements or condones behavior and mindsets detrimental to women. There is, in fact, method to his madness.

Duterte has weaponized the degradation of women in order to delegitimize their calls for the government to discharge its constitutional duty and international obligation to respect and promote human rights, and to defend Philippine sovereignty and democracy. He insults and shames women to neutralize their efforts to shed light on the true situation prevailing in the Philippines: the attempts to change the constitution in order to entrench political dynasties and protect himself against any call to accountability, the unfavorable deals that the government is making with China, the reality about the War on Drugs, and about Martial Law in Mindanao.

His are calculated attacks that aim to silence dissent by making an example of the women he has publicly vilified, slut-shamed and punished, in order to promote a culture of impunity that has resulted in the narrowing of political, social and economic discourse in the country. Along with the systematic



Teresita Quintos Deles explaining the human rights situation in the Philippines before the Subcommittee on International Human Rights (SDIR) of the Canadian House of Commons in April 2019.

erosion of the independence of institutions that are meant to serve as checks on the abuse and concentration of powers, he has delivered one message: if you don't want to be attacked, don't speak out against Duterte. Better yet, tow the line and support Duterte's narrative: there are no extrajudicial killings, everything is going well in Mindanao, Philippine sovereignty is robust and kicking. Everything he says to the contrary is just a joke, and every fact that points to a different reality is fake news.

He is turning the Filipino into his image of what a woman should be: easily cowed, easily silenced, unquestioning, complicit. Weak, subservient, and ultimately, creatures that bend to the whim of their masters: men, specifically, Duterte. He may attempt to cast his attacks as gender-specific, but the damage he wreaks transcends gender lines.

We can see it in whom he personally targets: strong and independent women.

Women like Senator Leila M. De Lima who, as then chair of the Senate Committee on Justice and Human Rights, initiated an inquiry into the spate of extrajudicial killings apparently connected with his declared "War on Drugs." One day, Senator De Lima was a well-respected public servant serving her first term of office as an elected official, a lawyer by training, a defender of human rights and the Rule of Law by choice. The next day, she is, all of a sudden, the so-called "Mother of all drug lords," who, today, marks her 770th day in detention, based on trumped-up illegal drug trading charges that have no evidence to back them up, save for the self-serving and perjured testimonies of actual, self-confessed drug lords.

Women like Chief Justice Ma. Lourdes Sereno who was unconstitutionally ousted from her post, after she had dared call out the fakeness of Duterte's drug list, which included judges long dead or retired or who had acted on Petitions filed in court to probe his War on Drugs.

Women like Senator Risa Hontiveros who has been charged with everything from kidnapping to wire-tapping, especially after she took steps to secure eyewitnesses to the killing of 17-year-old EJK victim, Kian De Los Santos, which, to this date, remains the only case, out of thousands of deaths, that has resulted in a conviction.

Women like UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples, Victoria Tauli Corpuz, who was in a position to look into the true situation of the IPs displaced by the Marawi siege and the ongoing Martial Law in Mindanao but was tagged by the government as a member of a terrorist group, thus endangering her and undermining her work.

Women like Maria Ressa, who now faces eleven live cases in court and who was arrested and released on bail for the 7th time last Friday after she, as CEO of the online Rappler, came under attack by the Duterte Administration for publishing incisive news and commentaries on national issues, including reportage on the so-called “war on drugs.”

These have sent a very clear, chilling message: if this can be done to powerful and prominent women — who already have a platform, resources, and political and legal acumen, not just to defend others but also themselves — then with greater ease can it be done to others.

And it is being done to others, to the even more vulnerable of women and children. I will now speak about the two most pressing human rights crises we now face in the Philippines: the extra-judicial killings connected to the so-called war on drugs, and the continuing crisis in Marawi city in Mindanao.

Countless women and children have been widowed and orphaned by the bloody war on drugs. The actual death toll is disputed but the Supreme Court has established that, by 2017, 20,232 have already been killed; by now, the number could easily reach between 25,000 and 30,000.

While all available documentation shows that most of those killed are men, a closer examination of the facts will reveal the severe impact on the women: wives, mothers, sisters, daughters of the murdered men who are now left to pick up the pieces of their families’ broken lives. Finding livelihood, keeping children in school, addressing health issues which now include recovery and healing from trauma — these are their immediate concerns, assuming they have managed to give their dead a decent burial.

A study conducted by my women’s organization, PILIPINA, furthermore underscores the violation of women’s rights and dignity in the way the anti-drug operations are carried out: among others, the violent intrusion into the homes of the poor, which are supposed to be women’s safe and sacred space, no matter how lowly; denial of their right to care for their dead or wounded; theft of their few belongings; threats of being taken to substitute for their targeted male relatives when they are not found in the premises; vulnerability to sexual harassment, prostitution, and human trafficking. The women who have been

left behind have become, in the words of the study, a new “underclass among the urban poor: often ostracized and isolated by their neighbors, terrorized by barangay officials and the murderers of their family members, vulnerable to sexual exploitation.”

To date, two petitions have been filed for the issuance of a writ of amparo, a temporary protection order prohibiting police authorities from getting near the residences and workplaces of the families of EJK victims. The second one was filed in October 2017, on behalf of the families of 35 residents of San Andres Bukid, an urban poor community in Manila, who were killed within a 13-month period. The San Andres Bukid petitioners were led by Sr. Ma. Juanita Daño of the Religious of the Good Shepherd, who has been living among the poor of San Andres for many years. Her apostolate being centered on building “basic ecclesial communities” (BEC), Sr. Juanita or Nenet has formed an all-women group of around 20 members which meets weekly to reflect on the challenge of the Gospel in their lives. Men were initially invited to join the group, but they didn’t stay because they were not comfortable with the sharing process.

When the killings started, the residents thought that the first death was meant only to serve as a warning to the drug users and pushers in the neighborhood. But the killings did not stop and the rising number of fatalities included those not involved with drugs, including several youth. Members of Sr. Nenet’s core group were the first to act. In her words, they were mothers. It was not okay with them that their neighbors were getting killed. They started with candle-lighting and holding prayer service for the dead — subtle actions, Sr. Nenet points out. They became even more disturbed when they heard people say that those who were killed were worthless and deserved to die. With no action forthcoming from their parish priest, Sr. Nenet went to the Bishop, who called for a meeting with NGO lawyers. The most eager among the lawyers was a young woman, Atty. Tin Antonio of Centerlaw. While gathering data and collecting testimony, Atty. Antonio joined the women in cooking, washing clothes, and singing with the choir at funerals.

Many of the petitioners were hesitant to join the legal action at first. They received threats from the police. The village officials got angry with them. Even their families asked if filing the case would bring the dead back to life. But they persisted. Sister told the petitioners: Even if we lose, at least you can say you fought for your loved ones. The media report about the deaths but they have no names, only numbers. Identifying and naming them, you give them back their dignity.

Two days ago, the Supreme Court ordered the government to release all documents related to Duterte’s anti-drug war. The police assigned to the neighborhood have been changed. Killings have waned but they still happen under a different form — no longer by the police but by riding-in-tandem teams. Every BEC member’s home now has a tarpaulin on the front door. On the tarp are written 10 basic rights of citizens. Everyone is encouraged to memorize the

list so they know what to do in case they are picked up or threatened. Sr. Nenet herself narrowly escaped being identified because she was not wearing a veil when the village ombud came looking for a nun.

I now raise the second pressing human rights issue arising from the displacement caused by the five-month Marawi siege. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees reports that 77,170 families were displaced by the armed operation that began in May 2017. The city center was completely demolished, ancestral homes looted, properties destroyed, hundreds of lives lost, including 45 civilians. Families were and continue to be sundered and, now, almost two years after Duterte declared the “liberation” of Marawi, residents have not been allowed to return to the Most Affected Area (MAA) in the center of the city. Adding to their heartbreak, they continue to be excluded from any participation in the planning of the rehabilitation of their city.

That war and displacement place a higher burden on women than on men is well documented worldwide. But even the start of the siege was ominous: when Duterte declared martial law covering the whole of Mindanao as a response to the siege, he sought to motivate the soldiers to fight by telling them that, if they raped up to three women, it would be on him. Today, Marawi women find themselves dealing with a new reality of scarcity, marginalization, and physical and psychological insecurity, including unverified reports of sexual abuse.

The tragedy is that the human rights defenders of Marawi are themselves displaced and among those who have lost everything. Civil society woman leader Samira Gutoc was the lone Moro voice who persisted in speaking out against the declaration of martial law when the issue was debated on the floor of Congress. Her mother and three-year-old son were caught in their home at the city center when the battle broke out. Her ancestral home and all in it were lost. Like most of her people, she identifies herself as an IDP. Marawi civil society leaders today are organizing and strategizing to get their voices heard by government, even as they are still dealing with the loss of their dead and the missing, inhuman conditions in evacuation sites, the tearing up of the tightly woven social fabric of their lives, the threatened extinction of their culture and their identity, the complete lack of reliable information of what will happen next. They are standing up on their own because, if not, who else will, since the government seems intent to sweep the rubble of Marawi under the rug, as if an entire, old and bustling city — and its needs and its people — has turned invisible overnight?

Despite troubling reports on the conduct of the siege and the conditions of the evacuation centers, no independent inquiry has been conducted to uncover the true state of Marawi. The lack of information on the status of the internally displaced and the actual death toll is already distressing, but what is depressingly and disturbingly true is that, whatever is being reported is just the tip of the iceberg of an escalating human rights crisis.

Now, the greatest danger, in all these cases — from the vilification of powerful and empowering women to the victimization of other women, human rights defenders included, especially those in the context of drug-related EJKs and the Marawi siege — is that no one seems to be listening, while the government is exerting efforts to obscure reality.

We have attempted to fight the growingly alarming status quo in many, but admittedly small ways:

For instance, the women’s coalition, EveryWoman, has launched a FaceBook page, called “*Bantay Bastos*” (which very roughly translates to “Watchdog Against Vulgarity”) in order to combat the culture of misogyny. The women’s organization PILIPINA mobilizes Women Defend Democracy actions spearheaded by its chapters nationwide. A high-impact social media campaign hashtagged “*BabaeAko*” (I am Woman”), was carried out in the wake of the outrage that met Duterte’s kissing a married overseas Filipina on the lips on a public stage during his state visit to Seoul. But our efforts have only demonstrated the magnitude of the problem which is exacerbated by the use of trolls and fake or anonymous accounts that continue to spread toxic masculinity and misogyny.

For survivors of EJK victims, primarily women, actions include direct assistance, covering psycho-social counselling (including a three-day family workcamp conducted the women’s coalition Baigani to start the wholistic healing of survivor families), scholarships for children, and socio-economic support, sometimes undertaken with church groups. As part of the country’s yearly commemoration of All Saints Day in November, women’s groups have started holding *Undas ng Kababaihan* (“women’s mourning”) as prayer memorials for those killed. In one provincial municipality, local women leaders took up the group practice of patrolling their streets to ensure the safety of their residents. Paralegal trainings are being held to teach people not just about their basic rights but, more importantly these days, about practical and safe ways to invoke their rights and prevent EJKs in their areas. Alternative law groups are pursuing the documentation of EJK cases for some future time, if not today, under better circumstances when justice may be pursued.

On International Women’s Day last 8 March, for the first time in people’s memory, broad-based women’s formations crossed political, ideological, sectoral, and generational divides to hold a united women’s action against misogyny, carrying a common call: *Tama Na. Sulong Kababaihan* (translated — “Enough! Women, surge!).

But these remain small and, to be candid, largely disjointed efforts so far. The chilling effect and culture of impunity cultivated by Duterte have made it difficult to do anything more organized, comprehensive, and visible. There is a feeling that to do too much is to catch attention; and to catch attention, at this time, may be counterproductive and even dangerous. Which is why many

people are resorting to more subtle forms of protest, if you may call them that, such as simply refusing to laugh at Duterte's crass jokes during his speeches.

Which is why we consider this as more than just a domestic concern. This calls for international solidarity. This, in fact, is the most appropriate time to mobilize the global community. For it is when local advocates are themselves being attacked and endangered that the international community of human rights defenders are most needed to step up. Let our people know that someone is watching. Help us to grow the hope and courage of your vigilance and solidarity, that we may break the climate of fear and impunity.

Thus, we call on the international community not to depend on what the Philippine government says. Demand answers to your questions in the strongest possible terms. Leave the Duterte administration no doubt that a time for reckoning will come to those who refuse to respect human rights, especially those who prey on their own people for the sake of power.

Thank-you, Madame Chair and all members of the Subcommittee. Good afternoon.

In June 2019, the Subcommittee on International Human Rights (SDIR) of the Canadian House of Commons gave recognition to INCITEGov chairperson Teresita Quintos Deles for her courageous work as a human rights champion, along with Marguerite Barankitse (Burundi) and Sara Hossain (Bangladesh). The honor was bestowed unanimously by Members of the committee from all political parties. Below is the speech that Deles delivered for the occasion. The video can be accessed here: <https://www.bit.ly/SDIR06Jun2019>

DEFENDING HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE PHILIPPINES IS A DANGEROUS AND HEROIC ACT

Statement delivered before the Subcommittee on International Human Rights (SDIR) of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development of the Canadian House of Commons on The Recognition of International Human Rights Champions

By Teresita Quintos Deles, International Center on Innovation, Transformation and Excellence in Governance (INCITEGov). Philippines
6 June 2019

To the Honorable Chair Anita Vandenbeld and the Members of the Subcommittee, thank-you for inviting me again to appear before this Subcommittee, this time in relation to the study you are conducting on the Recognition of International Human Rights Champions.

Receiving an award or recognition for one's work is undoubtedly an occasion for great satisfaction and joy, but this time it is also with a sobering thought that this recognition and celebration are necessary today because the situation of human rights in my country has become so dire. Championing human rights is really just common sense and regular work — a normal part of life — except when human rights are threatened and violated every day, and especially when the threat emanates from the highest level of government. Then, to uphold and defend human rights becomes a dangerous act and to persist in its defense becomes extraordinary and heroic. That is how it is in the Philippines today. It is not the way it's supposed to be, and I would give anything — everything! — not to have to be here, because it would mean that it's all right in my homeland and working on human rights would need no special acknowledgment.

But we all know that is not the case and it is with profound gratitude that I take my place in the panel before you today. Thank-you for providing a safe space for us to be able to speak about the crisis of human rights in our respective countries. Thank-you for giving us a platform to remind the world that, in the darkness that envelopes our home countries today, there are people who continue to struggle and who refuse to surrender to the dark night. I know that today's honor speaks less to me and my achievements and more to the importance of doing this work today. Even more I recognize that I am here not just for myself but for the many more who continue to fight, especially the women who have been especially targeted for persecution and intimidation, especially the women in the communities which have encountered and continue to endure the state's most brutal violence.

As I told you last April, the promotion of human rights has not really been the focus of my work over the past several decades. Since 1987, following the downfall of Marcos, my major effort has focused on the field of conflict resolution and peacebuilding. Pursuing the belief that civilians and ordinary, unarmed citizens are major stakeholders, if not the primary claimants, in any peace process; that peace talks are too important to be left just to the combatants to work out; and that peace work is constant and collective work, we built the Philippine peace movement that, among other things, established and upheld peace zones which community residents declared as off-limits to armed conflict and any display of weapons; that unilaterally declared “people’s ceasefires” to silence the guns marking special occasions; that pushed the government to set up a full time peace office under the Office of the President and to adopt a multi-track peace policy to end the many fronts of internal armed conflict which are legacy of the Marcos dictatorship.

In 2010, I crossed over from civil society to public service for the second time, to serve in the Aquino Cabinet as overseer of this peace office. Under my watch, in March 2014, the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro, or CAB, was signed, which marked the end of 17 years of protracted peace negotiations and four decades of armed conflict between the Philippine government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, or MILF. Three women signed the CAB on the part of government, led by the government’s chief negotiator — a first in the world! Despite stalled implementation and presidential waffling in the first years of the Duterte presidency, the CAB has held, putting in place the new and enhanced Bangsamoro Autonomous Region, with the transitional regional government led by the MILF.

On the other hand, my work with the women’s movement started earlier, in 1981, when I co-founded PILIPINA with a handful of NGO women, arguably the first women’s organization in the Philippines which explicitly tagged itself as feminist. At this time, Imelda Marcos was parading her brand of leadership on the global stage, shaping the national machinery for women into her image, while the conjugal dictatorship ran a well-oiled machinery of murder and plunder which bloodied the countryside and bled the national coffers dry. There came to be a blossoming of women’s organizations and, in 1985, we were confident and consolidated enough to bring an alternative NGO report to the Nairobi World Women’s Conference. Women would join the fight against Marcos on all fronts and so it was that the images of our 1986 EDSA people power revolution would show military tanks stopped in their tracks by outstretched hands holding rosaries and flowers.

The intervening years after EDSA saw the women’s movement building on its gains, pushing relentlessly to overcome and stretch the limits of women’s participation in the public and private spheres, incrementally building a legal architecture which today includes laws against sexual harassment, violence against women and children, rape including in marriage; legislation upholding



Teresa Quintos Deles (seated right) with fellow human rights champions Marguerite Barankitse (Burundi) and Sara Hossain (Bangladesh) and the members of the Subcommittee on International Human Rights (SDIR) of the Canadian House of Commons during the recognition in June 2019. Photo from MP Anita Vandenbeld's Facebook page.

the rights of women in agriculture and the informal sector; a long-fought, hard-won reproductive health law; an omnibus Magna Carta of Women which embeds CEDAW in Philippine domestic law. Even in the just-ended last Congress, through the hard work of the battered opposition led by Senator Risa Hontiveros, the Safe Streets and Public Spaces Law was passed. Notably, the law was not signed by the President; not being vetoed, it simply lapsed into law.

Always, there was more work to be done, in homes, work places, and public spaces, to make sure that laws became reality, that women overcome barriers of culture and poverty, and to continuously assert that the glass ceilings being broken by Filipino women should not blind us to the multiple loads and burdens and sometimes impossible pain that our sisters who barely survive in the cellar continue to suffer. The work was far from done but, Filipino women being ranked at the top of Asia's gender equality index and the only Asian country in the top ten global ranking, we felt assured that we were on the right track, that gains would not be reversed, it could only get better. Did the women's movement get complacent? Possibly. Probably. Our base organizing work no longer enflamed the fire in the belly. Gender equality efforts turned more technical and maybe even bureaucratic, less feminist and fierce.

Certainly, we were not ready for the way our world has turned upside down since Duterte took office in July 2016. We never imagined we would ever have to face attacks against women of the sort, gravity, frequency, flagrancy, and willfulness that is now our almost-daily fare. No woman has been spared — and no man — as everyone's mother, daughter, sister, aunt, and grandmother have been made more vulnerable to violence, both physical and psychological. No one has been spared. Everyone has been urged to succumb to their basest instincts — as senior officials laugh, take pictures, and rationalize presidential misbehavior and large portions of the audience laugh and call the president

authentic — finally, a president who is one of them. This is a Philippines we have never known and never imagined it could be. The fight has to be fought every day and at every front and level to make sure this does not become our permanent reality.

We are caught off-balance by the cruelty and viciousness, indeed by the utter shamelessness of Duterte's attacks on women. But, as I pointed out last time, there is in fact method in his madness. He is not simply unhinged. His are calculated attacks that aim to silence dissent by making an example of the women he has publicly vilified, slut-shamed, and punished, in order to promote the culture of impunity that has resulted in the narrowing of political, social, and economic discourse in the country. Let us not forget the growing list of women leaders who have dared to cross his line and have suffered the high cost of championing human rights and upholding the rule of law in the Philippines today. I will not mention them now because of time constraints but only single out Senator Leila de Lima who today marks her 833rd day in solitary detention even as her court trials are going nowhere.

The message is clear and chilling: if this can be done to powerful and prominent women who already have a platform, resources and political and legal acumen not just to defend others but also themselves, then with greater ease can it be done to others.

In April, I also spoke about the two most pressing human rights crises that are burning in the Philippines today. I regret to inform this Subcommittee that the crises continue to rage with no end in sight:

The killings continue in the bloody war on drugs which has widowed countless women and orphaned countless children, becoming a new underclass of the urban poor. With the Philippine Supreme Court establishing that more than 20,000 have already been killed by 2017, the number of victims already far exceed the 3,257 reported killed under Marcos' martial law. In the face of growing criticism of his bloody drug war by the Church and other sectors, Duterte pronounced during his State of the Nation Address in July last year, that his war on drugs will continue; in his words: "The war against illegal drugs will not be sidelined. Instead it will be as relentless, as chilling, if you will, as the day it began." It is a war against the poor, now spreading to other urbanized areas outside of Manila. Its costs will haunt us for generations.

In Marawi, the tent city set up during the siege — now mostly dusty, torn, and still without potable water — is still standing as home to displaced residents who have had to mark their second Ramadan since the siege still not knowing when they will be allowed to return to their homes in the most affected areas in the center of the city, still without a shadow of a workable rehabilitation plan that they can look forward to and plan for. Even worse, before the end of April after my first appearance here, Duterte expressed his inclination to pass on the costs of the rehabilitation of the city he had ordered carpet-

bombed to the private sector. Anyway, he said, the people there have a lot of money. This, despite the huge amount his administration has received from the international community precisely for the rebuilding of the ruined city. Even today, no independent inquiry has been conducted on the true state of Marawi. We hear troubling reports on the conduct of the siege and the conditions in its aftermath, but these remain unverified, the distressing implication being: whatever is being reported now is just the tip of the iceberg of an escalating human rights and humanitarian crisis. Of such crisis are new, more vicious wars born.

We continue to fight the alarming status quo but the fight has just gotten harder. The results of the recent elections have now all but solidified Duterte's control over all three branches of government with the opposition failing to win any seat in the Senate, leaving the minority even more miniscule and vulnerable. Whether this was actually a blanket public endorsement of Duterte and a resounding win in a referendum on his policies is still debatable — there were certainly enough anomalies in the conduct of the elections that the Commission on Elections is being asked to account. What is certain is the recent electoral results will only further embolden Duterte and his forces. And so, even as our work continues all the same, we also have to brace for harder storms ahead.

We cannot operate on the assumption that democracies will course-correct on their own. Whether in the Philippines or elsewhere, we cannot assume that the storm will simply pass, that a country will eventually see sense and move towards justice and progress, that voters will see evidence and elect better leaders — leaders who won't attack women, leave a city ruined and promptly shun responsibility, and kill thousands in a futile and inutile policy. Our recent elections prove that. For instance, the chief implementor of the brutal war on drugs, despite the thousands killed, is now a Senator.

The violence of misogyny, the brutality of the war on drugs, the neglect of Marawi — these aberrations have existed before and, despite our best efforts, will likely exist for some time more. These are crimes for which there must someday come a full accounting. But, at the same time, it is also becoming clear that, more than the violence, more than the brutality and the neglect, the crime of our times is silence.

We are not all silent in the Philippines. A growing number are pushing back — and pushing back harder. There are many stories to tell but we don't have time to tell these stories now. Let me just mention my women's coalition, EveryWoman. We are fighting, but too few are listening. And the government is taking every effort to obscure reality and stifle dissent.

And so again we have to insist: this cannot be just a domestic concern. When local human rights defenders are themselves attacked and persecuted, then the role of the international community of human rights defenders becomes even more important. It becomes essential.

So again I ask, on behalf of all of those who are fighting at home, for the world community to stand with us. Let not Duterte and his minions think that there will be no reckoning for those who prey on their own people for the sake of power.

As the Canadian government launches the Equality Fund Canada, may I also ask the Subcommittee to consider how the Fund may ensure that support is given to the women and women's organizations who are "pushing back against the pushback," in the words of one press release on the Fund.

Again, thank-you to the Subcommittee. It is a great honor to be considered part of this important community. Good afternoon.

AFTERWORD

By Joshua Carlo T. Pile

Rodrigo Duterte did not invent populism.

And yet the case of the Philippines should be of great interest not just to serious students of history and politics, but to all who have a stake in the survival of democracy and social equity anywhere in the world.

This monograph has taken the contested concept of populism, mapped its elements, and used this as a lens through which we can examine the practice of politics under Duterte. What emerges here, as this monograph made clear, is a near-textbook case of populism: one where society is polarized between the pure and poor masses needing protection and the corrupt elite and their supporters, or in the case of the Philippines, the DDS and the *Dilawan*; the projection of the populist leader as outsider; the construction of crisis; the personification of the strongman with political will; the performance of bad manners; and the massive use of social media to push its own narrative.

Near-textbook because it carries a strain that is even more contested in the academic discourse: that is, populism and misogyny interlinked. This strain arguably makes populism more virulent and more toxic; but as this monograph explained, it also serves to intensify the polarization of society for populist ends, and consolidate support for populist leadership. But the practice and performance of gender and populism go beyond contestations of concepts and definitions; in the Philippines most especially, gender and populism involve questions of life or death; progress or poverty; freedom or repression. This is evident in the three policy cases examined by this monograph, as well as in its recounting of the impact that Duterte's populist performance has had on women.

This is also made clear in the two speeches on the defense of democracy and women's human rights — the "Ottawa Speeches" — delivered by Deles before the Canadian House of Commons — first in April 2019 during its study of women human rights defenders, then in June 2019 when it honored her as one of these defenders. These speeches, reproduced as the second half of this monograph, explored the intersection of populism and misogyny and their interplay with authoritarianism and disregard for human rights — and laid bare the often deadly consequences of this mix, evident in the two most pressing human rights crises being faced then by the country: the Marawi Siege and its aftermath, and the extrajudicial killings under the guise of a campaign against illegal drugs.

Two important points were made here: first, that this state of affairs does not exclusively affect women, and, second, that this is not solely the product of an unhinged mind; there is, as Deles put it, method to Duterte's madness.

Because in the Ottawa Speeches, the endgame of this vicious mix of misogyny, populism, and authoritarianism emerges: its own perpetuation.

And yet in the face of all this, we take heart. We see emerging developments in women's organized resistance against Duterte and his populism recounted in this monograph's account of gender and populism in the Philippines and in the Ottawa Speeches — as in the case of EveryWoman and its growing coalition of multi-sectoral and intergenerational organizations and individuals and the promotion of discourse countering misogyny; *Samahan ng Nagkakaisang Pamilya ng Pantawid* and its work to organize and defend the gains of social protection reforms in the country; issue-based organized women's actions taking on critical issues such as the drug-related extrajudicial killings in the country and tax reform and the economy; the #*BabaeAko* social media campaign. This monograph also offered a way forward to counter populism and misogyny: to return to the basics and reinvent organizing; to bring a quantum leap in women's electoral and political participation; to build programs to guard against misogyny; and to develop parallel civil society mechanisms on issues of women's rights where populist governments fail and refuse to work.

Duterte did not invent populism — and the work ahead also requires us to examine, admit, and address, in open dialogue, the very real grievances and circumstances which made this strain of populism possible at this point in our history. The work ahead requires us to genuinely engage and interrogate populist leaders or at least their supporters to unmask populist performances and promises as yet more empty posturing, as yet more noise and fury signifying nothing. The work ahead requires us not to fall into the trap of fighting fire with fire — that is, to resort to knee-jerk binaries and unthinking polarization by rallying the public to oppose without a clear understanding of what corrupts the populist, to posture as outsider reformers, to respond with similar bad manners, and so on: in short, populism will not be solved by more populism.

Instead we guard, we resist, we engage, we educate, we organize, so as to let populism collapse on the own inescapable weight of its empty promises and posturing and performances. We guard, we resist, we engage, we educate, we organize — tirelessly, persistently — so that this may come to pass sooner rather than later.

And to do this, we have to understand populism—to be able to recognize how and when it is being practiced, to be able to see what lies beyond and ahead the performance, to be able to see the direct relationship between populist rhetoric and realities in our communities. It is our hope that this monograph is a considerable contribution in this endeavor. Because while Duterte did not make populism, it could precisely be his unmaking.

Joshua Carlo Tenorio Pile is a communications specialist, researcher, and development worker. He is a writer for the Diokno Foundation and a researcher for a UP Center for Women's and Gender Studies project on sexual and reproductive health and rights.



Teresita “Ging” Quintos Deles is a co-founder and current chairperson of the International Center for Innovation, Transformation and Excellence in Governance (INCITEGov). She also serves as the chair-convenor of the women’s coalition EveryWoman. Previously, she sat as an Expert-Member of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (UN-CEDAW) and also served as the Philippine Permanent Representative in the Advisory Board of the ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation (AIPR). Under her leadership, the Philippines rigorously implemented a National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security.

Ms. Quintos Deles was the first woman to be appointed as Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process, serving a first term in 2003-2005 and a second term from July 2010 to June 2016. Under her watch, the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro was signed. Following her stint in public service, she was designated as one of three Philippine representatives in the ASEAN Women’s Peace Registry (AWPR) upon its formation in 2018.

Published by:



International Center for Innovation, Transformation and Excellence in Governance (INCITEGov)

3rd Level Cyberpark Tower 1, 60 General Aguinaldo Ave,
Cubao, Quezon City 1109

incitegov@incitegov.org.ph | incitegov.org.ph

INCITEGov is a policy research and advocacy center that catalyzes and provides support to democratic movements and reform initiatives in the Philippines. It firmly believes in the democratic process and the rule of law as the bedrock of the Philippine society.

INCITEGov applies the P-G-D lens in its analysis of key national issues and underscores that Democratic Politics (P) must be linked to Good Governance (G) to ensure that Development Outcomes (D) will secure the interests of the poor and marginalized.