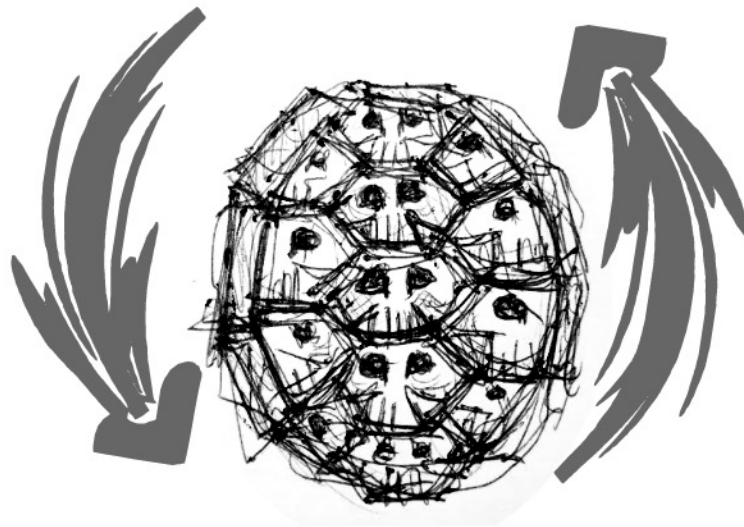


ABCDuterte



A Brief Compendium of Duterte (Mindanao Chapter)

by Kristine Ong Muslim
Cover and page design by Tilde Acuña

A is for the Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA) and its abuses

The Anti-Terrorism Act of 2020, the Philippines' most contested law, *not only* legalizes the state's violation of a person's right to due process, but it also allows warrantless arrests for some vaguely defined 'terrorist' acts. Names of people designated as 'terrorists' by the Anti-Terrorism Council (ATC)—a group of Duterte appointees, not court judges—are publicized; if listed, an ATC-designated 'terrorist' has 15 days to appeal.¹

Unlike in the Human Security Act of 2007, which the ATA replaced, anyone wrongfully detained no longer automatically qualifies for government compensation.² The ATA is met with widespread protests and opposition at the Supreme Court by up to 37 petitions “with still two more from Mindanao that the Court has yet to receive.”³

Petitions come from multiple sectors—like retired Supreme Court associate justices, lawyers, journalists, student leaders, labor groups, indigenous peoples, Muslims, even social media influencers. In January 2021, the Court starts hearing oral arguments on the petitions.⁴

The first on ATA's crosshairs: Aetas, indigenous people from Zambales and other parts of northern Philippines, are accused of shooting soldiers and being combatants for the communist rebel group New People's Army. The Aetas insist they have been “tortured, fed with human feces” by military men.⁵

Also on the ATA hitlist is Rural Missionaries of the Philippines, a Catholic organization helping poor people in the northern Mindanao countryside. Accused of financing terrorism, the bank assets of RMP have been frozen.⁶

[1] Department of Justice Anti-Terrorism Council, “The 2020 Implementing Rules and Regulations of Republic Act No. 11479, otherwise known as The Anti-Terrorism Act of 2020,” <https://www.doj.gov.ph/files/2020/news%20articles/IRR%20ATA%202020%20-%20CTC.PDF>.

[2] Lischin, Luke, “The Trouble with the New Anti-Subversion Act Push for the Philippines,” *The Diplomat*, 19 October 2019, <https://thediplomat.com/2019/10/the-trouble-with-the-new-anti-subversion-act-push-for-the-philippines/>.

[3] Torres-Tupas, Tetch, “37 petitions vs Anti-Terrorism Act now pending before Supreme Court,” *Inquirer.net*, 23 October 2020, <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1351678/37-petitions-vs-anti-terrorism-act-now-pending-before-supreme-court>.

[4] Panaligan, Rey, “SC sets oral arguments on 37 petitions vs anti-terror law on Jan. 19,” *Manila Bulletin*, 20 November 2020, <https://mb.com.ph/2020/11/20/sc-sets-oral-arguments-on-37-petitions-vs-anti-terror-law-on-jan-19/>.

[5] Torres-Tupas, Tetch, “Anti-Terror Law's first hit: Two Aetas from Zambales – group,” *Inquirer.net*, 18 November 2020, <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1362348/anti-terror-laws-first-hit-two-aetas-from-zambales-group>.

[6] Elao, Janess Ann J., “Bank freeze order vs. church group to deprive poor of aid, services,” *Bulatlat*, 7 February 2020, <https://www.bulatlat.com/2020/02/07/bank-freeze-order-vs-church-group-to-deprive-poor-of-aid-services/>.

B is for BARMM and its beginnings

The Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) is formed at the heels of the years of peace talks between the national government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. Mostly credited to Duterte for having signed the law that creates the self-governing region, it is during the administration of former President Benigno Aquino III that BARMM's framework agreement is drafted.⁷

BARMM interim government heads, seeing their terms lapsing in 2022 when the region is scheduled to hold its first elections, ask Congress for an extension that enables them to stay in power until 2025. Duterte is supportive of the term extension.⁸

Basilan Representative Mujiv Hataman—an advocate of both human rights and the constantly derailed Anti-Political Dynasty Bill and who, for a long time, stands out as a rarity among Mindanao's political figures—displays moral fortitude in his statement on the proposed term extension. Hataman says, “We are for peace, and we are supportive of any mechanism or recommendation from an objective panel, be it an extension or not. And to convince the people and LGUs [Local Government Units] of BARMM, especially those who are opposed to the proposed extension, it would be better to conduct a midterm review by all stakeholders and, from there, make recommendations.”⁹

[7] “‘A new start:’ Aquino lauds passage of Bangsamoro Law,” *ABS-CBN News*, 29 July 2018, <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/07/29/18/a-new-start-aquino-lauds-passage-of-bangsamoro-law>.

[8] Corrales, Nestor and Taher G. Solaiman, “Duterte OK to extend BARMM transition – Galvez,” *Inquirer.net*, 27 November 2020, <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1365333/duterte-ok-to-extend-barmm-transition-galvez>.

[9] Cruz, Maricel, “Review of BARMM transition sought,” *Manila Standard*, 14 December 2020, <https://manilastandard.net/news/national/340070/review-of-barmm-transition-sought.html>.

C is for COVID-19 and the cock-up in its handling

The COVID-19 pandemic has not only managed to bring forth embarrassing international news coverage on the Duterte administration's oppressive militaristic response to a public health crisis; it is also a period marked by state disinformation overdrive. Pro-administration fake accounts on Facebook and Twitter flood social media; the Philippine News Agency shares fake Bulgarian-based polling firm's survey figures showing majority of Filipinos "satisfied with the government's response to COVID-19."¹⁰

Duterte forwards numerous fabrications about COVID-19. He incorrectly claims that the viral disease is caused by "that kind of microbes [that] visits about once every 100 years."¹¹ He also repeatedly endorses gasoline as a disinfectant for masks.¹²

Similarly, Duterte's former mouthpiece Salvador Panelo trumps up COVID-19 preventive tips, all countered by health experts. Panelo crows about bananas and saltwater gargle, saying "I saw on the internet, that bananas are a good way to fight [viruses]. So here I am, eating bananas every day."¹³

On February 2, 2020, the Philippines records the world's first COVID-19 fatality outside of China, a 44-year-old man who travelled to the Philippines from Wuhan.¹⁴ Two days after the announcement of the man's death, Duterte downplays the then-nascent outbreak by saying that the virus would "die a natural death."¹⁵ By August and still with "no coherent strategy for defeating the virus," the Philippines becomes Southeast Asia's COVID-19 hot spot.¹⁶ Nearly a year since the start of the pandemic, Duterte at last has an epiphany on December 8, when he realizes that mass testing is a vital and necessary step in controlling the viral outbreak.¹⁷

[10] Billing, Lynzy, "Duterte's troll armies drown out COVID-19 dissent in the Philippines," *Rappler*, 22 July 2020, <https://www.rappler.com/technology/features/philippine-troll-armies-coda-story>.

[11] "FULL TEXT: President Duterte's State of the Nation Address 2020," *Rappler*, 27 July 2020, <https://www.rappler.com/nation/full-text-duterte-sona-speech-2020>.

[12] CNN Philippines Staff, "Chemists warn against use of gasoline as disinfectant after Duterte remark," *CNN Philippines*, 31 July 2020, <https://www.cnnphilippines.com/news/2020/7/31/Chemists-warn-against-gasoline-use-as-disinfectant-.html>.

[13] Madarang, Catalina Ricci S., "Armed with the internet, Panelo concluded that eating bananas and gargling can prevent COVID-19. Health experts disagree.," *Interaksyon*, 16 March 2020, <https://interaksyon.philstar.com/trends-spotlights/2020/03/16/164377/armed-with-the-internet-panelo-concluded-that-eating-bananas-and-gargling-can-prevent-covid-19-health-experts-disagree/>.

[14] Schnirring, Lisa, "Philippines has first nCoV death outside of China as cases top 14,000," *CIDRAP News*, 2 February 2020, <https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2020/02/philippines-has-first-ncov-death-outside-china-cases-top-14000>.

[15] Romero, Alexis, "Duterte: nCoV to die a natural death," *The Philippine Star*, 4 February 2020, <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2020/02/04/1990292/duterte-ncov-die-natural-death>.

[16] Sullivan, Michael, "The Philippines Becomes Coronavirus Hot Spot In Southeast Asia," *NPR News*, 10 August 2020, <https://www.npr.org/2020/08/10/900279722/the-philippines-becomes-coronavirus-hot-spot-in-southeast-asia>.

[17] Madarang, Catalina Ricci S., "Duterte realizes importance of tests, wants them cheaper," *Interaksyon*, 8 December 2020, <https://interaksyon.philstar.com/politics-issues/2020/12/08/181697/9-months-into-pandemic-duterte-says-he-realizes-importance-of-tests-wants-them-cheaper/>.

D is for Davao City, Davao Death Squad's birthplace

Davao City is the largest city in the Philippines, Mindanao's capital city, stronghold of the Duterte clan for over two decades, and "reputedly the biggest city in the world," according to Duterte's lie.¹⁸ Nationwide police data for 2010 to 2015 show Davao City to have registered the country's highest murder rate and the second highest number of rape cases.¹⁹

The administration's practice of releasing narco-lists that tag politicians allegedly involved in drug dealing—with the most recent narco-list victim, among many other killings, being the December 3 slay of Los Baños Mayor Caesar Perez²⁰—has its roots in Davao City with then-mayor Duterte "announc[ing] the names of "criminals" on local television and radio; some of those he names become death squad victims."²¹

One notable Mindanawon, who has roots in Davao City, is Carlos Isagani Zarate, an activist, human rights lawyer, and partylist representative of the progressive group Bayan Muna. He has chaired the Davao chapter of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines as well as the Union of Peoples' Lawyers in Mindanao. Duterte redtags and lobs puerile insults at Zarate, claiming that the Makabayan bloc, of which Zarate's Bayan Muna is part, has a "grand conspiracy" to overthrow the government. Lawyers in Mindanao swing hard to defend Zarate from Duterte's baseless attacks; Atty. Romeo Cabarde, one of the spokespersons for a citizens' reporting platform on Anti-Terror Act violations, says in an interview with news outlet *MindaNews*: "If a sitting member of the House of Representatives can be treated poorly in public, how much more for ordinary citizens, particularly those who do not have access to the means of defending themselves? Many Mindanao farmers, workers, indigenous peoples, and Bangsamoro have found themselves in such a situation, where they are unfairly charged, and their rights and safety put at risk."²²

[18] Presidential Communications Operations Office, "Situation Briefing on the effects of Typhoon Ulysses presided over by President Rodrigo Roa Duterte," 15 November 2020, <https://pcoo.gov.ph/presidential-speech/situation-briefing-on-the-effects-of-typhoon-ulysses-presided-over-by-president-rodrigo-roa-duterte/>.

[19] Lamb, Kate, "Thousands dead: the Philippine president, the death squad allegations and a brutal drugs war," *The Guardian*, 2 April 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/apr/02/philippines-president-duterte-drugs-war-death-squads>.

[20] Baraoidan, Kimmy and Maricar Cinco, "Shock, rage in Los Baños over mayor's slay," *Inquirer.net*, 5 December 2020, <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1368203/shock-rage-in-los-banos-over-mayors-slay>.

[21] Human Rights Watch, "'You Can Die Anytime' Death Squad Killings in Mindanao," 6 April 2009, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2009/04/06/you-can-die-any-time/death-squad-killings-mindanao>.

[22] Arguillas, Carolyn O., "Mindanawon lawyers: Duterte's tirade against Zarate "dangerous" for all HR lawyers and defenders," *MindaNews*, 3 December 2020, <https://www.mindanews.com/top-stories/2020/12/mindanawon-lawyers-dutertes-tirade-against-zarate-dangerous-for-all-hr-lawyers-and-defenders/>.

E is for extrajudicial killing (EJK), and the eight out of 10 Filipinos who fear it

Extrajudicial killing (EJK), or summary execution by state agents, is easily the one identifying marker of Duterte's despotic reign.

State-sanctioned killings in the Philippines, particularly the formation of military death squads that echo the United States' Cold War-era anti-communist paranoia, have their roots in the country's colonial history and imperialist interventions involving US-backed regimes in the Global South.²³ Redtagging—or being labeled as a member of the communist rebel group New People's Army—has long been linked to a spate of killings. A Catholic priest is gunned down after he facilitates “the release of suspected communist rebel Rommel Tucay.”²⁴ A redtagged King's Glory Ministry pastor is also killed by government troops.²⁵

EJKs in Mindanao include the Lake Sebu massacre of indigenous people by state forces; seven members of the indigenous tribe are killed.²⁶ The slain tribal leaders and their kin had been fighting to reclaim their ancestral lands from the Consunji family's corporate plantation.²⁷ In Kabacan, nine Bangsamoro farmers are killed; one victim, who lives long enough to give a “dying declaration” to his relatives, says that policemen are behind the killings.²⁸

Social Weather Station poll results in 2019 indicate that eight out of 10 Filipinos worry about being EJK victims themselves or knowing someone who might be killed by state forces. Fifty percent of Filipinos, who understand the class dimension of EJKs, believe only the poor can be victimized. Seventy-eight percent of Mindanawons say they fear being a victim of EJK.²⁹

[23] Umali, Lakan Daza, “The Jakarta Method, or how anti-communism never left the Global South,” *CNN Philippines*, 22 September 2020, <https://cnnphilippines.com/life/culture/literature/2020/9/22/the-jakarta-method-anti-communism-US.html>.

[24] Cervantes, Ding, “Activist priest killed in Ecija gun attack,” *The Philippine Star*, 5 December 2017, <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2017/12/05/1765786/activist-priest-killed-ecijs-gun-attack>.

[25] Capistrano, Zea Io Ming C., “10 activists, Lumad killed a week before Human Rights Day,” *Davao Today*, 6 December 2017, <http://davaotoday.com/main/human-rights/10-activists-lumad-killed-a-week-before-human-rights-day/>.

[26] Damicog, Jeffrey, “Raps filed vs Army, barangay officials over ‘Lake Sebu massacre,’” *Manila Bulletin*, 30 June 2020, <https://mb.com.ph/2020/06/30/raps-filed-vs-army-barangay-officials-over-lake-sebu-massacre/>.

[27] Ragragio, Andrea Malaya M., “Coming together,” *Davao Today*, 14 December 2017, <http://davaotoday.com/main/todays-views/coming-together/>.

[28] Cabrera, Ferdinandh B., “Cops behind Kabacan 9 massacre – CHR-12,” *MindaNews*, 1 September 2020, <https://www.mindanews.com/top-stories/2020/09/cops-behind-kabacan-9-massacre-chr-12/>.

[29] Co, Adrian Stewart, “8 of 10 Pinoys fear falling victim to EJK – survey,” *Panay News*, 2019 March 3, <https://www.panaynews.net/8-of-10-pinoys-fear-falling-victim-to-ejk-survey/>.

F is for Facebook and its fake account networks that are an advocacy of government, according to Duterte

Facebook is the social media network that has—in all sense of the word—*escalated* quickly from its relatively innocuous origin story as a Harvard student’s “study tool” and site for finding women to date.³⁰ The platform has become a global force, with its continued use by repressive regimes, including Duterte’s administration.³¹

The most popular social networking platform in the Philippines, Facebook has around 76 million accounts locally as of 2020.³² It also serves as the domain of persuasion for one Mocha Uson. Dubbed as “fake news queen,” Uson consistently outdoes herself, so to speak, in her stint as a Duterte appointee.³³ Some of her infamous Facebook moments, among way too many others to list here, include passing off as “symbolism” for Filipino soldiers a picture of Honduran troops³⁴ and helping cause a diplomatic incident that has the Philippines issuing an apology to the government of Kuwait.³⁵

A tool to artificially drum up support for Duterte’s drug war and propagate false or misleading information about government critics,³⁶ Facebook gets Duterte’s ire after the takedown of massive fake account networks, one of which is traced—unsurprisingly—to the Philippine National Police and the Armed Forces of the Philippines. Duterte refers to the fake account networks as an “advocacy of government.” He then threatens to ban Facebook in the country for believing what leftists say about his administration and for removing the disinformation networks of fake accounts—which are, like what Duterte says, an “advocacy of government.”³⁷

[30] Carson, Biz, “This is the true story of how Mark Zuckerberg founded Facebook, and it wasn’t to find girls,” *Business Insider*, 29 February 2016, <https://www.businessinsider.com/the-true-story-of-how-mark-zuckerberg-founded-facebook-2016-2>.

[31] Kozłowska, Hanna, “Facebook’s power to undermine democracy is getting stronger—and it’s fueling oppressive regimes,” *Quartz*, 18 December 2017, <https://qz.com/1159420/facebook-beyond-fake-news-how-the-social-network-aids-oppressive-regimes-across-the-world/>.

[32] Rodriguez, Mia, “Just How Dependent Are Pinoys on Facebook?,” *Spot.ph*, 29 September 2020, <https://www.spot.ph/newsfeatures/the-latest-news-features/83762/facebook-ph-stats-a4362-20200929-lfrm>.

[33] Tan, Jo-est B., “Mocha Uson ‘The Queen of Fake News’ summoned by NBI for spreading fake news again,” *MSN News*, 14 May 2020, <https://www.msn.com/en-ph/news/national/mocha-uson-the-queen-of-fake-news-summoned-by-nbi-for-spreading-fake-news-again/ar-BB144u2p>.

[34] Salaverria, Leila B., “Mocha embroiled in another fake news controversy,” *Inquirer.net*, 31 May 2017, <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/901157/mocha-embroiled-in-another-fake-news-controversy>.

[35] Yee, Jovic and Tina G. Santos, “Kuwait fiasco makes Mocha unfit for new post, says group,” *Inquirer.net*, 2 October 2019, <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1172293/kuwait-fiasco-makes-mocha-unfit-for-new-post-says-group>.

[36] Alba, Davey, “How Duterte Used Facebook To Fuel The Philippine Drug War,” *BuzzFeed News*, 4 September 2018, <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/daveyalba/facebook-philippines-dutertes-drug-war>.

[37] Lalu, Gabriel Pabico, “Duterte tells Facebook: Why keep operating in PH if you can’t help us?,” *Inquirer.net*, 29 September 2020, <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1341242/breaking-duterte-threatens-facebook-why-operate-in-ph-you-cant-help-us>.

G is for gay slurs that Duterte hurls at people who criticize him.

Duterte refers to former US Ambassador to the Philippines Philip Goldberg as a “gay son of a bitch.”³⁸ Because: Goldberg, along with Australian Ambassador Amanda Gorely, once criticized Duterte’s remark on wanting to be the first to rape—as his entitlement for being the city’s mayor—the Australian missionary murdered in a Davao City jail riot.³⁹

Duterte claims that former Senator Antonio Trillanes IV, one of his critics, is gay. Trillanes is gay because of the way he moves, according to Duterte. He also says that he used to be gay and then proceeds to liken homosexuality to a disease by touting a cure for it.⁴⁰

In southern Mindanao in 2005, the revolutionary government of the Communist Party of the Philippines celebrates the first same-sex wedding, a historic moment in the country’s struggle for gender rights and equality.⁴¹ These are the same communist rebels that Duterte alleges are terrorists without of course offering proof to back up his claim. He just says he “finally declared them to be one.”⁴²

[38] Esmaguél III, Paterno R., “US summons PH envoy after Duterte called Goldberg ‘bakla’,” *Rappler*, 9 August 2016, <https://www.rappler.com/nation/us-philippines-diplomat-duterte-goldberg-bakla-gay>.

[39] Andolong, Ina, “Duterte lashes out at foreign envoys, women’s group,” *CNN Philippines*, 21 April 2016, <https://cnnphilippines.com/news/2016/04/21/Duterte-lashes-envoys-womens-group.html>.

[40] Ranada, Pia, “Duterte implies being gay is a disease,” *Rappler*, 31 May 2019, <https://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/inside-track/duterte-implies-being-gay-is-disease>.

[41] Manlupig, Karlos, “Love is love in communist movement,” *Inquirer.net*, 18 July 2016, <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/796671/love-is-love-in-communist-movement>.

[42] Gotinga, JC, “Duterte says communist rebels are terrorists because he ‘declared’ so,” *Rappler*, 8 July 2020, <https://www.rappler.com/nation/duterte-says-communist-rebels-terrorists-because-declared-so>.

H is for human rights, which Duterte repeatedly tells state agents to violate

Duterte, who repeatedly mentions that he is a lawyer, has many quotes—often terrifying in their implications—where he expresses his disdain for the inviolability of human rights. Here are some of his statements on human rights:

In 2018: “If you think I can be dissuaded from continuing this fight with your protests, then you got it all wrong. Your concern is human rights, mine is human lives.”⁴³

In 2020: “The game is killing...I say to the human rights, I don’t give a shit with you. My order [for cops to shoot to kill drug suspects] is still the same. Because I am angry.”⁴⁴

During International Human Rights Day on December 10, 2020, Alvin Luque, a convalescent 51-year-old peace consultant for the National Democratic Front in Mindanao, is killed by arresting personnel. *Manila Today* journalist Lady Ann Salem is arrested, and cops enter at 2am the house of trade union organizer Dennise Velasco to arrest him. In the latter two cases, the search warrants are issued by Quezon City Executive Judge Cecilyn Burgos-Villavert,⁴⁵ who has also issued search warrants leading to the arrest of 56 activists in Bacolod and Manila.⁴⁶

[43] Malasig, Jeline, “Duterte’s ‘human rights’ vs. ‘human lives’ statement draws flak,” *Interaksyon*, 23 July 2018, <https://interaksyon.philstar.com/breaking-news/2018/07/23/131083/rodrigo-duterte-human-rights-vs-human-lives-statement-draws-flak-sona2018/>.

[44] Luna, Franco, “‘I don’t care about human rights,’ Duterte says, urging cops to ‘shoot first,’” *Philstar*, 3 December 2020, <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2020/12/03/2061268/i-dont-care-about-human-rights-duterte-says-urging-cops-shoot-first>.

[45] CNN Philippines Staff, “Peace consultant killed; journo, union organizer arrested on Int’l Human Rights Day,” *CNN Philippines*, 10 December 2020, <https://cnnphilippines.com/news/2020/12/10/Journo--union-organizer-arrested-International-Human-Rights-Day-.html>.

[46] Buan, Lian, “Crackdown? Same QC judge issues warrants vs 58 activists in Manila, Bacolod,” *Rappler*, 2 November 2019, <https://www.rappler.com/nation/same-qc-judge-issues-search-warrant-manila-bacolod>.

It is for Idang Susukan, with 23 murder raps and wanted in two countries, riding on Duterte's private jet

Anduljihad “Idang” Susukan—wanted in both Malaysia and the Philippines for “23 cases of [m]urder, 10 for kidnapping and serious illegal detention, and six for frustrated murder”—is a leader of the terror group Abu Sayyaf. Susukan arrives in Davao City through a private jet that Duterte has used multiple times. He is seen with Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) founder Nur Misuari who “hand[s] over” Susukan to Davao City policemen some days later.⁴⁷

Idang Susukan's presence in Davao City raises many important questions. *The Philippine Star* columnist Federico D. Pascual Jr. writes, “why, for instance, [Duterte] did not say a word, as if he was totally unaware, about the arrest three days earlier of Anduljihad Indang Susukan, a notorious Abu Sayyaf terrorist leader in Duterte's own home ground. This security matter deserved an extended statement or a flurry of directives from the Commander-in-Chief, especially with the involvement of Moro leader Nur Misuari, his special envoy to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. Was Duterte asleep, or was he elsewhere, while Misuari and Susukan escorted by their heavily armed fighters moved around Davao like the Mayor had given them the key to the city?.”⁴⁸

[47] Arguillas, Carolyn O., “How a “wanted” Abu Sayyaf leader who flew to Davao with Nur on Sunday was arrested in his house on Thursday,” *MindaNews*, 14 August 2020, <https://www.mindanews.com/top-stories/2020/08/how-a-wanted-abu-sayyaf-leader-who-flew-to-davao-with-nur-on-sunday-was-arrested-in-his-house-on-thursday/>.

[48] Pascual Jr., Federico D., “If Duterte flies out, then he can't return?,” *The Philippine Star*, 20 August 2020, <https://www.philstar.com/opinion/2020/08/20/2036513/if-duterte-flies-out-then-he-cant-return>.

J is for journalism, which Duterte hopes to kill

Journalism is what Duterte hopes to kill. “Kill journalism. Stop journalism in the country,” he says.⁴⁹ In many ways, Duterte has delivered on his threat.

ABS-CBN, the country’s biggest media network, has its franchise renewal bid turned down by Duterte’s allies in the House of Representatives; the network’s shutdown easily translates to loss of livelihood for 11,000 workers during the raging COVID-19 pandemic.⁵⁰ The war against the media extends to small independent outlets: a sophisticated distributed denial of service (DDoS) attack targets *Bulatlat*, while *Kodao Productions* and *Altermidya Network* are bombarded digitally with malware scripts and the like.⁵¹

Duterte’s martial law period in Mindanao sees the killing of five journalists. All in all, as of November 2018, 12 media practitioners are killed, with seven of them—Apolinario Suan Jr., Marlon Muyco, Rudy Alicaway, Leodoro Diaz, Christopher Lozada, Carlos Matas, and Dennis Denora—all based in different areas in Mindanao.⁵² In Cagayan de Oro, *Mindanews*’s Froilan Gallardo and *Mindanao Goldstar Daily*’s Cong Corrales are maliciously redtagged.⁵³

[49] Andolong, Ina, “Duterte stands by statement on media killings,” *CNN Philippines*, 3 June 2016, <https://cnnphilippines.com/news/2016/06/03/Duterte-media-killings-journalists.html>.

[50] Regencia, Ted, “Duterte’s Congress allies back order to shut Philippines’ ABS-CBN,” *Al Jazeera*, 10 July 2020, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/7/10/dutertes-congress-allies-back-order-to-shut-philippines-abs-cbn>.

[51] Espina-Varona, Inday, “Big, rich tech teams attack PH alternative media websites,” *ABS-CBN News*, 7 February 2019, <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/02/07/19/big-rich-tech-teams-attack-ph-alternative-media-websites>.

[52] Baterna, Penzer, “Case Files: The 12 Journalists Killed Under the Duterte Administration,”

[53] Lagsa, Bobby, “Media groups in Mindanao slam red-tagging of CDO journalists,” *Rappler*, 31 August 2019, <https://www.rappler.com/nation/media-groups-mindanao-slam-red-tagging-journalists>.

K is for Konsyensya Dabaw and their keen, appraising stance

Konsyensya Dabaw, which translates to ‘Davao’s conscience,’ is a pro-democracy group based in Davao City, where critics of Duterte’s repressive and militaristic policies are eerily in short supply. Antonio Montalvan II, in his *Inquirer* column where he also writes about Konsensya Dabaw, describes the milieu: “When criticisms against President Duterte are firing off on all cylinders across social media, there is generally a sedate silence from Davao City that seems to separate it from the national debate of ideas.”⁵⁴

A much-needed pocket of resistance in Davao City during Duterte’s martial law declaration⁵⁵ and hero’s burial for dictator and world-famous kleptocrat Ferdinand Marcos,⁵⁶ the collective consistently calls for diverse and inclusive civic spaces.

A Konsensya Dabaw statement that excoriates “verbal abuse and all forms of violence against women and girls” gathers more than 120 signatories. The statement in part says, “We lament that the President has displayed misogynistic behavior and used sexist language repeatedly. We recall his rape joke about a foreign missionary, the order to shoot female members of the New People’s Army in the vagina, and the trivialization of Vice President Leni Robredo’s disaster relief and recovery efforts. The State’s deplorable acts, specifically the continued persecution of women critical of the Duterte administration that have led to their imprisonment and even the death of an infant forcibly separated from her mother, follow and mirror the behavior and language.”⁵⁷

[54] Montalvan II, Antonio, “Silencing critics in Davao City,” *Inquirer.net*, 25 November 2019, <https://opinion.inquirer.net/125459/silencing-critics-in-davao-city>.

[55] Konsensya Dabaw, “STATEMENT: Martial Law: Not in the name of Mindanao and Mindanawons,” *MindaNews*, 11 March 2017, <https://www.mindanews.com/statements/2017/03/martial-law-not-in-the-name-of-mindanao-and-mindanawons/>.

[56] Arguillas, Carolyn O., “Davao City joins ‘National Day of Rage and Unity,’” *MindaNews*, 24 November 2016, <https://www.mindanews.com/top-stories/2016/11/davao-city-joins-national-day-of-rage-and-unity/>.

[57] “STATEMENT: Stop the verbal abuse and all forms of violence against women and girls!,” *MindaNews*, 11 December 2020, <https://www.mindanews.com/statements/2020/12/statement-stop-the-verbal-abuse-and-all-forms-of-violence-against-women-and-girls>.

L is for the Lumad whose community schools Duterte threatens to bomb

Lumad is a collective term for the non-Muslim groups of indigenous peoples in Mindanao. And just like the other indigenous groups in the northern regions of the country, the Lumad of southern Philippines have a fraught history of struggle for self-determination and against displacement from their ancestral lands.

Duterte speaks of his intentions to ‘hamlet’ the Lumad supposedly to protect them from communist rebels; hamletting, or forced relocation, is a practice right out of the Marcos dictatorial regime’s playbook.⁵⁸ Duterte also threatens to drop bombs on community schools for Lumad children because he alleges that the schools teach communism and “rebel[ling] against the government.”⁵⁹ Long before Duterte’s bomb threat, the Lumad say that military forces have already been attacking their communities.⁶⁰ Fifty-five schools for indigenous kids in remote areas are shuttered by the Duterte government for allegedly discussing “left-leaning ideologies” in the classroom.⁶¹

In the Lake Sebu massacre, the Tboli and Dulangan Manobo farmers slain by government troops are all Lumad fighting to reclaim their ancestral domain from encroachment by the Consunji clan’s corporate plantation.⁶²

[58] Ranada, Pia, “Duterte says he’ll ‘hamlet’ Lumad to keep them from NPA,” *Rappler*, 19 December 2018, <https://www.rappler.com/nation/duterte-says-he-will-hamlet-indigenous-peoples-keep-from-npa>.

[59] Lingao, Amanda, “Duterte threatens to bomb Lumad schools,” *CNN Philippines*, 25 July 2017, <https://cnnphilippines.com/news/2017/07/25/Duterte-threatens-to-bomb-Lumad-schools.html>.

[60] Bondoc, Marly Rome, “Military attacking lumad schools prior to Duterte’s bombing remark,” *GMA News Online*, 28 July 2017, <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/regions/619825/military-attacking-lumad-schools-prior-to-duterte-s-bombing-remark/story/>.

[61] Palo, Ruth, “DepEd shuts down 55 lumad schools,” *CNN Philippines*, 8 October 2019, <https://www.cnn.ph/regional/2019/10/8/depd-salugpungan-schools.html>.

[62] Lumibao, Ruth, “‘Terrorism’ | Soldiers kill 8 Lumad in South Cotabato,” *Bulatlat*, 6 December 2017, <https://www.bulatlat.com/2017/12/06/terrorism-soldiers-kill-8-lumad-south-cotabato/>.

M is for the Marawi crisis and martial rule in Mindanao

To get a handle on the complexity of the Marawi crisis along with the historical and political context behind it, one must first grow comfortable with the Duterte government's 'logic' of razing an entire house to the ground in order to get rid of cockroaches inside that house. Out to capture terrorist leader Isnilon Hapilon, government troops get into a firefight with gunmen for the Maute group.⁶³ The Philippine army later opt to just air-bomb Marawi City to ruins and displace its residents.

Unverified reports abound, including the supposed hostage takeover of a hospital and an ISIS flag being flown there; the hospital chief himself goes on record to deny that such a thing has occurred.⁶⁴ Then there's Duterte declaring martial law for the entirety of Mindanao based partly on the beheading of a police chief by terrorists—another fake news.⁶⁵ The officer, very much alive with his head still intact, disputes the reported circumstances of his gruesome death.⁶⁶

Some five months later, Duterte announces that “Marawi City [is] liberated from the terrorist influence.” Three years pass and with a government allotment of P60.5 billion on top of “private institutions and foreign governments grant[ing] the Philippines P30.56 billion in loans and another P3 billion in grants for the project,” the Duterte government manages to complete just about 30 percent of Marawi's rehabilitation. It is projected that the reconstruction of the city can be completed by December 2021.⁶⁷

[63] Nery, John, “Key facts about a tumultuous Tuesday in Marawi City,” *Inquirer.net*, 24 May 2017, <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/898990/key-facts-about-a-tumultuous-tuesday-in-marawi-city>.

[64] Bajo, Anna Felicia, “Doctor denies Marawi hospital taken over by Maute,” *GMA News Online*, 26 May 2017, <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/regions/612181/doctor-denies-marawi-hospital-taken-over-by-maute/story/>.

[65] Rauhala, Emily, “In declaring martial law, Duterte cited the beheading of a police chief — who is still alive,” *The Washington Post*, 26 May 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/duterte-justified-martial-law-over-the-beheading-of-a-police-chief-who-is-still-alive/2017/05/26/b6f0a9f2-41d7-11e7-9851-b95c40075207_story.html.

[66] Alconaba, Nico, “Town police chief not beheaded. says: ‘Am still alive,’” *Inquirer.net*, 26 May 2017, <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/899751/town-police-chief-not-beheaded>.

[67] “Marawi rehabilitation up to 30 pct complete 3 yrs after siege: task force data,” *ABS-CBN News*, 19 November 2020, <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/11/19/20/marawi-rehabilitation-up-to-30-pct-complete-3-yrs-after-siege-task-force-data>.

N is for NTF-ELCAC, the well-funded agency for redtagging Duterte critics

National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC) is created by Duterte through an Executive Order. As the COVID-19 pandemic rages, the House of Congress earmarks for NTF-ELCAC a 2021 budget of ₱19 billion,⁶⁸ an amount that could have been spent to end, once and for all, the “local communist armed conflict”—or whatever fancy name exists nowadays to justify the often-deadly witch-hunt of innocent civilians—by actually addressing the roots of insurgency.

With billions of pesos of taxpayers’ money at NTF-ELCAC’s disposal to dignify, at the very least, the imperative of ‘intelligence’ in intel, the agency does a redtagging spectacle involving actresses Angel Locsin and Liza Soberano, as well as former Miss Universe Catriona Gray;⁶⁹ all three women are supporters of women’s and children’s rights—a preoccupation that amounts to participation in the “local communist armed conflict,” if one follows NTF-ELCAC’s thought process. A session at the Senate has NTF-ELCAC’s asset making questionable claims linking various progressive groups with communist rebels.⁷⁰ The agency also posts on their Facebook the now-deleted fake news about the media network giant ABS-CBN’s franchise renewal case and an attack against *Rappler*’s Maria Ressa.⁷¹

One of the things that the agency brags as its “accomplishment” is the closure of 75 indigenous community schools for Lumad children in Mindanao.⁷²

[68] CNN Philippines Staff, “₱19B NTF-ELCAC fund stays in Congress-approved budget,” *CNN Philippines*, 10 December 2020, <https://cnnphilippines.com/news/2020/12/10/P19-billion-NTF-ELCAC-stays-Congress-ratified-budget.html>.

[69] Cupin, Bea, “ABS-CBN defends Angel Locsin, Liza Soberano against red-tagging,” *Rappler*, 23 October 2020, <https://www.rappler.com/entertainment/celebrities/abs-cbn-statement-defending-angel-locsin-liza-soberano-parlade-red-tagging>.

[70] Jerusalem, Jigger J., “NPA disowns military ‘whistleblower’ Jeffrey Celiz,” *Inquirer.net*, 5 December 2020, <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1368370/npa-disowns-military-whistleblower-jeffrey-celiz>.

[71] Luna, Franco, “Accountability sought over NTF-ELCAC ‘black propaganda’ vs ABS-CBN, *Rappler*’s Ressa,” *Philstar*, 10 May 2020, <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2020/05/10/2013083/accountability-sought-over-ntf-elcac-black-propaganda-vs-abs-cbn-rapplers-ressa>.

[72] “Teacher solon slams NTF-ELCAC ‘accomplishment’ of closing Lumad schools,” *Davao Today*, 6 November 2020, <http://davaotoday.com/main/human-rights/teacher-solon-slams-ntf-elcac-accomplishment-of-closing-lumad-schools/>.

O is for opposing open-pit mining

Open-pit mining is an environmentally destructive mineral extraction technique whose ban in the Philippines has been professed by Duterte to be one of his commitments.

In Mindanao, the \$5.9 billion Tampakan copper-gold mining venture of Sagittarius Mines, Inc. (SMI), one of the biggest of its kind in the world, receives through the Office of the President its Environmental Compliance Certificate, which is previously thumbed down by former Environment Minister Regina Paz Lopez. The scope of the Tampakan mining area spans “rice fields and agricultural lands affecting four provinces and six rivers,” including indigenous lands in South Cotabato, where open-pit mining is banned.⁷³

Met with widespread resistance from local communities wanting to uphold the open-pit mining ban, the SMI Tampakan project obtains an estimated 10,000-hectare mining area’s certification precondition (CP) from the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP).⁷⁴ It must be noted that NCIP also issues a CP, despite opposition from the affected communities, for the China-backed Chico River Pump Irrigation Project that adversely impacts indigenous lands in the Kalinga and Cagayan regions in northern Philippines.⁷⁵

Under Duterte, the Philippines becomes the world’s second deadliest country for land and environmental defenders, with majority of the cases to be mining-related killings, according to a 2019 report by Global Witness.⁷⁶

[73] Miraflor, Madelaine B., “OP restores ECC for \$5.9-B Tampakan project,” *Manila Bulletin*, 13 July 2020, <https://mb.com.ph/2020/07/13/op-restores-ecc-for-5-9-b-tampakan-project/>.

[74] Capistrano, Zea, “Opposition to Tampakan mining project in South Cotabato mounts,” *Manila Bulletin*, 14 November 2020, <https://mb.com.ph/2020/11/14/opposition-to-tampakan-mining-project-in-south-cotabato-mounts/>.

[75] Catajan, Maria Elena, “NCIP en banc slammed for approving Chico River project,” *SunStar Baguio*, 27 May 2019, <https://www.sunstar.com.ph/article/1807354/Baguio/Local-News/NCIP-en-banc-slammed-for-approving-Chico-River-project>.

[76] “Defending Tomorrow,” *Global Witness*, <https://www.globalwitness.org/en/campaigns/environmental-activists/defending-tomorrow/>.

P is for planting —planting evidence

Duterte brags about planting evidence during his stint as a city prosecutor. He says, “I’ve learned a lot during my prosecution days. We planted evidence.”⁷⁷

And the planting continues—in a manner so brazen and downright chilling in its impunity. The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) report on Duterte’s ‘drug war’ uncovers at least 25 police raid cases that point to planted evidence; guns bearing the exact same serial numbers are ‘found’ with slain suspects in separate locations during unrelated raids. “The pattern suggests planting of evidence by police officers and casts doubt on the self-defense narrative, implying that the victims were likely unarmed at the time of killing,” the UNHRC report notes.⁷⁸

A long-form Reuters special report offers a thorough dissection of the maneuverings of the “Davao Boys” death squad transplanted from Davao to form “what would become the deadliest police station in Quezon City Police District.” A Filipino police officer tells Reuters about police operatives killing unarmed people and then planting evidence—drugs and guns—with the dead bodies.⁷⁹

[77] Nery, John, “Duterte: ‘We planted evidence ... (and) the intrigues,’” *Inquirer.net*, 21 August 2016, <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/808126/duterte-we-planted-evidence-we-first-planted-the-intrigues>.

[78] Ramos, Christia Marie, “UNHRC report: ‘Near impunity’ in PH drug war killings, ‘Tokhang’ must end,” *Inquirer.net*, 4 June 2020, <https://globalnation.inquirer.net/188186/unhrc-report-near-impunity-in-ph-drug-war-killings-tokhang-must-end>.

[79] Baldwin, Clare and Andrew R. C. Marshall, “How a secretive police squad racked up kills in Duterte’s drug war,” *Reuters*, 19 December 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/philippines-drugs-squad/>.

Q is for quarantine violators of health protocols that apply to all, except Duterte allies

“Shoot [quarantine violators] dead,” Duterte orders cops. The quarantine violators in question are the urban poor who are protesting and asking for help as their resources dwindle away during the long lockdown. More than 20 residents of Quezon City are arrested for resorting to what the state sees as an unspeakably heinous crime—that of protesting, asking for food when one has nothing to eat.⁸⁰

Meanwhile, Duterte allies do not seem to be burdened with accountability whenever they breach COVID-19 health protocols.

The Makati Medical Center censures coronavirus-positive Sen. Koko Pimentel for “add[ing] to the burden of a hospital” and “unduly expos[ing] healthcare workers to possible infection.”⁸¹ Resolution is still pending in Pimentel’s case.⁸²

In two separate instances, Duterte’s mouthpiece Harry Roque is reported flouting quarantine rules that only allow for essential travels. He is pictured frolicking in a dolphin theme park⁸³ and regaling a non-physical distancing crowd in Cebu.⁸⁴

In the case of the then-chief of the National Capital Region Police Office Debold Sinas’s mass gathering for his birthday bash, even the then-chief of the Philippine National Police (PNP) cannot find any health protocol violations.⁸⁵ Sinas—who was born in Butuan City, Mindanao and is linked to a string of killings during his stint as a Central Visayas regional police director—is later promoted by Duterte to lead the PNP.⁸⁶

[80] Tomacruz, Sofia, “‘Shoot them dead’: Duterte orders troops to kill quarantine violators,” *Rappler*, 1 April 2020, <https://www.rappler.com/nation/duterte-orders-troops-shoot-kill-coronavirus-quarantine-violators>.

[81] Hallare, Katrina, “Makati Med hits COVID-19-positive Pimentel for ‘irresponsible, reckless’ actions,” *Inquirer.net*, 25 March 2020, <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1248399/makati-med-hits-covid-19-positive-pimentel-for-irresponsible-reckless-actions>.

[82] Damicog, Jeffrey, “DOJ submits for resolution case vs Pimentel,” *Manila Bulletin*, 24 September 2020, <https://mb.com.ph/2020/09/24/doj-submits-for-resolution-case-vs-pimentel/>.

[83] Casilao, Joahna Lei, “Harry Roque takes a dip with the dolphins in Subic amid quarantine,” *MSN News*, 1 July 2020, <https://www.msn.com/en-ph/news/national/harry-roque-takes-a-dip-with-the-dolphins-in-subic-amid-quarantine/ar-BB16cNcH>.

[84] Aguilar, Krissy, “IATF to tackle supposed health protocol violation in Cebu event graced by Roque,” *Inquirer.net*, 30 November 2020, <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1366319/iatf-to-tackle-supposed-health-protocol-violations-in-cebu-airport-rites-graced-by-roque>.

[85] Talabong, Rambo, “LOOK: Birthday salu-salo for NCRPO chief Sinas amid ECQ,” *Rappler*, 12 May 2020, <https://www.rappler.com/nation/ncrpo-chief-sinas-birthday-celebration-ecq-may-2020>.

[86] Villaruel, Jauhn Etienne, “Who is the new PNP Chief? Look back on the days Debold Sinas hogged headlines,” *ABS-CBN News*, 9 November 2020, <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/11/09/20/who-is-debold-sinas-new-ntp-chief-maanita-controversies>.

R is for resign, a recurring offer by Duterte

“Resign” is a convenient Duterte catchword, perfect for conveying a emotional blackmail, when all that is needed is to simply allow public scrutiny of his Statement of Assets, Liabilities, and Net Worth for the years 2018 and 2019.⁸⁷ Here is a sampling of quotes from at least 15 documented instances of Duterte offering to “resign.”

In 2017: “This I can say: If Trillanes can prove his allegations that I have amassed P2 million illegally, or if that bank account under my name has a total deposit at one time of even just half a billion, I will resign as president immediately.”⁸⁸

In 2020: “There are many speculations out there that Cabinet members and I are receiving money [...] Just bring a person who will say that he gave us a peso, I will resign tomorrow.”⁸⁹

Again, in 2020: “I offered to resign as president, sabi ko kasi nagsasawa na ako, (because I said I’m sick of it [corruption]).”⁹⁰

[87] Ilagan, Karol and Stanley Buenafe Gajete, “Duterte’s SALNs secret; PCIJ makes public wealth disclosures of all presidents since Cory,” *Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism*, 18 October 2020, <https://pcij.org/article/4402/dutertes-salns-secret-pcij-makes-public-wealth-disclosures-of-all-presidents-since-cory>.

[88] Salaverria, Leila B. and Nestor Corrales, “Prove bank accounts and I’ll resign immediately, Duterte tells Trillanes,” *Inquirer.net*, 17 February 2017, <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/872344/prove-it-and-ill-resign-immediately-duterte-tells-trillanes-on-bank-accounts>.

[89] Aguilar, Krissy, “Bring me anyone who will say he bribed me with even P1 and I will resign – Duterte,” *Inquirer.net*, 8 December 2020, <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1369091/bring-me-a-person-who-bribed-me-with-even-p1-and-i-will-resign-duterte>.

[90] CNN Philippines Staff, “Duterte: ‘I offered to resign as president because I am sick of corruption,’” *CNN Philippines*, 29 September 2020, <https://www.cnnphilippines.com/news/2020/9/29/Duterte---I-offered-to-resign-as-president-because-I-am-sick-of-corruption-.html>.

S is for the Sultanates of Mindanao and the sanction of clan politics

Sultanates are Mindanao's royal houses. Their modern-day descendants are generally perceived to be holdovers from ancient traditions that can be important in the maintenance of social order. Mindanao Sultanates vary in their clan politics, as well as governance and class mobility systems. Some bear, as in the case of the Sultanates of Lanao and Maguindanao, for example, the provenance of having successfully resisted foreign colonial powers. All have the support of their respective communities.

Duterte's popularity in Mindanao can be attributed in part to his deep understanding of the confluences of clan rule dynamics in southern Philippines. At the Malacañan Palace in 2017, Duterte meets with members representing three of Mindanao's royal houses.⁹¹ His push for a federal government is also backed overwhelmingly by numerous Sultanates in Mindanao.⁹²

[91] "Duterte meets with 3 Sultanates of Mindanao," *Interaksyon*, 15 October 2017, <https://interaksyon.philstar.com/breaking-news/2017/10/15/103390/duterte-meets-with-3-sultanates-of-mindanao/>.

[92] Capistrano, Zea Io Ming C., "Historic: Mindanao sultanates converge to support Bangsamoro peace process, federalism," *Davao Today*, 23 February 2017, <http://davaotoday.com/main/politics/historic-mindanao-sultanates-converge-to-support-bangsamoro-peace-process-federalism/>.

T is for the TRAIN Act, the tax reform train wreck to make the poor immensely poorer

The Duterte administration's Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion (TRAIN) Act, characterized by hikes in consumption tax and cuts in personal income tax, is most notable for worsening "poverty among households and individuals and across all sectors." Transport workers bear the brunt of soaring fuel excise taxes, while fisherfolk, the worst hit by the rollout of the TRAIN law package, suffer the highest increase in poverty rate.⁹³

In Davao City, economist and lawyer Rene Alexis Villarente exhorts Filipinos to join the conversation on the then-impending train wreck of the TRAIN Act. He says, "Not all are subjected to police power or eminent domain, but all is affected if power to tax is exercised by the government."⁹⁴

[93] De Vera, Ben O., "More Filipinos dragged into poverty by higher taxes under TRAIN," *Inquirer.net*, 30 October 2019, <https://business.inquirer.net/282231/more-filipinos-dragged-into-poverty-by-higher-taxes-under-train>.

[94] Carillo, Lovely, "Understanding the TRAIN Law and its implications on Filipinos," *Mindanao Daily Mirror*, 14 January 2019, https://mindanaodailymirror.ph/Main/full_article/understanding-the-train-law-and-its-implications-on-filipinos741.

V is for vaccine

Under Duterte, the Philippines has outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases such as measles and polio—courtesy mostly of the highly publicized vaccine scare shenanigans of medical credentials-free Persida Acosta, the Public Attorney’s Office chief.⁹⁵ Duterte’s Health Secretary attributes the “decline in vaccine confidence and a rise in cases of [m]easles and other vaccine preventable diseases” to Acosta’s “baseless claims and accusations.”⁹⁶

In a move to regain the public’s confidence in vaccines, Duterte volunteers to be first in line for the COVID-19 vaccine once it is cleared for use by the Food and Drug Administration.⁹⁷ He also appoints what he calls a ‘vaccine czar,’ a non-scientist and someone who has no medical expertise, to be outfitted with decision-making privileges in the procurement and nationwide distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine. An anti-science, militaristic approach and bureaucratic layers, led by multiple ‘czars,’ characterize the Duterte administration’s anti-COVID-19 response; *only one* of the czars is a medical expert.⁹⁸

[95] Carreon, Allan, “We Need a Vaccine Against Stupidity,” *Esquire Philippines*, 11 February 2019, <https://www.esquiremag.ph/politics/opinion/persida-acosta-measles-outbreak-a2298-20190211-lfrm>.

[96] Malasig, Jeline, “DOH blames Persida Acosta for decline in vaccinations and rise of measles cases,” *Interaksyon*, 31 January 2019, <https://interaksyon.philstar.com/politics-issues/2019/01/31/143328/doh-blames-persida-acosta-decline-vaccinations-rise-measles-cases/>.

[97] Ranada, Pia, “Duterte willing to get COVID-19 vaccine first once emergency use approved,” *Rappler*, 7 December 2020, <https://www.rappler.com/nation/duterte-willing-vaccinated-first-covid-19-vaccine>.

[98] Ranada, Pia, “Duterte taps Galvez as ‘vaccine czar’,” *Rappler*, 2 November 2020, <https://www.rappler.com/nation/duterte-taps-carlito-galvez-jr-covid-19-vaccine-czar>.

X is for Xi Jinping, the power behind the throne

Xi Jinping, China's president. Among Filipinos, he is colloquially known as the one who holds the puppet's strings. In mass demonstration placards, Duterte is often referred to as "tuta ng China;" 'tuta' means puppy.

Attached agencies to Duterte's communications office keep reposting Beijing propaganda. The Philippine News Agency shares an article from China's state-run news agency calling the historic Hague ruling that favors the Philippines's claims "an ill-founded award at a South China Sea arbitration."⁹⁹ A radio station under Duterte's communications office airs a program called "Wow China" to promote Chinese culture—after a Chinese vessel rams a Filipino fishing boat and Beijing navy points a radar gun at a Philippine ship.¹⁰⁰

The disturbing extent of Duterte's pro-China stance is encapsulated in his Defense minister's downplaying of Beijing's radar gun laser-pointing incident in West Philippine Sea; Duterte's alter ego says that China "d[oes] not mean to harm our men" and maybe "just want[s] to test our reaction."¹⁰¹

A China-based network of fake accounts, all parroting propaganda in support of Duterte and his daughter Davao City Mayor Sara Duterte-Carpio, is taken down by Facebook.¹⁰²

Michael Yang, a Chinese citizen who owns a shopping mall in Davao City and enjoys close ties with Duterte, is that one *foreign national* appointed as Duterte's economic adviser. Yang is reported to have links with the illegal drug trade.¹⁰³

[99] Ranada, Pia, "PH News Agency posts article calling Hague ruling 'ill-founded award,'" *Rappler*, 9 August 2017, <https://www.rappler.com/nation/philippine-news-agency-hague-ruling-ill-founded-award>.

[100] Mercado, Neil Arwin, "'Wow China' program another 'blunder' from PCOO – solon," *Inquirer.net*, 12 May 2020, <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1273582/wow-china-program-another-blunder-from-pcoo-solon>.

[101] Merez, Arianne, "'Sinubukang lang nila': China testing Philippines' reaction in radar gun incident - Lorenzana," *ABS-CBN News*, 28 April 2020, <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/04/28/20/sinubukan-lang-nila-china-testing-philippines-reaction-in-radar-gun-incident-lorenzana>.

[102] Lalu, Gabriel Pabico, "Facebook shuts down fake China-based accounts backing Duterte, Sara's possible presidential bid," *Inquirer.net*, 23 September 2020, <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1338778/embargo-until-3am-facebook-shuts-down-fake-china-based-accounts-posting-about-duterte-saras-possible-2022-bid>.

[103] Ranada, Pia, "Ex-adviser Michael Yang hosts private lunch for Duterte in China," *Rappler*, 29 August 2019, <https://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/inside-track/michael-yang-hosts-private-lunch-duterte-china-august-2019>.

Y is for the not-so-young youth' in Duterte Youth

Duterte Youth is a pack of right-wingers who are calling for the reinstatement of the death penalty¹⁰⁴ and mandatory enforcement of military reservist training to young people.¹⁰⁵ Duterte Youth, whose naming convention evokes the styling of Hitler Youth, is an acronym from the awkwardly, awkwardly strung cluster of English words: *Duty to Energize the Republic through the Enlightenment of the Youth Sectoral Party-list Organization*.

Ronald Cardema, who spouts historically revisionist quips in favor of the dead dictator Marcos, is Duterte Youth's pack leader.¹⁰⁶ Cardema, a 34-year-old self-appointing 'youth' representative, fails in his congressional bid even after flouting numerous election rules; his wife gets to be his proxy in Congress,¹⁰⁷ a development that may seem complicated for non-Filipinos. In the Duterte administration, career advancement is very rarely about skill and competence.

[104] Tomacruz, Sofia, "Duterte Youth wants death penalty for heinous crimes," *Rappler*, 7 May 2019, <https://www.rappler.com/nation/elections/duterte-youth-wants-revive-death-penalty-heinous-crimes-terrorists>.

[105] Merez, Arianne, "Voice of change? A closer look at the 'Duterte Youth'," *ABS-CBN News*, 7 May 2017, <https://news.abs-cbn.com/focus/03/06/17/voice-of-change-a-closer-look-at-the-duterte-youth>.

[106] Bueno, Anna, "Holding the line at the Duterte Youth rally," *CNN Philippines*, 1 December 2016, <https://cnnphilippines.com/life/culture/politics/2016/12/01/duterte-youth-rally.html>.

[107] "Mockery upon mockery," *Inquirer.net*, 20 October 2020, <https://opinion.inquirer.net/134595/mockery-upon-mockery>.

Z is for zero, the number of public sightings of Duterte's Statement of Assets and Liabilities

Zero is the precise and accurate number of public sightings of Duterte's Statement of Assets, Liabilities, and Net Worth (SALN) for the years 2018 and 2019. A first among post-EDSA presidents, Duterte—through his appointed Ombudsman—places guidelines restricting public access to the document that shows how much wealth he is able to accumulate while in office.¹⁰⁸

SALN declaration is the basis for the Duterte government's removal of former Supreme Court Chief Justice Maria Lourdes Sereno, one of the few high-profile critics of Duterte's repressive, anti-people policies in the early years of his administration.¹⁰⁹ It is also former Chief Justice Sereno who says that there is not enough factual basis behind Duterte's martial law coverage for the whole of Mindanao.¹¹⁰

[108] Ilagan, Karol and Stanley Buenafe Gajete, "Duterte's SALNs secret; PCIJ makes public wealth disclosures of all presidents since Cory," *Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism*, 18 October 2020, <https://pcij.org/article/4402/dutertes-salns-secret-pcij-makes-public-wealth-disclosures-of-all-presidents-since-cory>.

[109] Mogato, Manuel, "Philippine Supreme Court removes Duterte 'enemy' judge," *Reuters*, 11 May 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-philippines-judiciary-idUSKBN11C0EM>.

[110] "SC ON MARTIAL LAW | Full text of CJ Sereno Opinion," *Interaksyon*, 6 July 2017, <https://interaksyon.philstar.com/breaking-news/2017/07/06/83195/sc-on-martial-law-full-text-of-cj-sereno-opinion/>.