

OUR DEMANDS TO PRESIDENT BIDEN ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE PHILIPPINES



Following the devastating impacts of the Rodrigo Duterte regime on human rights in the Philippines, **the Filipino people continue to face ongoing crises and gross human rights violations under the regime of Ferdinand Marcos Jr.** Despite the widespread protests and reports on the severe human rights crisis in the country, the Biden administration's policy towards the Philippines continues to prioritize US economic and military pursuits over human rights.

We are outraged at President Biden's pursuit of US hegemony and dominance in the Asia Pacific region at the expense of workers, farmers, indigenous, and all exploited and oppressed people in the Philippines. We are further dismayed at Biden's ongoing military funding of the Philippine government while people in the US continue to suffer from the lasting impacts of the Covid pandemic and face insufficient wages, food and housing insecurity, mental health crisis, police brutality, lack of access to health care, and increasing inequality between rich and poor. We are, therefore, resolute in our solidarity with the people of the Philippines.

We are issuing six demands to the Biden Administration as follows.

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Demand #1



To hold the Marcos regime accountable for the repression of labor activists and defend the right to unionize.

On October 10, labor organizers Kara Taggaoa (KMU International Officer) and Larry Valbuena (PASADA-PISTON President) were indiscriminately arrested by the Quezon City Police on trumped-up charges of direct assault. They were arrested before a warrant was even presented.

Kara Taggaoa is a labor rights organizer and was very active in fighting for the demands of workers' organizations that were gravely affected by the pandemic. Larry Valbuena fought against the jeepney phaseout and oil price hikes.

The unfounded charges against and arrests of Taggaoa and Valbuena reflect the rampant exploitation of workers in the Philippines. The Philippines is one of the worst countries in the world for workers. According to the International Trade Union Confederation, union members are particularly at risk of violence, intimidation, and murder.

In his speech to Asia Society, Marcos Jr. touted one of the main reasons to invest in the Philippines as “human capital” due to a young, English-speaking workforce. Much like his father's, Marcos' clamor for investment will further pad the wealthy while exploiting workers who already suffer low wages and police surveillance and repression for unionization.

Demand #2

To give due justice to the victims of Martial Law and uphold the contempt of court case against Marcos, revoking his immunity as the head of state of the Philippines.

In April 1986, victims of Ferdinand Marcos Sr Martial Law and Samahan ng Ex-Detainees Laban sa Detensyon at Aresto (SELDA) led the filing of a class-action suit on behalf of about 10,000 plaintiffs against Marcos in U.S. courts, which eventually made a ruling in favor of the victims. The courts found that Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos “fraudulently diverted enormous sums of money that belonged to the Philippine Government and the Government of the United States, which money was intended for the benefit of the Philippine people.”

Marcos Jr. currently faces a contempt of court case in the United States worth \$353 million. Despite the heinous crimes of the underlying issue, the United States affirmed Marcos Jr.'s diplomatic immunity, making him free to enter the United States without arrest. This decision on the part of the United States is not only a slap in the face to victims of Martial Law but also obscures the role of the U.S. in the financial, military, and political support it provided Marcos Sr.



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Demand #3



To halt US aid to the Philippine military and police by passing the Philippine Human Rights Act, and to halt all future arms sales to the Philippines.

Despite well-documented and ongoing human rights violations, the US government continues to funnel millions of dollars in aid to the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Philippine National Police (PNP). They are the main perpetrators of human rights abuses.

In their initial meeting in New York, Marcos Jr. raised with Biden the importance of the US role in bringing “peace and stability in the Asia Pacific.” He expressed his appreciation of military agreements like AUKUS and QUAD. Meanwhile, the US maintains unequal treaties with the Philippines, such as the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) and Enhanced Defense Coordination Agreement (EDCA) which gives US troops impunity and access to military bases across the archipelago, as well providing the US military oversight on Philippine operations, and hundreds of joint operations. These treaties allow the US to use the Philippines as a base to further its interests in the Pacific, positioning personnel and arms in bases across the many islands. What this means for the Filipino people is hot spots of abuse, prostitution, and murder around military bases, such as seen in the case of murdered trans woman Jennifer Laude, murdered by US Marine Joseph Scott Pemberton murdered her in 2014 near Subic Bay.

While the US and Marcos continue to work together around military aid and agreements, human rights violations and impunity continue to happen at the hands of the Philippine military and police.

Demand #4



To hold the Duterte Regime responsible for its egregious crimes against humanity and ensure justice & accountability for the victims of state terrorism

Marcos Jr. has insisted that the Philippines will not rejoin the International Criminal Court while the ICC continues its investigation of the Philippines and former President Duterte's war on drugs. Without justice and accountability for the thousands of victims of Martial Law and a thorough investigation into the crimes against humanity committed by the Marcos and Duterte regimes, political dynasties in the Philippines will continue to operate with impunity.

Brandon Lee, the first known US citizen, targeted in an assassination under the Duterte regime, is one among thousands whose perpetrators have not been tried, foremost amongst them Duterte himself, who promoted the lawless violence of the military and police.

We urge for further accountability and the use of Magnitsky Sanctions against the following: Architects of the war on drugs and campaign of state terror (Ronald "Bato" De La Rosa); the command-and-control structure of the Philippine National Police and the Armed Forces of the Philippines when rights violations by state institutions allegedly took place (Gen. Diebold Sinas, General Jose Faustino Jr., General Hermogenes Esperon Jr., Lt. Gen. Antonio Parlade Jr, Delfin Negrillo Lorenzana, and General Eduardo Año); and the infrastructure of terror in the Duterte regime and participated in the public orchestration of alleged state repression (Bong Go, Harry Roque, Judge Cecilyn Burgos-Villavert and Lorraine Badoy).

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Demand #5



To halt US corporate operations impacting climate change and resulting in the eradication of biodiverse ecosystems and the violation, harassment, and displacement of indigenous peoples.

The plans Marcos Jr. has presented so far show the continued use of fossil fuel energy such as coal and fossil gas. He has also been pushing for the revival of the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant, even distorting evidence and promoting it as a “renewable” energy source appropriate for the Philippines despite scientific assessments showing otherwise. This undermines the Philippine government’s commitment to the global fight against global warming, as new fossil fuel projects would continue to increase the global carbon footprint. His proposed 2023 budget allocates over 450 billion pesos for “climate-related” projects with no clear indication of where these funds will go, leaving space for severe corruption and misallocation.

The Philippines remains one of the most dangerous countries for environmental defenders in the world, and the attacks have persisted under Marcos including the arrest and cruel detention of two Lumad Indigenous organizers who are at the forefront of the struggle to defend their ancestral lands. With his commitment to expand fossil fuel projects and open the Philippine economy for foreign investment, Indigenous peoples and peasant farmers in the countryside will face increased militarization and displacement to pave the way for foreign-owned energy projects.

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Demand #6



To delist the CPP-NPA from the US terror list in support of the peace process in the Philippines.

Due to the long history of colonial rule, severe oppression, and exploitation in the Philippines, the country has a history of armed rebellions that continue today. For over 50 years, since the emergence of the Ferdinand Marcos I dictatorship, the Communist Party of the Philippines and the New People's Army have been waging an armed revolution in the rural countryside where people are suffering severe government neglect and abuse in the form of lack of public services, hunger, poverty, militarization and indiscriminate aerial bombing that force families to flee their homes.

The Duterte administration, following the suit of the United States, has sought to proscribe the Communist Party of the Philippines and the New People's Army as a terrorist organizations. Yet, a recent ruling in the Philippines found that the Communist Party of the Philippines should not be included on the list of terrorist organizations in the country; the court found that the program of the CPP shows that it is not organized to engage in terrorism but instead seeks to address social ills and improve the lives of the Filipino people.

The US terror listing of the CPP thwarts peace talks between the Communist Party of the Philippines-National Democratic Front and the Government of the Philippines. It enables the Philippine government's deadly counterinsurgency campaign that has led to red-tagging, arrests, killings, and aerial bombings against civilians. Social and economic reforms at the heart of the peace negotiations could address the root of armed conflict in the Philippines.

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In Conclusion



As people in the US, we see our interest and solidarity is with those poor and oppressed sectors of Philippine society against elitist rule and political dominance. We have common goals with the Filipino people for a peaceful and just society, and will not loiter along while lives are at stake in the Philippines. As the deepening human rights crisis and violations by state forces have become institutionalized, we cannot rely on the Philippine justice system to provide justice or create genuine change and must mobilize the broadest array of solidarity support to demand accountability and justice.

We call on people in the US to unite in solidarity with the Filipino people to advance the struggle for peoples' rights and Reject US support of the Marcos Dynasty!

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