

Manila, North Triangle residents: Our City, My Home

A solidarity assembly for the on-site housing campaign of North Triangle residents

Sunday 20 November 2011, by [KAMP](#), [Kilos Maralita](#) (Date first published: 20 October 2011).

International solidarity/support would be urgently needed for urban poor (informal settlers) in a central business district in Quezon City who are likely to be forcibly evicted from their homes next week by the government. Tomorrow, October 21, there will be solidarity assembly with the residents of North Triangle (place to be developed as central business district in Quezon City, Philippines). In addition to this, the international messages of support and sharing of situation/experience could give added strength to the affected residents and their supporter, and at the same time, these international messages can hopefully contribute putting pressure on the government to act positively on the demand of the people.

Below is the background/statement prepared by Kilos Maralita (movement of the poor for social protection) and Kampanya para sa Makataong Pamumuhay (Life of Dignity for All Campaign) in support of mre than 3,000 urban poor residents who are facing eviction from their residence now.

By end of October this year, some 3,000 settlers of North Triangle in Barangay San Roque, Quezon City, are going to lose their homes to one of the country's leading urban land developer, the Ayala Land, Inc.

Based on the plan, the 37-hectare North Triangle area currently occupied by residents shall be developed into Quezon City's Central Business District, a joint venture project expected to generate billions of revenue to both the government and the Ayalas. Thus, soon to be expected is a picture of modernity replacing the old face of a depressed community as the North Triangle rises to become the city's main commercial and business hub.

Inclusive growth

"Dapat po sana kaming matuwa sa napipintong pagpapaunlad sa aming komunidad. Sana sa pag-unlad na ito ay may pumatak man lang na grasya sa aming mahihirap,"(We should be happy with the prospect of development of our community. We hope that we can also benefit, even a little, from this development) said Teody Gacer, president of San Roque Community Council-North Triangle Alliance (SRCC-NTA)- Kilos Maralita (KM) upon learning of the proposed development for the North Triangle.

But they learned later that the "development", which they have also wished and hoped for, is not going to be "inclusive" contrary to what had been hyped under the Aquino administration. In fact on

September 23, 2010, demolition teams were sent to clear the North Triangle of informal settlers so that land development can commence. The demolition attempt ended in violence when residents put up a strong stand in defending their community.

The whole country witnessed the standoff and the violence that attended the clearing operations, prompting the President to order a moratorium on demolition. By order of the President, a Technical Working Group (TWG) composed of the DILG, NHA, QC-LGU, and representatives from urban poor groups was also created to come up with a comprehensive recommendation on how to address the North Triangle issue in particular and the urban poor housing issue in general.

On-site housing development proposed

The Kilos Maralita, the SRCC-NTA, as well as other members have participated religiously to the TWG meetings, hoping that the process is going to be a very important step to get the urban poor housing agenda into the President's attention and immediate consideration. And to make the recommendations more concrete, the urban poor groups have come up with a very specific proposal adopted by the TWG on the North Triangle issue.

The proposal is for an on-site housing development project for the North Triangle residents to be considered as an important economic and social component of the planned Quezon City Central District project. Under the proposal, a portion of the 37-hectare NT property shall be allocated for the building of medium rise buildings (MRB's) that would serve as an alternative to the much opposed relocation package being offered by the National Housing Authority (NHA).

The proposal also has a financial study which justifies the viability of the project. But more than that, it offers a significant departure from the usual evict and relocate approach to the urban poor housing problem.

On March 25, 2011, the government-led technical working group (TWG) submitted its recommendation to the President. But up to now, the President has not responded to any one of the proposed recommendations, including that of the North Triangle. What we have been hearing, however, was that the NHA had stuck to their original proposal of a relocation and "balik-probinsya" (back-to-the-province) package.

Meanwhile, the deadline to vacate the place by end of October this year has not been extended. Hence, threat of another violent demolition looms in the horizon.

Are cities only for the rich?

What happened to the TWG proposal? Are they being ignored? Are cities only for the rich? Can't the North Triangle residents have their homes in their own city?

Let us hear them share their sentiments on these questions. Let us also look at how they have managed to come up a sound community-based alternative approach in addressing the housing problem of the urban poor.

Let us gather in support of their struggle.

JOIN THE SOLIDARITY ASSEMBLY WITH NORTH TRIANGLE RESIDENTS ON OCTOBER 21, 2011.

ISSUE SOLIDARITY MESSAGE OR STATEMENT. SEND IT TO THE MEDIA(PRESS) OR TO THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT

STAND WITH THEM IN DEFENDING THEIR RIGHT TO THE CITY, RIGHT TO LIFE OF DIGNITY!

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