

Philippines: Makabayan not fully on board yet on Robredo nomination

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(2nd UPDATE) 'Robredo is a worthy candidate no doubt. But a unified opposition is equally important and to do this, all options should still be explored,' says Bayan Muna's Teddy Casiño

The progressive rank is not fully on board yet on 1Sambayan's [formal nomination](#) of Vice President Leni Robredo as its presidential candidate for the 2022 elections.

"We respect 1Sambayan's decision. On our part, Bayan Muna has not decided who to support for 2022 yet," former Bayan Muna representative Teddy Casiño told Rappler on Thursday, September 30, after 1Sambayan's event.

Bayan Muna chairman Neri Colmenares was a convenor of [1Sambayan](#) until recently.

"I have been on leave from 1Sambayan for months. Delicadeza states that if I run, I shouldn't be part of 1Sambayan. I'm not updated anymore. Regarding president, Makabayan has not decided yet," Colmenares told Rappler, referring to the umbrella Makabayan bloc which Bayan Muna is under.

Colmenares has announced he will run again for the Senate in 2022.

Casiño said they were putting prime importance on having one candidate for all of the political opposition, and that the "the effort to unite will be needed even after the filing of candidacies."

"I am not in a position to say whether it's the right time or not. But it will certainly be difficult for 1Sambayan to play its role of unifier because it has already limited its options," said Casiño.

"Robredo is a worthy candidate no doubt. But a unified opposition is equally important and to do this, all options should still be explored," Casiño added.

Manila Mayor Isko Moreno and Senator Manny Pacquiao, who have both announced their intent to run for president, are part of the unity talks. Robredo, who has neither accepted nor rejected the nomination, said she [has not ruled out reelection for vice president](#) if only for the sake of unity.

The Constitution allows at most two terms for Philippine vice presidents.

More activist groups from the Makabayan coalition and part of the 1Sambayan process "expressed concern" Friday that Robredo's endorsement was premature.

"We express serious concern that the selection and endorsement by 1Sambayan of any presidential candidate at this time is premature and will hinder rather than help in attaining this primary objective," said a collective statement released on Friday October 1.

"We are concerned that 1Sambayan's role in contributing to unification will be hampered by the

perception that it has sealed support for a particular candidate,” the statement added.

The statement was signed by Kilusang Mayo Uno, Tanggol Magsasaka, National Union of Student of the Philippines, Youth Act Now Against Tyranny, Alliance of Concerned Teachers, Promotion of Church People’s Response, Health Alliance for Democracy and Katribu.

Labor

Federation of Free Workers (FFW) president Sonny Matula backed Robredo’s nomination, saying “trade unions welcome the endorsement of 1Sambayan for VP Leni to run for President.”

Matula ran in 2019 for the Senate under the unified Labor Win ticket, alongside Bukluran ng Manggagawang Pilipino (BMP) chair Leody de Guzman.

De Guzman has announced [an intent to run for president](#).

“Nagkausap na kami ni Leody (Leody and I have talked) that we are committed to the 1Sambayan process since last year. We can’t disregard our commitment to 1Sambayan by an instant or surprise decision of one group in our Trade Unions rank,” Matula told Rappler.

Matula said as far as he knows, BMP was invited to be part of the 1Sambayan process.

Rappler has reached out to De Guzman and will update this once he responds.

The Labor Win ticket was historic because it united rival unions, prompted by a collective disappointment at President Rodrigo Duterte’s failed promise to put a stop to “endo,” or end of contract, meaning contractualization.

Even during the 2019 campaign, there would be [difference of opinions](#) like Matula accepting the version at the time of a House bill to end contractualization, while De Guzman and Colmenares called the bill as having legalized contractualization. The dispute was about allowing middlemen or subcontractors.

Since 2010, the Makabayan bloc has never endorsed a presidential candidate of the Liberal Party, of which Robredo is chairman.

Makabayan allied with Manny Villar in 2010, with its senatorial bets Satur Ocampo and Liza Maza as Nacionalista Party’s guest candidates running against Noynoy Aquino and LP.

Makabayan [also did not endorse](#) any LP candidate in the 2013 midterm elections.

In 2016, Makabayan endorsed Grace Poe and Chiz Escudero as president and vice president, as opposed to LP’s Mar Roxas and Robredo. They also allied with President Rodrigo Duterte who later gave Cabinet posts to leftists, before easing them out in a bitter breakup.

Having leftists in the Duterte Cabinet [became a factor](#) in the efforts to unite the opposition in the 2019 midterm elections.

The dream of a unified opposition slate [did not push through](#) in 2019 as Colmenares went from being part of the so-called 8+1 of the Liberal Party-endorsed Otso Diretso, to being part of Labor Win.

Only five in Otso Diretso were endorsed by Makabayan in 2019, excluding Gary Alejano, Romy Macalintal and Roxas.

There is also of course the rivalry between Anakbayan, allied with Makabayan; and Akbayan, allied with LP. Senator Risa Hontiveros of Akbayan sent a solidarity message during the Makabayan convention, where the bloc chose its nominees for the 2022 party list elections. Casiño seeks a return to the lower house as Bayan Muna's first nominee.

All bets of Otso Diretso and Labor Win were swept by the administration candidates in a sorry loss for the opposition in 2019.

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