

PRESS RELEASE

Philippines: P-Noy gets failing mark, make up assignment from labor

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Greatly disappointed with President Aquino's performance during his first year in office, the militant labor group Partido ng Manggagawa (PM) gave P-Noy a failing mark, specifically for making the Philippine Airlines (PAL) the flag carrier of his labor contractualization policy and for perpetuating the country's pro-capitalist economic policies.

PM joined other groups in a rally for social protection held at the Mendiola bridge today organized by the Kampanya para sa Makataong Pamumuhay (KAMP). KAMP is calling on the government to install social protection policies to prevent the vulnerable sectors of Philippine society from further impoverishment.

"P-Noy failed labor the very first day he assumed office and he continue to do so by making labor contractualization his major policy stand," stated PM Chair Renato Magtubo.

But more than just designating a failing mark, the labor group is giving P-Noy a load of assignments in order to make up and stay relevant, lest he squander the next five years doing things that have no impact on the lives of the working class.

Magtubo said his group is putting forward its "Apat Na Dapat" agenda for the government to consider. These include:

1. Regular jobs, not contractual employment;
2. Public Employment Program for the unemployed;
3. Healthcare coverage for all; and
4. Moratorium on demolitions, evictions and foreclosures

Magtubo said this four-way test for P-Noy is not a mere menu of things to do as each item require a major reversal of current policies. The Public Employment Program, for instance, would depart from the failed private sector led employment generation while healthcare for all would involve large amount of state subsidy - a policy renounced under privatization and market deregulation.

Organized labor is also at odds with Malacanang since last year when Rosalinda Baldoz, President Aquino's labor secretary, upheld Lucio Tan's plan to layoff some 2,600 PAL employees and rehire them as contractual workers. Although Malacanang has ruled in favour of Baldoz' order, the outsourcing issue is still awaiting final resolution from the Office of the President.

Contractualization, the labor group claims, depresses labor standards including income and job security. It exacerbates the unemployment and underemployment problems by transforming many jobs temporary in nature.

"Chronic unemployment and the proliferation of temporary and precarious jobs were the main reasons why many Pinoys suffer the life of indignity," said Magtubo. A recent survey made by the Social Weather Station put the number of unemployed among adults to 11 million.

The labor leader and former partylist representative added that P-Noy made many bad things even worse by clinging onto the same economic policies imposed by previous administrations.

“Unbridled liberalization prevented the growth of agriculture and local industry in the last three or four decades, thus, creating no solid base of employment for the growing labor force. Deregulation and privatization on the other hand made Filipinos suffer more under the regime of high prices,” explained Magtubo.

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