

# **Philippines: Enough of Elite and Trapo Rule! Onward with the People's Electoral insurgency to Assert Our Sovereign Will!**

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**Enough of Elite and Trapo Rule! Onward with the People's Electoral insurgency to Assert Our Sovereign Will! Fight for New Politics, New Economy, and the New System!**

We come from the ranks of the workers, the farmers, the street vendors. We are joined by teachers, nurses, the youth, the marginalized women and men of our country who are fed up with the way our country is being run. We come as people who dream of a future unlike what we have at present, a future vastly different from that conjured up by the hodge-podge of political parties and the parade of politicians that make up the national electoral circus.

We are here today to demand genuine change in the way our country is being run. We call for an end to the old elite-dominated politics which has consigned our people to poverty and subservience to foreign governments and private corporations. We have come to lend our support not to any one party or candidate, but to the unifying alternative vision for Philippine politics and governance which refuses to concede the future of the country to yet another set of trapos.

We have seen what continued dominance of the elite and the trapos in our political and economic life which is in stark display under the Aquino administration, does to our country. Despite persistent attempts to convince the nation that it has benefitted from his time in office, we know that Aquino's term has not pushed the country forward, it has in more ways than one, set us back.

The never-ending hype about rapid economic growth under Aquino's term camouflages the widening inequality and festering poverty that are the true hallmarks of his elite-dominated, neo-liberal presidency.

The myth of progress through the "Tuwid na Daan" has by now been thoroughly exposed. No one but the most gullible Aquino fanatic believes that his policies have benefitted the broad majority of our people. Indeed, other than credit ratings upgrades and positive growth figures, Aquino will be stepping down with little else to show for his six years in office.

And yet, this really comes as no surprise. After all, Aquino did not invent patronage politics, nor did he introduce the neoliberal policy bias in our governance. The public relations packaging notwithstanding, the Aquino government is of the same mold as the past elite and trapo governments before it.

It was no surprise that his allies in Congress made a brazen attempt to railroad the removal of the constitutional ban on 100 percent foreign ownership and other nationalist provisions in the charter. Or that his government brazenly pursued policies to further open up the economy to the control of big business and giant corporations. Under his watch, we saw an acceleration and intensification of the privatization drive through the single-minded promotion of PPPs. Aquino did not lift a finger when private water companies Manila Water and Maynilad invoked provisions for investor state

dispute settlement embedded in the Concession Agreement to block a lawful order from the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System to cut water rates in 2013.

It was no surprise that during his term, no significant gains were made on the labor front, with the number of unemployed hardly improving from 2.8 million to 2.6 million from 2011 to 2015. Nor should it be a surprise that he refused to rise above his hacendero roots to bring much-needed momentum back into the agrarian reform program and that around 1 million hectares, mostly from big landholdings such as the Aquino family's own Hacienda Luisita, have evaded land reform until now.

It was no surprise that Aquino also failed to capitalize on the global outpouring of support and goodwill following the devastation wrought by Yolanda to push for debt relief so the money freed up could be used for rehabilitation and reconstruction. Worse, his government chose the path of further indebtedness amounting to US\$ 2.9 billion for projects that have barely moved.

It was no surprise that the economic growth posted under the current administration did nothing to improve the lives of the vast majority of our people. If anything it only resulted in their further marginalization as the wealth created by economic expansion was siphoned off by the already fabulously wealthy, further widening the gap between the rich and the poor.

In the previous election, our people elected a member of the elite hoping he would champion the cause of the poor and the oppressed. It was no surprise that he and the legions of trapos and elites who were voted into power with him, betrayed those hopes.

And unless we end the elite stranglehold on our political system and the system remains fundamentally unchanged, we should not be surprised if our hopes for change will be betrayed yet again and when the dust settles after these elections, we end up with another elite government who will behave in the same trapo fashion and dutifully implement the same set of policies that is leading our country to ruin.

And so today, we stand here and declare, enough! We are taking back into our hands our destiny as a people! We seek to assert our genuine sovereign will and fight for our rights, welfare and aspirations as a people!

We support genuine alternatives and leaders who will fight for security of tenure for workers; completing agrarian reform; protecting the rights of women, indigenous peoples, and other marginalized groups. We support leaders who will fight to free our economy from neoliberal policies imposed by a global capitalist system that has consigned our people to greater poverty and inequality while enriching our greedy elite and foreign corporations. We support leaders who will work to pull us out of the crippling debt trap that has prevented us from fully utilizing available resources for the benefit of our people.

**FDC**

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**P.S.**

\* [Freedom From Debt Coalition](#), 16 October 2015