

Rape culture: Filipino presidential candidate [and later elected] Duterte condemned after rape joke

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Filipino presidential candidate Rodrigo Duterte has been roundly condemned after a video surfaced of him joking about an Australian rape victim. The lay minister was raped and murdered in the country in 1989.

Rodrigo Duterte is shown in a YouTube video telling a crowd of laughing supporters at a campaign rally: “They raped all of the women. ... There was this Australian lay minister ... when they took them out ... I saw her face and I thought, ‘Son of a bitch, what a pity ... they raped her; they all lined up.’ I was mad she was raped but she was so beautiful. I thought the mayor [Duterte himself] should have been first.”

The missionary, who was ministering in a prison in Davao in the southern Philippines in 1989, was raped and killed during a riot by inmates, when Duterte was the city mayor.

Condemnation

His election rivals, women’s groups and social media commentators quickly attacked the remarks.

“The comments show his lack of fitness for the presidency and his utter lack of respect for women,” President Benigno Aquino’s spokesman Herminio Coloma said.

Aquino, who cannot seek a second term under the constitution, supports his former interior secretary Mar Roxas in the election.

Another presidential candidate, Vice President Jejomar Binay, called Duterte’s remarks “simply revolting.”

“You are a crazy maniac who doesn’t respect women and doesn’t deserve to be president,” Binay said in a statement.

Women’s group Gabriela attacked Duterte’s remarks, saying rape or any other form of sexual abuse was not a joke “nor something to be trivialized in a joke,” especially by someone seeking the presidency.

The worse, the better

Many Filipinos have celebrated Duterte’s vulgarity-laced speeches, his boasts of sexual conquests and his promised war on crime. He called Pope Francis a “son of a whore” in a speech in November, but was quickly forgiven.

“We won’t apologize for he has done nothing wrong, it was a clear joke for God’s sake,” one

supporter said on Twitter.

A lawyer by training, Duterte has served the most years of any mayor in the Philippines, governing Davao City for a total of seven three-year terms. In between, he has either been vice mayor or a congressional representative of the city.

He has four children by two women, and claims to have three girlfriends.

As mayor of Davao City, he has been credited for transforming the metropolis of more than 1.4 million people into a commercial hub in the southern region of Mindanao.

Duterte has been linked to a vigilante group called the Davao Death Squad, which has been blamed for hundreds of murders, though he has never been formally charged with being behind the squad.

jbh/bk (AFP, dpa)

* "Filipino presidential candidate Duterte condemned after rape joke". Philter. Updated April 17, 2016 - 8:00pm:
<http://www.dw.com/en/filipino-presidential-candidate-duterte-condemned-after-rape-joke/a-19194252>

Duterte on rape 'joke': No apologies

MANILA, Philippines (UPDATED 10:26 p.m.) — Davao City Mayor Rodrigo Duterte, PDP-Laban presidential candidate, on Sunday said he would rather lose than apologize for a remark about rape that he said was "called for."

In a video posted online by *The STAR* reporter Robertzon Ramirez, Duterte said he is fine with losing the support of women's group Gabriela and losing the presidential race altogether but he will stand by what he said.

"Do not make me apologize for something which I did na talagang it was called for," he said.

On Saturday, a video of Duterte where the mayor was seen speaking at a political rally and telling a story about an operation against criminals who raped a number of women went viral.

In his speech, Duterte expressed anger over the rape of one of the victims, an Australian lay minister whom he likened to a beautiful American actress and joked that the mayor (Duterte) should "have been first."

Duterte's remarks earned criticisms from his rivals in the presidential race as well as from netizens. Duterte supporters, meanwhile, said on social media that the video was taken out of context and that reactions to it were exaggerated.

Apology 'in general'

In a longer video posted on Duterte's Facebook page, Duterte denied that the comment on the incident was a joke and he was merely narrating what he felt upon seeing the rape victim's remains.

"No it was not a joke. I said it in a narrative. I was not smiling. I was just talking plain sense narrative," he said, speaking to reporters on Sunday.

While he refused to heed the call of a women's group to apologize for the remark, the presidential candidate said he is apologizing "for the Filipino people."

"I am sorry in general. I am sorry for the Filipino people. It is my style. It is my mouth. I said that in the heat of anger. But listen to the story behind. *'Wag kayo basta lang paambak-ambak d'yan,*" he said.

Duterte said that the remark was made in "gutter language" and in "utter anger."

He said that the case he was talking about happened in 1989, where convicts in the Davao Penal Colony took hostages. "So, there are 16 hostages and 16 criminals," he said as he recounted how then President Corazon Aquino ordered him to go there since he was head of the regional peace and order committee. He said he tried to negotiate with the hostage-takers, but that negotiations ended in a shootout.

He said was overcome with anger when he saw the hostage who had been killed.

"In my utter anger, gutter language iyan eh. Salitang kanto... Galit ako nun, sabi ko 'o, eto, ang ganda ganda pa mukhang artista galing Amerika. P****, naunahan pa ako, patayin mo lahat," he said on the video. "Sa galit iyon, I was not joking."

It must be noted, however, that in the video that went viral, the audience was heard laughing at Duterte's remarks.

In separate statements, Duterte's opponents in the presidential race condemned the mayor's remarks.

"Anyone who laughs at the ultimate assault on the dignity of women should not be allowed to wield power. Ang babae ay may karapatan, hindi pinaglalaruan. Hindi ito katatawanan, kahayupan ito," Liberal Party standard-bearer Manuel Roxas II said.

"Hindi nakakatawa ang rape at murder ng isang babae," Vice President Jejomar Binay said while Sen. Grace Poe, Duterte's closest rival in pre-election surveys, reiterated that rape is a crime.

Poe said she took offense at Duterte's remark and found it "distasteful" and "unacceptable."

"Bilang isang babae, nagagalit ako sa pahayag ni Mayor Duterte tungkol sa Australyanang biktima ng rape sa Davao. Ito ay magaspang at hindi katanggap-tanggap, at nagpapakita ng kanyang kawalan ng paggalang sa kababaihan," Poe said in a statement sent to Philstar.com.

Cayetano: Duterte a protector of women

Earlier Sunday, Duterte's running mate Sen. Alan Peter Cayetano defended the mayor and said he still sees him as a fighter and protector of women, citing the women's rights protection program in Davao City.

"We tried to be a good influence kay mayor as a conservative Christian. We talk differently, but alam ko ang puso ni mayor is a fighter, protector of women," Cayetano said.

"Kung titignan mo ang ginagawa niya sa Davao bawal ang swimsuit sa beauty pageant, kung

makikita niyo 'yung pano niya pinaglalaman yung mga kababaihan lalo na against violence," he added.

Meanwhile, Cayetano's rivals said rape is a serious matter and condemned the mayor's joke.

Lone female vice presidential candidate Rep. Leni Robredo earlier issued a statement demanding respect for women but once again spoke about Duterte's rape joke prior to the televised vice presidential debate on ABS-CBN. She said the remark is an insult to women.

"Personal na insulto 'yun at insult sa lahat ng mga kababaihan lalong-lalo na yung nagsabi [ay] isang tumatakbo para sa isang mataas na position, kasi nakakatakot yung planning system na ipapakita natin sa mga kabataan," Robredo said.

Vice presidential candidate Sen. Francis "Chiz" Escudero said Duterte's statement should be denounced and deplored as his remarks during campaign sorties are a "distasteful" attempt to draw voters but demean the dignity of women.

"His frequent use of women, regardless of their circumstance, as subject or object of his jokes during his presidential sorties is foul and offensive, to say the least. It is a distasteful attempt to woo voters at the expense of women and by demeaning the dignity of women," Escudero said.

"We should, at all times, protect and respect the dignity of women and other genders. We do not want the Philippines to become a haven for women and sex offenders," he added.

Escudero and Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV agreed that Duterte's remark revealed his character as a candidate.

"These statements are unbecoming of a candidate who is seeking to lead this nation and sends the wrong signal about rape and violence against women—issues we condemn and not condone and certainly [do] not joke about," Escudero said.

Trillanes said he hopes that with these remarks, the voters will determine who to vote for.

"Seryosong mga usapan iyan at kinikita iyong pagkatao ng mga kandidato. Hindi natin binoboto dito iyong mga komedyante. Maaring nakakatawa for some pero it has very serious implications. Sana mamulat yung mga mata nila," Trillanes said.

Rosette Adel (philstar.com) |
— with **Jonathan de Santos**

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<http://www.philstar.com/headlines/2016/04/17/1573866/duterte-rape-joke-no-apologies>
