

Philippines: Davao City mayor endorses Ocampo, Maza

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DAVAO CITY, Philippines — The politics of Satur Ocampo and Liza Maza, senatorial bets of Makabayan Coalition, has earned them the respect and admiration of Mayor Rodrigo Duterte who has publicly endorsed them.

Ocampo and Maza, guest candidates of Sen. Manny Villar's Nacionalista Party, were in the city with Villar and other members of the slate as they went around for their regional sortie.

Duterte on Friday night presented Ocampo, who represents the Bayan Muna partylist in the House of Representatives to barangay chairmen and a number of his supporters who were gathered in a meeting in a downtown hotel. Ocampo got Duterte's endorsement a few minutes before he was to fly back to Manila,

"Leaders like him will stand and fight for the rights of the people, especially the poor and the oppressed. We need leaders like Satur in the national government," Duterte told his supporters.

On Thursday night, Duterte also asked his supporters who gathered at the gymnasium of Barangay (Village) Vicente Duterte in Agdao District to support Maza, a representative of the Gabriela partylist in Congress.

"This is a rare chance that you will hear me this serious...let us support Liza Maza. Leaders like her do not have money but they have principles...To the women present here tonight, you, too, are mothers, sisters, wives—you can count on Liza Maza to protect your rights," Duterte said.

Ocampo said the open support that he and Maza received from people like Duterte was a vindication over the attacks they got from the government.

"We have no doubt that such endorsement and our established following will carry us to victory in Davao against the black propaganda and dirty tricks of sinister forces serving the Arroyo government and vested interests," Ocampo said.

"I heartily thank Mayor Duterte for making public his personal commitment to me and Rep. Liza Maza to support our senatorial candidacies under Makabayan," he added.

Maza said she appreciated the way Duterte recognized her contribution to the women's rights movement.

"I highly welcome the support of Mayor Duterte and his belief that I will be able to continue the battle for women equality in the Senate. I will continue to further the interest of the people of Davao, particularly the city's legacy of enacting local legislation on women's rights and welfare," Maza said.

Ocampo said he and Maza may be limited in funds but not in people's support.

“Everywhere we go we are greeted by throngs of people and this kind of support keeps us going. We have a limited fund unlike other candidates but the support of the people is very valuable to us,” Ocampo said.

Villar, he said, was even surprised to see how organized their supporters have been as shown during their sorties. In Mati City— as in their visits in Davao City and the provinces of Davao del Norte and Davao del Sur— the Makabayan senatoriales were greeted by their supporters warmly.

“Manny Villar told me that he was impressed by how organized our supporters are. That proves one thing— that we may not have the money but we have the people backing us,” Ocampo said.

Before his meeting with Duterte, the Satur for Senator Movement in Davao City hosted “Lugaw para kay Satur” fundraising event for the candidacy of Ocampo.

“What we will be able to get here would be of great help to our campaign. But I am happier to see all of you gathering here tonight with the objective of pushing for reforms in the government,” Ocampo said.

Supporters of Ocampo and Maza come from the sectors of urban poor, lumad, women, fisherfolk, workers, lawyers, artists, human rights advocates and students who share the same view with them.

In a caravan of posh vehicles during sorties, the Makabayan supporters are the only ones using passenger jeepneys and multicabs.

Their supporters render their services and time to the campaign voluntarily.

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