

Philippine House panel: Ex-president Duterte centre of grand criminal enterprise - The Star

MANILA: Former President Rodrigo Duterte (pic) appears to be at the “centre” of a “grand criminal enterprise” to wage a brutal war on drugs to enable and to profit from the very same scourge he had openly and strongly campaigned to eliminate, according to a preliminary report on a months-long House inquiry.

As it turned out, Duterte was “the face of illegal drugs and criminality” in the country, Antipolo Rep Romeo Acop said late Thursday (Dec 12), reading a report on the findings of the House quad committee on the links between Philippine offshore gaming operators (Pogos), illegal drugs and extrajudicial killings (EJKs) during the previous administration.

“Ladies and gentlemen, the quad comm has started to uncover a grand criminal enterprise, and it would seem that at the centre of it is former President Duterte,” Acop said.

“This is so painful because we were all scammed.”

Acierto revelations

He said that a former “right hand man” of Duterte who had testified during one quad committee hearing, dismissed narcotics officer Eduardo Acierto, described the former chief executive as the “lord of all drug lords.”

“It’s very painful because Duterte won on a platform of a hardline stance against illegal drugs and criminality. It turned out that he was after all the face of illegal drugs and criminality,” said Acop, a retired police general who was chief of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group.

He said the reward was managed by Go, a former special assistant to the President, who allegedly used money from confidential funds and profits from Small Town Lottery. Go has strongly denied this.

“The existence of the rewards system is not denied,” Acop said. “In fact, pinagmayabang pa ito ni former President Duterte at ang kanyang mga alipores (former President Duterte and his cohorts even bragged about it).”

This reward system led to countless EJKs and “so many of them were collateral damage,” Acop said.

Duterte made many incriminating statements at the quad committee hearing, including admitting that he had killed “six or seven” “criminals” when he was mayor.

He also recalled that he often patrolled the streets of Davao on his motorbike in hopes of catching criminals and killing them himself.

Bato: No surprise

Dela Rosa said he was not surprised by Acop's conclusions.

The senator, Duterte's first Philippine National Police chief and the first implementer of the drug war, insisted that the House quad committee's mission was to "destroy the Dutertes."

"We launched the war on drugs not to enrich ourselves, but to save this republic from becoming a narco state and save the Filipinos, especially the youth, from the evils of illegal drugs," Dela Rosa told the Inquirer.

"We did not deceive the people. I swear before the graves of my policemen who offered the ultimate sacrifice in the war on drugs," he said.

PNP data

PNP data from July 2016 to June 2022 showed that 312 officers were killed and 974 were injured in Duterte's drug war.

The initial findings of the megapanel composed of the committees on human rights, dangerous drugs, public order and safety, and public accounts, will be presented to the plenary on Dec 17.

Lead chair and Surigao del Norte Rep. Robert Ace Barbers said they would resume hearings in January 2025.

Meanwhile, they will be working on the legislative measures they filed as part of the quad committee's output, including a bill that would specifically penalize EJKs, Barbers said. — Philippine Daily Inquirer/ANN

<https://www.thestar.com.my/aseanplus/aseanplus-news/2024/12/14/philippine-house-panel-ex-president-duterte-centre-of-grand-criminal-enterprise>