# EDITORIAL — Face the inquiry | Philstar.com

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Amid the explosive revelations that have come out of the hearings at the House of Representatives, former president Rodrigo Duterte has finally expressed readiness to face the four committees conducting a joint inquiry into his crackdown on illegal drugs, if he is invited. So the quad committee is formally inviting him. Duterte can then expound on his denial of the existence of a quota and reward system in the Philippine National Police for killing drug suspects, as certain retired and active PNP officers have testified before the quad comm.

Duterte won’t be the first former president to face a congressional inquiry. Fidel Ramos had also answered questions from the Senate regarding the independent power producers that he tapped to end the crippling blackouts that started in the final months of Corazon Aquino’s presidency. Noynoy Aquino also defended before the Senate the use of the anti-dengue vaccine Dengvaxia during his administration.

Perhaps with Duterte answering questions before the quad comm, his loyalists in the Senate will follow his lead and also face the House. Sen. Ronald dela Rosa, Duterte’s first PNP chief who designed Oplan Tokhang, and Sen. Bong Go are invoking interparliamentary courtesy in refusing to face the quad comm. Instead the two prefer to conduct their own patently self-serving probe into Duterte’s war on drugs. Their inability to see the conflict of interest in such a probe says a lot about the quality of senators today.

Retired police colonel Royina Garma, whose appointment as general manager of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office has been suspected to be due to her alleged special relationship with Duterte, has told the quad comm about the existence of the PNP kill quota and reward system. Garma claimed Go was the paymaster, with another police colonel, Edilberto Leonardo, supervising the operation and identifying those on the hit list. Go has vehemently denied Garma’s story. Leonardo resigned recently as commissioner of the National Police Commission – a post with a six-year tenure that he received from Duterte on Feb. 14, 2022.

Garma’s story about the reward system partly corroborated the testimony of police Lt. Col. Jovie Espenido, who is still in the active service. The quickest way for Duterte and his loyalists to clear their names is to face the quad comm and give their side of the story.