# The audacity of Apollo Quiboloy | Inquirer Opinion

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It takes a special kind of gall for a man to sit at a Senate inquiry face-to-face with the very people who accused him of murdering church followers and raping preteen girls. And for the same man to tell his alleged victims point-blank: “That’s a lie and if that’s an accusation, I request my accuser to file a case against me.”

That was hardly surprising, for Apollo Quiboloy, founder of the Davao-based Kingdom of Jesus Christ (KOJC) sect, had never claimed to be an ordinary man. But even the “appointed son of God” wilted under the crushing gravity of the crimes leveled against him at the final hearing of the Senate committee on women, children, family relations, and gender equality last week. Quiboloy “looked meek as he faced his accusers at the hearing, a stark contrast to his usual stance,” as the Inquirer reported.

Indeed, what the public witnessed during the hours-long inquiry wasn’t the divine being Quiboloy liked to pretend to be. They saw instead a lowly mortal consumed by depravity, who, by witness accounts, had allegedly used his power and wealth to prey on the innocent.

## The ‘angels of death’

The accusations against the detained preacher are staggering. Two former members of KOJC testified at the Senate investigation led by Sen. Risa Hontiveros that Quiboloy ordered his private army, known as the “Angels of Death,” to kill followers who had left the sect because “they knew too much” about his alleged sex crimes, such as grooming girls not even in their teens to be part of his “inner pastoral” circle.

Teresita Valdehueza, one of the women allegedly assaulted by their leader, said Quiboloy had sent his personal bodyguard to threaten to kill her. Another former member, Eduard Masayon, who had trained with the Angels of Death, said they were the ones behind the killing of former colleagues who had tried to break away from the church. “If they know too much already, they cannot leave the ministry, especially if they’re part of the inner circle,” he said.

Hontiveros played an audio recording in which a man whose voice sounded like Quiboloy’s warned his former followers: “The Angels of Death will be watching them. When the opportunity presents itself, they will be dead.” In response, Quiboloy said: “It appears that it’s my voice. But we need to authenticate it because AI (artificial intelligence) is prevalent nowadays.”

## Keys to every bedroom

Perhaps the more chilling of the allegations against Quiboloy involved girls and women entangled in the KOJC web of deceit, trafficking, and sexual perversion.

At the same hearing, one woman, alias Marie, recounted how she was coerced to engage in sexual intercourse with Quiboloy upon joining the KOJC at the tender age of 12. Yulya Tartova Voronina, 32, and a Ukrainian, spoke of how Quiboloy had kept keys to every bedroom in the ministry where “only girls and young and beautiful women are included.”

“Our rooms are next to him so he has free access to every room. Nobody knows his life behind these doors,” she told the Senate body, speaking remotely online. “Just in the middle of the night, he [suddenly] comes to my room,” said Voronina, who joined the KOJC in 2014. “You cannot say, ‘I don’t want.’ You cannot run away, because if you don’t obey him, he will say ‘You didn’t overcome your flesh … you will go to hell’.” Based on a preliminary investigation by the Philippine National Police, Quiboloy had allegedly sexually abused “around 200 women” over the years, of whom 68 victims of various ages had been identified and their cases documented.

## Running for senator

“Through his preachings with the inner pastorals, per narrative of the former pastorals, Quiboloy aimed to acquire 1,000 women anchored on the biblical story of Solomon, King of Israel, who had 700 wives and 300 concubines,” Davao City police chief Hansel Marantan said at the hearing.

Quiboloy denied the claims and repeatedly challenged his accusers to file criminal cases against him. “I will face the charges in the right forum, in court. There is no truth to them. They are not true. I dare them to file a case against me or any KOJC leader or member,” said the sect leader, who has been held at the national police headquarters in Camp Crame, Quezon City, since turning himself in to the authorities on Sept. 8.

Given the seriousness of the allegations, one would think Quiboloy should be busy preparing for an airtight defense for his pending cases in the Pasig and Quezon City courts.

Instead, he is running for senator in the 2025 midterm elections. Only in the Philippines can someone awaiting trial for trafficking and child sexual abuse have the audacity to seek elective office. Now it’s up to the Commission on Elections, the same body that allowed a certain Alice Guo to run and win a mayoral post in 2022, to stop this insanity.

In the meantime, Quiboloy remains unflustered and unrepentant–and why not–why should one bother with clearing one’s name in court when one can aspire to be an “elected son of God”?