



Statement of the UP Diliman University Council

Demand Political Accountability, Reject Political Theatrics

1 July 2026

The University Council of University of the Philippines (UP) Diliman calls for justice and accountability in the midst of continued corruption and impunity. We must not be distracted by the political drama of the past weeks. We need to continue to demand accountability for systemic corruption that has had real, punishing costs to the Filipino people.

The events in the Senate, however farcical, present grave consequences for millions of Filipinos. After a series of dishonorable events, the new Senate majority only offers temporary stability, as self-interested politicians angle to protect themselves. Senate ranks may thin further with the result of other investigations and anticipated prosecutions, as well as arrests. What is truly at stake is the trial of Vice President Sara Duterte, impeached for the second time. A failure of the impeachment trial would place justice farther out of our reach and bequeath more power to the already massively corrupt Duterte family that has set its sights on a 2028 presidential win.

The crisis of the day is the massive Iglesia ni Cristo protest over plunder charges against Senator Rodante Marcoleta, which caught commuters by surprise on June 30 and threatens even more disruption should the group entrench itself and grow even larger. At the heart of the unmitigated crisis is the persistent use of legislative power to secure impunity—for oneself, for one's allies, and for one's political patrons. We saw this in the shielding of Senator Ronald "Bato" dela Rosa from the International Criminal Court (ICC) arrest, and we can expect more of the same. Half of the Senate faces active or unresolved investigations.



The present political instability comes at a time when the basic cost of living continues to rise beyond the means of the ordinary Filipino. The government's response to the oil price crisis and other economic pressures has been slow and piecemeal when what is needed is immediate relief.

Let us remain focused on the people's agenda, not the machinations of two warring elite factions. First, the impeachment trial of Vice President Duterte must proceed and conducted with demonstrable fairness that allows the full presentation of evidence. There is public clamor for this: seven out of 10 Filipinos surveyed want the vice president to face trial.¹ Second, President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s "Mahiya naman kayo!" comment in reference to widespread corruption proves to be empty rhetoric, given the now defunct Independent Commission on Infrastructure's failure to go after the suspected big fish and its lack of transparency. We have not seen its final report. Third, the 2028 elections will be another exercise in elite domination without the needed legislative interventions like the passage of a genuine anti-dynasty law and the reform of the party-list system dominated by political dynasties and big business interests.

The present political instability may create more disorder. Despite the ongoing ICC trial of former President Rodrigo Duterte, the 10th anniversary of his "war on drugs" today has seen continued impunity for police and other direct perpetrators as there have been only a handful of convictions in local courts despite thousands of victims killed. Moreover, the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao elections, postponed yet again, must proceed peacefully in September. Yet the Mindanao earthquake continues to take a toll, especially on the residents of General Santos City, Sarangani, South Cotabato, and Davao Occidental. Crucially, the peace process with the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army-National Democratic

¹ <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/topstories/nation/989711/7-out-of-10-filipinos-support-a-senate-impeachment-trial-vs-vp-sara-duterte-octa/story/>



Front of the Philippines must resume. The military's unabated human rights violations under the state's ferocious counter-insurgency program must be properly investigated and the perpetrators punished. The military killed UP students Alyssa Alano and Maureen Santuyo in what an independent fact-finding mission (that included members of our community) asserts was a massacre in the conflict-ridden Negros Island.² The impunity of state violence must end. Finally, the Philippine state's subordination to the United States' security priorities in the region, exemplified by the Pax Silica project in Northern Luzon,³ needs to be shifted toward a foreign policy that truly promotes the people's well-being.

Let us see past the theatrics and pursue wide-reaching change. The political process must be allowed to run its appropriate course, and institutions must perform their mandates. Through our vigilance, our anger, our protests, and our demands, we must raise our voices for our nation's interests during this time of worsening sociopolitical and economic crises. We must join forces with the rest of civil society to make these demands at the 2026 State of the Nation Address. It is our turn to say: *Mahiya naman kayo!*

1 July 2026
Diliman, Quezon City

² https://www.karapatan.org/media_release/fact-finding-mission-confirms-civilian-victims-ongoing-ihl-violations-in-toboso/

³ <https://www.rappler.com/technology/features/things-to-know-pax-silica-philippines-goals-concerns/>