

QC mayor orders massive clean-up drive

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As yesterday's elections drew to a close, Quezon City Mayor Joy Belmonte ordered the city's sanitation office and barangay officials to launch a massive clean-up drive.

"I have ordered the **Department of Sanitation and Cleanup Works of Quezon City (DSQC)** and the barangay captains to conduct massive cleanup drive as soon as precincts conclude their election-related activities," Belmonte said.

"DSQC OIC Richard Santuile has been given instructions to closely coordinate with barangay leaders and begin clean-up operations as soon as possible," she said.

This is meant to ensure that election paraphernalia will be disposed of properly and will not end up clogging the city's waterways, she added.

"Both local and national candidates are also enjoined to voluntarily remove their campaign posters and paraphernalia to ensure that we keep our city clean and orderly."

The Commission on Elections (Comelec) also reminded candidates to help local government units (LGUs) take down their campaign materials and other election-related materials as voting concluded yesterday.

"All I'm asking is that if we're really public servants, all candidates from president down to councilor should after today help the LGUs clean up our mess," Comelec Commissioner Rey Bulay said in Filipino.

Bulay said Metro Manila candidates should assist the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority in cleaning up the metropolis of their campaign paraphernalia.

He said the Comelec has no existing resolution, nor is there an existing law that would require candidates to remove their campaign materials after the campaign period, but that they would convene the commission and come up with the resolution.

Asked what could be the penalty or fine against violators, Bulay said that they would revisit the "old rules" as he emphasized that they do not want to consider the violation as an election offense because candidates should do the cleaning voluntarily.

Meanwhile, environmentalists called for urgent climate action from potential winners of the 2022 national election, after the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) released its groundbreaking report on the "National Inquiry on Climate Change."

"The findings of the Commission on Human Rights are a victory for the millions of people whose fundamental rights are being impacted by the corporations behind the climate crisis. The message is clear: There are legal grounds for communities to hold corporations accountable for undermining climate action," said Yeb Saño, Greenpeace Southeast Asia-Philippines executive director.

Greenpeace said the next step forward is for the incoming government to implement genuine climate action. The group also highlighted the need for a vibrant democracy and good governance that will enable climate and environmental justice.

"This decision comes at a time when Filipinos are about to elect their new leaders, whose first order of business should be protecting the people from the impacts of the worsening climate crisis, heeding the communities' call for accountability from the fossil fuel industry and strengthening democratic processes and institutions," Greenpeace campaigner Virginia Llorin said.

Grizelda Mayo-Anda, of the Environmental Legal Assistance Center (ELAC), noted the case "is significant as it is the first case in the Philippines and in the world where human rights harms caused by carbon majors/fossil fuel-producing companies have been exacted/demanded by vulnerable communities and civil society organizations."

She added, "The finding that the business operations of these companies have human rights implications provides us with several possibilities in terms of future legal and policy actions; Filipino citizens, especially the vulnerable communities, can build upon the findings of the CHR report and pursue various pathways in seeking climate justice."

Llorin said, "Alongside our co-petitioners, we are calling on the incoming Philippine government leaders and world leaders to adopt the Commission's findings and hold big polluters responsible for the climate-damaging impacts of their business activities."