

Philippine president-elect urges public to kill drug dealers

06/06/2016 13:57 by admin

Manila: The Philippine president-elect has encouraged the public to help him in his war against crime, urging citizens with guns to shoot and kill drug dealers who resist arrest and fight back in their neighborhoods.

Rodrigo Duterte

In a nationally televised speech late Saturday, Rodrigo Duterte told a huge crowd in the southern city of Davao that Filipinos who help him battle crime will be rewarded.

“Please feel free to call us, the police, or do it yourself if you have the gun” you have my support,” Duterte said, warning of an extensive illegal drug trade that involves even the country’s police.

If a drug dealer resists arrest or refuses to be brought to a police station and threatens a citizen with a gun or a knife, “you can kill him,” Duterte said. “Shoot him and I’ll give you a medal.”

The 71-year-old Duterte won the May 9 presidential election on a bold promise to end crime and corruption within six months of the start of his presidency. That vow resonated among crime-weary Filipinos, though police officials considered it campaign rhetoric that was impossible to accomplish.

“ Human rights watchdogs have expressed alarm that his anti-crime drive may lead to widespread rights violations.

Duterte, a longtime Davao mayor, has been suspected of playing a role in many killings of suspected criminals in his city by motorcycle-riding assassins known as the “Davao death squads,” but human rights watchdogs say he has not been criminally charged because nobody has dared to testify against him in court.

In his speech on Saturday, Duterte asked three police generals based in the main national police camp in the capital to resign for involvement in crimes that he did not specify. He threatened to humiliate them in public if they did not quit and said he would order a review of dismissed criminal cases of active policemen, suggesting some may have bribed their way back onto the force.

“They go back again crucifying the Filipino,” he said. “I won’t agree to that.”

“If you’re still into drugs, I will kill you, don’t take this as a joke. I’m not trying to make you laugh, son of a bitch, I will really kill you,” Duterte said to loud jeers and applause.

The foul-mouthed former government prosecutor said crimes were committed by law enforcers because of “extreme greed and extreme need.” He said that he would provide a small amount to an officer who was tempted because his wife has cancer or a mother died, but that those who would break the law because of extreme greed “will also be dealt with by me. I’ll have you killed.”

Duterte, who starts his six-year presidential term on June 30, repeated a plan to offer huge bounties to those who can turn in drug lords, dead or alive.

While it remains to be seen what will happen to his threats when he takes office, some policemen have heeded his call for a tougher anti-crime approach.

In suburban Las Pinas city in the Manila metropolis, police have apprehended more than 100 minors who defied a night curfew, and men who were either having drinking sprees in public or roaming around shirtless in violation of a local ordinance.

The crackdown was dubbed “Oplan Rody” after Duterte’s nickname “Rid the Streets of Drinkers and Youth.”

- AP