

A thick black L-shaped frame is positioned on the left and right sides of the page, framing the central text. The left part of the frame is a vertical line extending from the top to the bottom, with a horizontal bar at the top. The right part is a vertical line extending from the top to the bottom, with a horizontal bar at the bottom.

RESISTANCE FROM AFAR

Reflections on political activism and the
role of the overseas Filipino youth

The current conjuncture

- “War on drugs”
 - 20,000+ killed (reports from human rights NGOs, Supreme Court interpretation of Philippine National Police data)
 - Extrajudicial killings → state-sponsored → crimes against humanity
 - = “war against the poor”
- Martial law in Mindanao → Marawi crisis successfully contained?
- Crackdown against activists/critics (terror lists, etc.)
- Railroading of democratic institutions
 - *Ouster of the Chief Justice*
 - *Duterte’s constitutional reform → federalist agenda*
- Diplomatic blunders/crises and foreign policy shifts (China, Kuwait, etc.)
- High (yet declining) popularity → no mass base?



Struggles on the ground



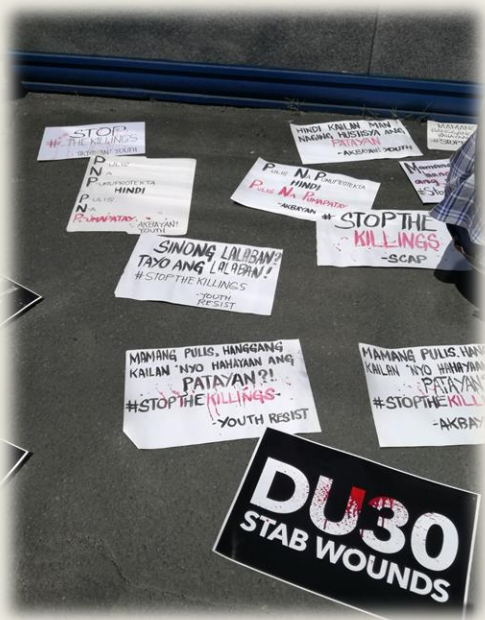
SOUTHEAST ASIA | Duterte renews



Protesters during a march towards the Philippine Congress ahead of Duterte's State of the Nation Address in Quezon city, Metro Manila on July 24, 2017. Photo: Reuters/Erik De Castro



Personal reflections



Personal reflections



*"I've never looked at politics so closely until I went to Europe. I got a very different insight on my home country and I was able to hold a much more balanced view, combining those from my friends here and from my home country. Now that the home country is in a dismal state of events, I'm trying to convey the real story to our friends here in Europe, where the Enlightenment was born. **Activism is never a crime; activism is stepping up to policies which can be harmful to us all.** Activism is taking political action because you have beliefs you hold on to."*

- Asher Serrana, KU Leuven, Brussels, Belgium



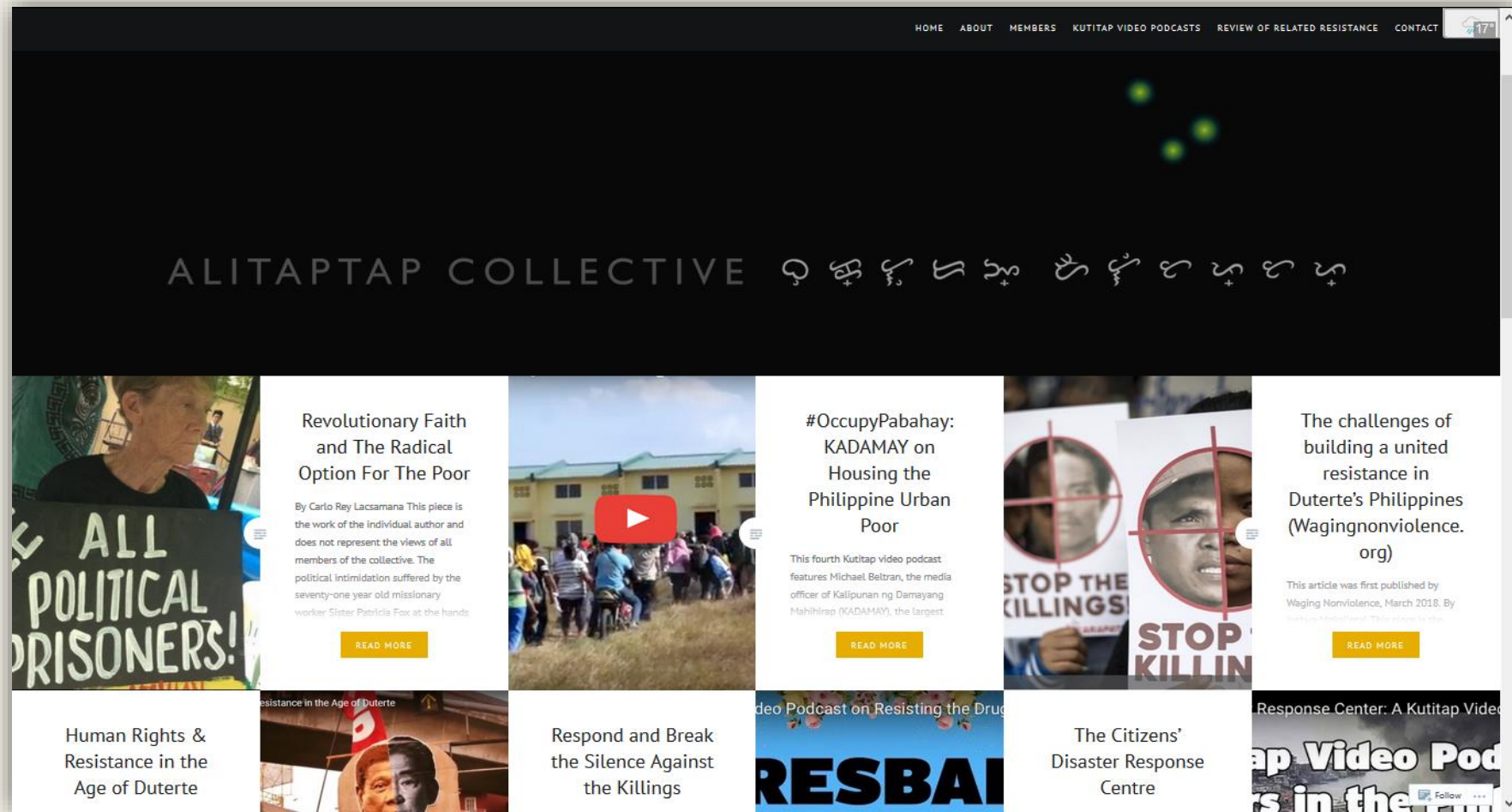
*"I had grown disenchanted with traditional politics across the spectrum back home. And so I welcomed the opportunity when a couple of friends talked me into participating in the Alitaptap Collective about a year ago. We have since started reaching out to various writers, student activists, and scholars in the diaspora in an attempt to develop an independent intellectual and political community. We all understand what a **great privilege** it is to be 'above the fray', as it were, and to see **things more clearly from a distance**. The **relative security that our position affords also allows us to speak out openly**. Being abroad has also given me a unique perspective on politics both at home and overseas. I see connections and comparisons that I'd not have seen otherwise. I believe **Filipinos in the diaspora have a double obligation to defend human rights and democracy, both in the Philippines and wherever we find ourselves living**."*

■ Christopher Chanco, York University, Toronto, Canada



*“Events in the Philippines have left us thinking about action from afar. We are concerned about the creeping authoritarianism; the disregard for human life, especially of the poor and the marginalized; the sanctification of a criminal oppressor; the state of public discourse; for the vitriol afforded by anonymity; and for the way our political lives have regressed into echo chambers. **We are, nonetheless, inspired by the persistent efforts of our comrades in the country.** We take courage to act, incisively, and in ways that we are in a unique position to do. **While we live and work abroad, we keep our eyes, minds and hearts attuned to what is happening in the Philippines.** We realize that **our distance should not deter us from action**; that, as with our access to academic resources and vantage points, and even the security our locations afford us, **we should see it as a strength unique to our privileged position.**”*

■ Alitaptap Collective



*“Democrats must present a vision and a program that speak to the aspirations of the vast majority of impoverished and marginalized Filipinos and convince them that democratic competition is a more effective means of realizing their hopes than authoritarian rule. Crisis can spell opportunity, and Filipino progressives would do well to ponder the words of the great Italian opponent of fascism, Antonio Gramsci, at a not dissimilar moment in his nation’s history: **“Pessimism of the intellect, optimism of the will.”**”*

- Walden Bello, “A nation’s odyssey toward a popular dictatorship.”
Rappler, June 26, 2017

