

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

(October 3, 2023)

**FROM: Ronald D. Holmes**  
**President**  
**Pulse Asia Research, Inc.**

**RE: Pulse Asia Research's September 2023 Nationwide Survey on Urgent National Concerns and the Performance of the National Administration on Selected Issues**

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Pulse Asia Research, Inc. is pleased to share with you some findings on *Urgent National Concerns and the Performance of the National Administration on Selected Issues* from the September 2023 *Ulat ng Bayan* national survey. We request you to assist us in informing the public by disseminating this information.

The survey fieldwork was conducted from **September 10 to 14, 2023** using face-to-face interviews. This nationwide survey is based on a sample of 1,200 representative adults 18 years old and above. It has a  $\pm 2.8\%$  error margin at the 95% confidence level. Subnational estimates for the geographic areas covered in the survey have the following error margins at 95% confidence level:  $\pm 5.7\%$  for Metro Manila, the rest of Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao. Those interested in further technical details may refer to our website ([www.pulseasia.ph](http://www.pulseasia.ph))

The following are some of the key developments during the weeks immediately prior to and during the conduct of the survey interviews:

1. The congressional deliberations regarding the ₱ 5.7-trillion national budget for 2024, with the House Appropriations Committee approving the ₱ 4.8 billion in confidential and intelligence funds requested by some government entities, including the Office of the President (OP), the Office of the Vice-President (OVP), and the Department of Education (DepEd);
2. The statement released by the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) regarding the so-called “concerning resurgence of swarming activity” in the West Philippine Sea (WPS) as indicated by the presence of about three (3) dozens Chinese fishing vessels in the area in

late August 2023 and early September 2023 as well as efforts of Chinese vessels to block a Filipino resupply mission in Ayungin shoal;

3. The call made by the President during the 18<sup>th</sup> East Asia Summit held in Jakarta on 07 September 2023 to stop the “dangerous use” of coast guard and maritime militia vessels in contested areas in the South China Sea (SCS) and for stakeholders to adhere to international law in resolving territorial disputes in the SCS;
4. The rejection by the Philippines, along with India and Malaysia, of the 2023 standard map of China that includes the WPS as part of its territory as indicated by a 10-dash line, which encompasses the entire SCS and overlaps with the exclusive economic zones (EEZ) of the Philippines, Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Vietnam;
5. The new initiatives of the Department of National Defense (DND) to modernize the Philippine Navy and the Philippine Coast Guard amidst the continuing Chinese incursions into the WPS to be carried out through a comprehensive re-strategization and the forging of partnerships with allies;
6. The postponement of the administration’s plan to import rice due to high prices in the world market and the projection made by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) that the Philippines’ rice importation will reach 3.8 million metric tons for the marketing years 2023-2024, making it the top rice importer in the world;
7. The implementation of Executive Order (EO) No. 39, beginning 05 September 2023 and to last indefinitely, that sets the national price ceiling for regular milled rice at ₱ 41/kilo and ₱ 45/kilo for well-milled rice, a move that surprised members of the administration’s economic team since they were not consulted on the matter;
8. The Department of Social Welfare and Development’s (DSWD) distribution of cash assistance amounting to ₱ 15,000 beginning 09 September 2023 to rice micro traders across the country who are affected by the cap on rice prices;
9. The release of the August 2023 inflation figures showing an increase in headline inflation from 4.7% in July 2023 to 5.3% in August 2023 primarily due to the higher increase in the prices of food and non-alcoholic beverages, with rice and vegetables being the main drivers in the increase in the inflation rate for food items;
10. The acquittal of Ms. Maria Ressa and Rappler Holdings Corporation over charges of tax evasion by the Pasig City Regional Trial Court Branch 157, this being the last of five (5) charges of tax evasion filed against Ms. Ressa and Rappler during the Duterte administration;
11. The distribution by the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) of the ₱ 3-billion fuel subsidy for public utility vehicle operators (PUV) beginning 13 September 2023, this following nine (9) consecutive weeks of oil price increases;
12. The filing of certificates of candidacy from 28 August to 02 September 2023 for the *barangay* and *Sangguniang Kabataan* elections to be held on 30 October 2023 and the launch

on 08 September 2023 of the Committee on *Kontra Bigay* (CKB), the entity that will be responsible for implementing policies against vote buying and vote selling, among others;

13. The start of classes for academic year 2023-2024 in public schools across the country on 29 August 2023, with enrollment in elementary and high schools falling short of the DepEd target by around 2.5 million; while the Vice-President, who leads the department concurrently, blamed protest rallies for the shortfall, the Alliance of Concerned Teachers (ACT) attribute it to the shortage in classrooms, teachers, and education support personnel; prior to the start of classes, the Vice-President also called on teachers and school administrators to remove all wall decorations inside classrooms to avoid distracting students from their lessons;
14. The release of a DepEd memorandum dated 06 September 2023 requiring a change in the terms used in Grade 6 *Araling Panlipunan* curriculum on the martial law years from “*diktadurang Marcos*” (Marcos dictatorship) to simply “*diktadura*” (dictatorship), a move seen by critics of the DepEd as an effort to rebrand the Marcos family;
15. The expulsion of Negros Oriental Representative Arnolfo Teves, Jr. from the Lower House on 16 August 2023 and the issuance of a warrant of arrest for him on 05 September 2023 in connection with his role in the death of Negros Oriental Governor Roel Degamo and nine (9) other individuals in March 2023;
16. The deferral of the implementation of the revised departure guidelines for Filipino travelers, originally scheduled for implementation starting 03 September 2023, amidst concerns raised by lawmakers, migrant workers, human rights groups, the business community, and the public;
17. The recommendation made by the Office of the Ombudsman to file graft charges, instead of plunder, against former officials of the Procurement Service-Department of Budget and Management (PS-DBM) and officers of Pharmally Pharmaceutical Corporation in connection with the granting of various contracts to Pharmally for the delivery of medical supplies for the government’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic; and
18. The suspension of 22 reclamation projects in Manila on 09 August 2023 in order for the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to assess their environmental and social impacts as well as their compliance with relevant regulations.

Pulse Asia Research’s pool of academic fellows takes full responsibility for the design and conduct of the survey, as well as for analyses it makes based on the survey data. In keeping with our academic nature, no religious, political, economic, or partisan group influenced any of these processes. Pulse Asia Research undertakes *Ulat ng Bayan* surveys on its own without any party singularly commissioning the research effort.

For any clarification or questions, kindly contact Ana Maria Tabunda, Research Director of Pulse Asia Research at 09189436816 or Ronald D. Holmes, Pulse Asia Research President via Telegram or WhatsApp at +639189335497 or at ronald.holmes@gmail.com (via email).

Pulse Asia Research's September 2023 *Ulat ng Bayan* Survey:  
Media Release on Urgent National Concerns and the  
Performance of the National Administration on Selected Issues  
03 October 2023

**Inflation continues to be the leading urgent national concern among Filipinos; public sentiment on the matter is virtually unchanged between June 2023 and September 2023 as well as year-on-year**

A big majority of the country's adult population (74%) expresses concern about the need to control the rising prices of basic commodities. The second most often mentioned urgent national concern is increasing the pay of workers (49%) while a third group of responses includes creating more jobs (27%), reducing poverty (25%), and fighting graft and corruption in government (22%). Fighting criminality (18%), resolving the problem of involuntary hunger (14%), and providing assistance to farmers (13%) comprise a fourth set of national concerns that the national administration must address immediately. (Please refer to Table 1.)

**Table 1**  
**MOST URGENT NATIONAL CONCERNS**  
September 10 - 14, 2023 / Philippines  
(In Percent / Multiple Response, up to 3 allowed)

<i>Base: Total Interviews, 100%</i>				
	OVERALL	RANKED		
		FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
Controlling inflation	74	48	17	9
Increasing the pay of workers	49	13	22	14
Creating more jobs	27	4	11	12
Reducing the poverty of many Filipinos	25	6	9	10
Fighting graft and corruption in government	22	5	6	12
Fighting criminality	18	3	7	8
Addressing the problem of involuntary hunger	14	4	5	5
Providing assistance to farmers including selling their products	13	4	3	6
Enforcing the law on all, whether influential or ordinary people	11	1	4	5
Providing support to small entrepreneurs to restore their businesses	9	2	3	3
Promoting peace in the country	9	1	3	5
Stopping the destruction and abuse of our environment	8	1	4	3
Defending the integrity of Philippine territory against foreigners	7	3	3	2
Reducing the amount of taxes paid	7	2	2	3
Protecting the welfare of OFWs	4	1	1	2
Preparing to face any kind of terrorism	3	2	1	1

Q16. Sa mga sumusunod na isyung pambansa, pakisabi ang hanggang tatlong isyung dapat aksyunan agad ng administrasyon ni Presidente Ferdinand "Bongbong" R. Marcos Jr. Maaari kayong magbanggit ng iba pang wala sa listahan. Alin po ang unang isyung dapat aksyunan agad ng administrasyon? Ang pangalawa? Ang pangatlo?

Another group of urgent national concerns includes enforcing the rule of law (11%), helping small entrepreneurs to restore their businesses (9%), promoting peace (9%), protecting the environment (8%), defending national territorial integrity (7%), and reducing the amount of taxes paid by citizens (7%). In September 2023, Filipino adults are least concerned about protecting the welfare of overseas Filipino workers (4%) and preparing to face terroristic threats (3%).

The leading first-mentioned urgent national concern is controlling inflation (48%) while the top second-mentioned responses are increasing workers' pay (22%) and controlling inflation (17%). As for third-mentioned issues deemed urgent by Filipinos, the leading ones are increasing the pay of workers (14%), creating more jobs (12%), fighting corruption (12%), reducing poverty (10%), and controlling inflation (9%).

Majority levels of concern about controlling inflation are posted in every geographic area and socio-economic class (66% to 80% and 67% to 75%, respectively). Meanwhile, most of those in the rest of Luzon (51%), the Visayas (55%), and Class D (52%) are concerned about increasing the pay of workers. No other national concerns are deemed urgent by majorities across areas and classes. *(Please refer to Table 2.)*

**Table 2**  
**MOST URGENT NATIONAL CONCERNS: OVERALL**  
September 10 - 14, 2023 / Philippines  
(In Percent / Multiple Response, up to 3 allowed)

Base: Total Interviews, 100%								
NATIONAL CONCERNS	RP	LOCATION				CLASS		
		NCR	BL	VIS	MIN	ABC	D	E
Controlling inflation	74	66	72	80	79	67	75	75
Increasing the pay of workers	49	42	51	55	47	46	52	36
Creating more jobs	27	33	29	17	26	24	27	29
Reducing the poverty of many Filipinos	25	25	29	19	24	18	26	26
Fighting graft and corruption in government	22	31	22	21	20	23	23	19
Fighting criminality	18	13	17	19	21	22	18	9
Addressing the problem of involuntary hunger	14	16	10	14	19	4	14	20
Providing assistance to farmers including selling their products	13	9	13	12	17	12	12	21
Enforcing the law on all, whether influential or ordinary people	11	8	13	6	12	9	11	8
Providing support to small entrepreneurs to restore their businesses	9	13	7	10	10	10	9	6
Promoting peace in the country	9	7	8	17	4	23	6	14
Stopping the destruction and abuse of our environment	8	9	8	8	5	7	7	15
Defending the integrity of Philippine territory against foreigners	7	10	9	4	6	5	8	7
Reducing the amount of taxes paid	7	9	3	13	6	5	7	5
Protecting the welfare of OFWs	4	5	4	6	1	9	3	5
Preparing to face any kind of terrorism	3	3	5	1	2	13	2	3

Q16. Sa mga sumusunod na isyung pambansa, pakisabi ang hanggang tatlong isyung dapat aksyunan agad ng administrasyon ni Presidente Ferdinand "Bongbong" R. Marcos Jr. Maaari kayong magbanggit ng iba pang wala sa listahan. Alin po ang unang isyung dapat aksyunan agad ng administrasyon? Ang pangalawa? Ang pangatlo?

Except for the double-digit increase in the level of concern regarding the need to control the rising prices of basic goods (+11 percentage points) from June 2023 to September 2023, public opinion about urgent national concerns is virtually constant during this period. Year-on-year, concern about inflation becomes more pronounced (+8 percentage points) while levels of concern go down in relation to job creation (-8 percentage points) and poverty reduction (-9 percentage points). *(Please refer to Table 3.)*

**Table 3**  
**MOST URGENT NATIONAL CONCERNS**  
September 2022 to September 2023 / Philippines  
(In Percent / Multiple Response, up to 3 allowed)

National Concerns	Sep '22	Nov '22	Mar '23	Jun '23	Sep '23	Change*	Year-on-year**
	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	Sep '23 - Jun '23 (E - D)	Sep '23 - Sep '22 (E - A)
Controlling inflation	66	59	63	63	74	+11	+ 8
Increasing the pay of workers	44	40	44	44	49	+ 5	+ 5
Creating more jobs	35	33	30	31	27	- 4	- 8
Reducing the poverty of many Filipinos	34	28	28	30	25	- 5	- 9
Fighting graft and corruption in government	22	25	26	25	22	- 3	0
Fighting criminality	19	20	17	13	18	+ 5	- 1
Addressing the problem of involuntary hunger	17	21	18	16	14	- 2	- 3
Providing assistance to farmers including selling their products	---	---	---	15	13	- 2	---
Enforcing the law on all, whether influential or ordinary people	12	10	9	16	11	- 5	- 1
Providing support to small entrepreneurs to restore their businesses	9	10	14	10	9	- 1	0
Promoting peace in the country	8	12	12	11	9	- 2	+ 1
Stopping the destruction and abuse of our environment	9	11	11	7	8	+ 1	- 1
Defending the integrity of Philippine territory against foreigners	5	3	5	6	7	+ 1	+ 2
Reducing the amount of taxes paid	7	10	10	7	7	0	0
Protecting the welfare of OFWs	4	7	8	4	4	0	0
Preparing to face any kind of terrorism	2	2	3	4	3	- 1	+ 1

Note: (1) \*Change = Figures of September 2023 minus Figures of June 2023.  
(2) \*\*Year-on-year = Figures of September 2023 minus Figures of September 2022.

**Out of the 14 issues on which the performance of the national administration is evaluated in September 2023, the latter scores majority approval ratings on eight (8) issues; significant changes in the performance ratings of the present administration occur during the period June 2023 to September 2023 and September 2022 to September 2023**

Small to huge majorities are appreciative of the performance of the present dispensation in the following areas – protecting the welfare of overseas Filipino workers (74%), helping calamity-hit areas (72%), promoting peace (63%), defending national territorial integrity (59%), fighting criminality (57%), enforcing the rule of law (55%), providing assistance to farmers (55%), and protecting the environment (54%). *(Please refer to Table 4.)*

**Table 4**  
**PERCEIVED URGENCY OF SELECTED NATIONAL ISSUES AND**  
**THE NATIONAL ADMINISTRATION'S PERFORMANCE RATINGS**

September 10 - 14, 2023 / Philippines  
(Row Percent)

Selected National issues	% citing as One of Three Most Urgent Issues	Approve	Undecided	Disapprove	NAR*
Protecting the welfare of OFWs	4	74	23	3	+71
Responding to the needs of areas affected by calamities	---	72	23	6	+66
Promoting peace in the country	9	63	28	9	+54
Defending the integrity of Philippine territory against foreigners	7	59	31	9	+50
Fighting criminality	18	57	30	12	+45
Enforcing the law on all, whether influential or ordinary people	11	55	34	11	+44
Stopping the destruction and abuse of our environment	8	54	36	10	+44
Providing assistance to farmers including selling their products	13	55	34	12	+43
Addressing the problem of involuntary hunger	14	46	38	16	+30
Creating more jobs	27	43	39	18	+25
Fighting graft and corruption in government	22	45	31	23	+22
Increasing the pay of workers	49	41	35	24	+17
Reducing the poverty of many Filipinos	25	29	40	31	- 2
Controlling inflation	74	16	28	56	- 40

Q18a-n. *Nais naming malaman ang inyong opinyon tungkol sa pagganap sa tungkulin ng administrasyon ni Presidente Ferdinand "Bongbong" R. Marcos Jr. sa pagharap nito sa mga sumusunod na isyung pambansa nitong huling tatlong buwan. Sa bawat isyung mabanggit, sa pamamagitan po ng board na ito, maaari bang pakisabi ninyo kung kayo ay (SHOW AND READ RATING BOARD) sa pagganap sa tungkulin ng administrasyon ni Presidente Marcos sa mga isyung ito?*

Notes: (1) % Approve = % Truly Approve plus % Somewhat approve; % Disapprove = % Somewhat disapprove plus % Truly Disapprove.  
(2) \*NAR (Net Approval Rating) = %Approve minus % Disapprove  
(3) Figures may not add up to 100% due to rounding off or to Don't Know and Refuse responses.

Approval is the plurality sentiment regarding the efforts of the national administration to address the problem of involuntary hunger (46%), fighting corruption (45%), and increasing the pay of workers (41%). Basically the same percentages of Filipino adults either approve of or are undecided about the work of the administration in the area of job creation (43% versus 39%). As for the latter's anti-poverty initiatives, the plurality opinion

is one of indecision on the matter of approving or disapproving its work (40%). The only majority disapproval rating of the incumbent administration is registered on the issue of inflation (56%), the issue which most Filipino adults (74%) identify as requiring the immediate action of the administration.

Between June 2023 and September 2023, levels of approval for the work done by the current administration on the following issues decline – fighting criminality (-7 percentage points), protecting the environment (-7 percentage points), creating more jobs (-10 percentage points), increasing the pay of workers (-11 percentage points), reducing poverty (-14 percentage points), and controlling inflation (-15 percentage points). (Please refer to Table 5.)

**Table 5**  
**COMPARATIVE RATINGS OF THE NATIONAL**  
**ADMINISTRATION ON SELECTED NATIONAL ISSUES**  
June and September 2023 / Philippines  
(In Percent)

Selected National Issues	Approval		Change*	Undecided		Change*	Disapproval		Change*
	Jun 23 (A)	Sep 23 (B)	Sep23 - Jun23 (B - A)	Jun 23 (C)	Sep 23 (D)	Sep23 - Jun23 (D - C)	Jun 23 (E)	Sep 23 (F)	Sep23 - Jun23 (F - E)
Protecting the welfare of OFWs	76	74	- 2	21	23	+ 2	3	3	0
Responding to the needs of areas affected by calamities	73	72	- 1	23	23	0	3	6	+ 3
Promoting peace in the country	67	63	- 4	26	28	+ 2	6	9	+ 3
Defending the integrity of Philippine territory against foreigners	63	59	- 4	29	31	+ 2	8	9	+ 1
Fighting criminality	64	57	- 7	27	30	+ 3	9	12	+ 3
Enforcing the law on all, whether influential or ordinary people	56	55	- 1	32	34	+ 2	12	11	- 1
Stopping the destruction and abuse of our environment	61	54	- 7	27	36	+ 9	12	10	- 2
Providing assistance to farmers including selling their products	59	55	- 4	34	34	0	8	12	+ 4
Addressing the problem of involuntary hunger	---	46	---	---	38	---	---	16	---
Creating more jobs	53	43	- 10	33	39	+ 6	14	18	+ 4
Fighting graft and corruption in government	44	45	+ 1	39	31	- 8	17	23	+ 6
Increasing the pay of workers	52	41	- 11	27	35	+ 8	21	24	+ 3
Reducing the poverty of many Filipinos	43	29	- 14	34	40	+ 6	23	31	+ 8
Controlling inflation	31	16	- 15	32	28	- 4	37	56	+19

\*Change = Figures of September 2023 minus Figures of June 2023.

On the other hand, disapproval for the administration's performance becomes more notable in relation to its handling of three (3) issues – fighting corruption (+6 percentage points), reducing poverty (+8 percentage points), and controlling inflation (+19 percentage points). In terms of indecision levels, these go up in connection with the administration's work in the areas of creating more jobs (+6 percentage points), reducing



poverty (+6 percentage points), increasing workers' pay (+8 percentage points), and protecting the environment (+9 percentage points). The reverse occurs in relation to the administration's anti-corruption initiatives (-8 percentage points).

The performance ratings of the national administration also change significantly between September 2022 and September 2023. Approval figures drop as far as the administration's handling of the following issues is concerned - helping calamity-hit areas (-6 percentage points), promoting peace (-6 percentage points), enforcing the rule of law (-7 percentage points), fighting criminality (-10 percentage points), reducing poverty (-10 percentage points), fighting corruption (-13 percentage points), controlling inflation (-15 percentage points), creating more jobs (-16 percentage points), and increasing workers' pay (-18 percentage points). The only improvements in the administration's approval scores year-on-year are registered on the issues of protecting the welfare of overseas Filipino workers (+6 percentage points) and defending national territorial integrity (+7 percentage points). (Please refer to Table 6.)

**Table 6**  
**COMPARATIVE RATINGS OF THE NATIONAL**  
**ADMINISTRATION ON SELECTED NATIONAL ISSUES: YEAR-ON-YEAR**  
September 2022 and September 2023 / Philippines  
(In Percent)

Selected National Issues	Approval		Year-on-year**	Undecided		Year-on-year**	Disapproval		Year-on-year**
	Sep 22 (A)	Sep 23 (B)	Sep23 - Sep22 (B - A)	Sep 22 (C)	Sep 23 (D)	Sep23 - Sep22 (D - C)	Sep 22 (E)	Sep 23 (F)	Sep23 - Sep22 (F - E)
Protecting the welfare of OFWs	68	74	+ 6	29	23	- 6	3	3	0
Responding to the needs of areas affected by calamities	78	72	- 6	19	23	+ 4	3	6	+ 3
Promoting peace in the country	69	63	- 6	24	28	+ 4	7	9	+ 2
Defending the integrity of Philippine territory against foreigners	52	59	+ 7	40	31	- 9	9	9	0
Fighting criminality	67	57	- 10	24	30	+ 6	9	12	+ 3
Enforcing the law on all, whether influential or ordinary people	62	55	- 7	30	34	+ 4	9	11	+ 2
Stopping the destruction and abuse of our environment	57	54	- 3	32	36	+ 4	11	10	- 1
Providing assistance to farmers including selling their products	---	55	---	---	34	---	---	12	---
Addressing the problem of involuntary hunger	---	46	---	---	38	---	---	16	---
Creating more jobs	59	43	- 16	29	39	+10	12	18	+ 6
Fighting graft and corruption in government	58	45	- 13	28	31	+ 3	13	23	+10
Increasing the pay of workers	59	41	- 18	28	35	+ 7	13	24	+11
Reducing the poverty of many Filipinos	39	29	- 10	35	40	+ 5	26	31	+ 5
Controlling inflation	31	16	- 15	27	28	+ 1	42	56	+14

\*\*Year-on-year = Figures of September 2023 minus Figures of September 2022.

Disapproval for the administration's work becomes more notable on the issues of job creation (+6 percentage points), corruption (+10 percentage points), workers' pay (+11 percentage points), and inflation (+14 percentage points). In terms of indecision figures, these increase in relation to the present administration's efforts to fight criminality (+6 percentage points), increase the pay of workers (+7 percentage points), and create more jobs (+10 percentage points). Meanwhile, ambivalence eases on the issues of protecting the welfare of overseas Filipino workers (-6 percentage points) and defending national territorial integrity (-9 percentage points).