



BANTAY NG BAYAN



March 25, 2010
46 days before Election Day

How sure are you that your vote will be counted in the automated count?

With the automation of the May 2010 elections, the days of the yellow metal ballot boxes that used to be protected by concerned citizens are history. The days of manual *tara-tara* or tabulation in counting the votes are over. The Operation *Quick Count* conducted by NAMFREL at La Salle Greenhills is unnecessary. But can we trust the machines? Can we trust the count yielded by the machines?

In other electronic dealings like withdrawing cash from your bank's Automated Teller Machine (ATM) or buying lotto tickets, one gets a paper receipt, or at the very least, an onscreen notification of one's transaction.

On May 10, 2010, under the automated election system that COMELEC will administer in more than 75,000 precincts all over the country, the voter will not get any paper receipt or on-screen notification assuring him/her that his intent was what the PCOS machine captured. The COMELEC disabled these features in the machines for what? Speed? Economy? Expediency?

The last remaining safeguard of the accuracy of the count was to have been NAMFREL's offer to COMELEC at no expense to the COMELEC and as a natural extension of its operation quick count expertise to conduct a random manual audit (RMA) of the count in certain precincts, provided in the automation law itself (RA 9369). NAMFREL's position is to conduct the RMA right after the electronic count *before* the proclamation of winners. COMELEC is leaning towards conducting RMA *after* the proclamation when any discrepancy between the manual versus the electronic count shall not be recognized until much, much later. COMELEC denied the petition of NAMFREL to conduct RMA.

Clearly, COMELEC is choosing speed over reflecting the true will of the people, speed over transparency & auditability.

Maging BANTAY ng BAYAN.

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