

# The Philippines and the Future of Elections in a COVID-affected World



**ADOR R. TORNEO, Ph.D.**  
Full Professor and Director  
La Salle Institute of Governance

## Covid-19 Pandemic Impacts to PHL Elections



Source: Gulf News

- Postponement of Palawan Plebiscite from May 11, 2020 to March 13, 2021;
- Limited and disrupted schedule of voter registration due to quarantine restrictions;
- Number of registered voters: ~63M so far vs. 63.6M registered voters in 2019 elections (61.8M in Philippines and 1.82M overseas);
- Possible postponement of BARMM elections\*\*
- Various measures to address anticipated issues and challenges in the 2022 elections

## Threats to Participation in 2022 PH Elections

- Health threats during registration, campaign, election, and post-election;
- Administrative and logistical challenges;
- Low registration among new eligible voters\*;
- Non-renewal of many deactivated voters\*;
- Low voter turnout on election day;
- Threat of misinformation and disinformation;
- Civil society and election watchdogs may be limited in terms of mobilizing;



Source: Philippine Star

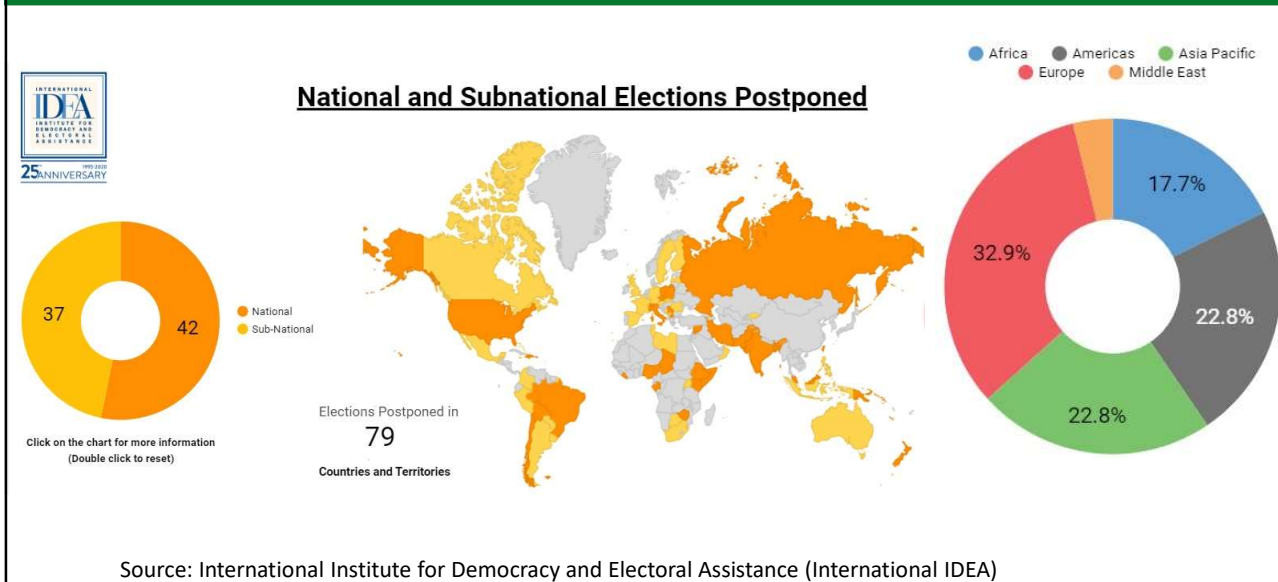
## Other Potential Threats to 2022 PHL Elections



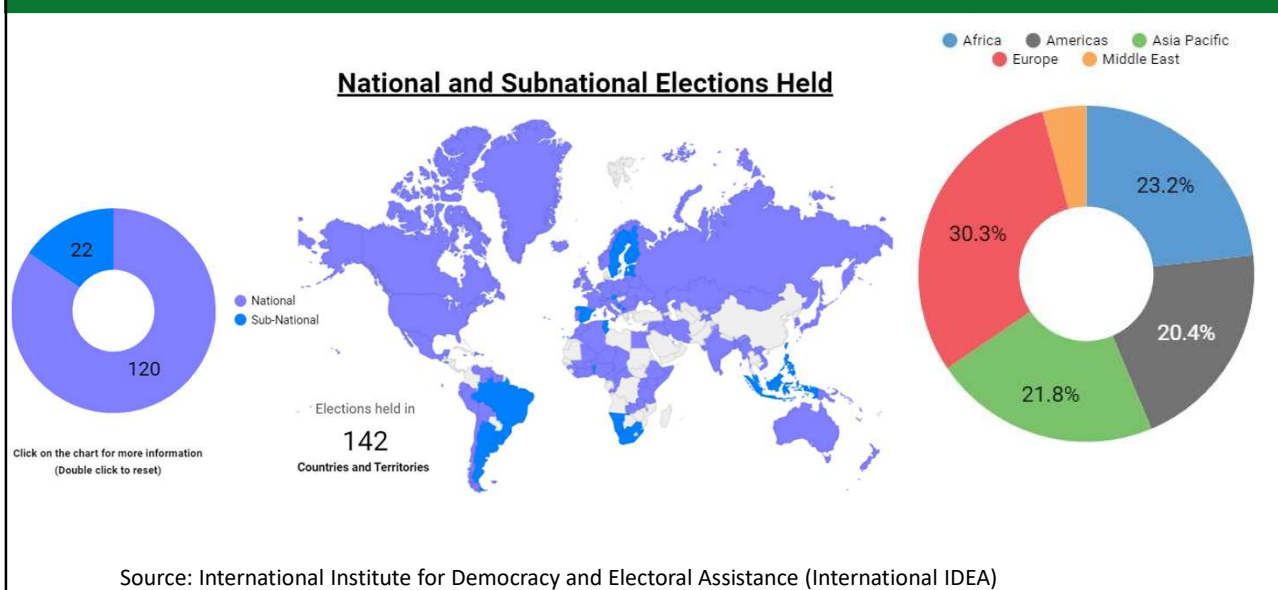
Source: Philippine News Agency

- Inadequate health/safety measures;
- Politicization of vaccines, govt. aid;
- Misuse/ abuse of restrictions;
- Economic hardship may make voters susceptible to vote-buying;
- Massive disenfranchisement of voters;
- Challenges to integrity and legitimacy;

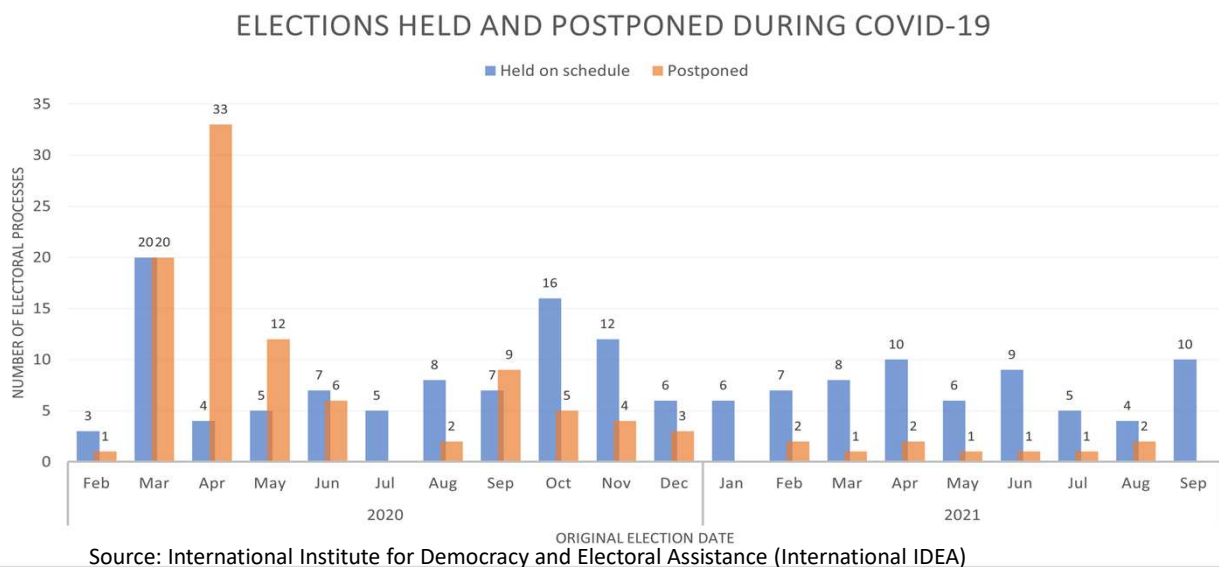
# Elections During the Pandemic: Global Context



# Elections During the Pandemic: Global Context



## Elections During the Pandemic: Global Context



## Mitigation Measures Adopted: Global Context



Source: Getty Images



Source: Council of Foreign Relations

- Health and safety measures in place\*
- Home and institutional-based voting by mobile ballot box
- Covid-19 related arrangements in polling station\*
- Early voting
- Limit on participants at public gatherings
- Ban on political rallies or events
- Postal voting
- Proxy voting

Source: International IDEA; ACE Project

## Mitigation Measures Adopted: PH Palawan Plebiscite



Source: Rappler



Source: CNN Philippines

- Minimum public health standards (e.g., physical distancing)
- 200 voters per clustered precinct
- Thermal check of voters prior to entry
- No face mask, no face shield, no entry
- Pre-filled Health Declaration Form
- Medical personnel stationed in voting center

## Mitigation Measures Adopted: PH Palawan Plebiscite



Source: Rappler



Source: CNN Philippines

- Disinfection station and foot bath in every polling place
- PlebCom members shall be in PPEs
- Use of voting booths
- Disinfection of frequently touched objects
- Isolation polling place



## Voter Turnout in National Elections: Global Context



Source: World Economic Forum

**Voter turnout increased in 32/90 (36%) countries; Mean increase is 8.2%**

**Voter turnout declined in 58/90 countries (64%); Mean decline is 10.3%**

**\*Philippine Palawan plebiscite: 60.06% voter turnout**

Source: International IDEA



## Possible PHL Mitigation Measures in 2022 Elections



Source: Manila Bulletin

### Comelec New Normal Committee (Res. No. 10688)

- Consult the appropriate government agencies/departments ...
- Identify which election operational activities need changes ...
- Formulate and develop a comprehensive manual ...



## Possible PHL Mitigation Measures in 2022 Elections



Source: Philippine News Agency

**Repeat of Palawan Plebiscite measures ++ ?**

- Additional guidelines for campaign?
- Early voting; Extension of voting hours?
- Change in venues (larger? new venues)?
- Reduced clustered precincts sizes; additional voting precincts?

## Factors that will Shape 2022 Philippine Elections

**The Conduct of 2022 Elections depends on:**

- General Covid-19 situation: cases, variants
- Progress of national vaccination campaign
- Adequacy of COMELEC preparations
- IATF and national government policies
- How election stakeholders respond
- Cooperation of political parties, candidates, and the general public with measures



Source: CNN Philippines

## The Future of Elections Post-Pandemic: Possible Global Scenarios

Post pandemic, the following trends may continue:

- Efforts to streamline electoral systems
- Increased shift to online or hybrid voter registration
- More countries may adopt postal or electronic voting
- More countries may adopt electronic voting
- Increased adoption of mobile voting
- Greater interest in internet voting systems



Source: Britannica

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