

GMA performance, trust ratings continue to dip

Even with just a few months left in her term, President Arroyo's performance and trust ratings continue to dip, according to the latest Pulse Asia survey on the country's top national officials.

The disapproval and distrust ratings of the President for October were at their highest since a year ago, at 51 percent and 52 percent, respectively.

Since October 2008, the disapproval rating of the President remained steady at around 46 percent until this October's survey where it went up to 51 percent.

The distrust rating, on the other hand, was already at 51 percent in October 2009 and went down a bit to 42 percent last August and back up again to 52 percent this October.

Malacanan continued to downplay the surveys on the President, saying that these were merely reflections of people's opinions and do not accurately represent the sentiments of the entire population.

Deputy presidential spokesperson Lorenso Fajardo argued that the ratings of Mrs. Arroyo could have been higher if there was an objective assessment of her performance.

"These surveys are opinion-based and we don't think it rep-

resents a significant number of Filipinos," Fajardo said in a press briefing at Malacanan.

"I think if we would judge the performance of the President based on her work ethic and her accomplishments, she would fare higher than the result of the survey," she added.

The Palace has always claimed that Mrs. Arroyo has done a lot to ease the plight of the country's poor with her pro-poor programs that include debt-cut, health care and educational support services.

The Pulse Asia survey supports this to some degree as it showed the highest level of trust and approval for the President in the poorest sector of the population.

Based on social classes, the President scored the highest approval rating among the Class E respondents at 25 percent and 24 percent for trust rating.

In contrast, the President scored the lowest among the ABC classes at 19 percent and 14 percent on approval and trust ratings, respectively.

By MARYM SY

By region, the President got the highest ratings from Mindanao, where the poverty level is highest.

She scored 24 percent and 23 percent on approval and trust in Mindanao, and 44 percent and 43 percent on disapproval and distrust, the lowest among the regions.

Respondents who approved of the President's performance averaged 21 percent nationwide, while those who had "big trust" in her was at 19 percent.

Pulse Asia disclosed that the survey was conducted at a time when the top news stories were related to the relief efforts after tropical storm "Ondoy" and typhoon "Tepung," the declaration of former President Joseph Estrada on his bid for reelection in 2010, Sen. Loren Legarda's own bid for the presidency and the price freeze on petroleum products and other basic commodities.

The firm claims to have a plus or minus two percent margin of error at the 95 percent confidence level for its nationwide survey.

The latest Pulse Asia survey also rated the performance of Vice President Noli de Castro, Senate President

Juan Ponce Enrile, Speaker Prospero Nograles and Chief Justice Reynato Puno.

Among the four officials, De Castro continued to get the highest approval rating at 43 percent, followed by Enrile and Puno at 36 percent and Nograles at 21 percent.

It was the first time in over a year that De Castro did not get a majority approval in the survey.

Enrile and Puno's numbers did not change much since last year, unlike Nograles whose approval rating was on a steady decline.

Nograles also got the highest disapproval rating at 29 percent, followed by De Castro at 27 percent, their highest levels in more than a year.

Reacting to his ratings, De Castro said the government will continue its programs that are truly beneficial to Filipinos.

"I would like to thank the people for their continued trust and confidence in me. I want to assure them that as their Vice President, I will relentlessly work for programs that are truly beneficial to them, especially to the poor," De Castro said.

- With Pia Lee-Brugo