

Press Release

# Statement on the Occasion of the National Day of Protest Against President GMA

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## Mindanao, Philippines

The growing disenchantment over the Arroyo administration had continuously risen starting from the involvement of the First Family in “Jueteng”. However, the nation was further shaken to its core when the notorious “Hello Garci” audio tapes were discovered and publicly aired. While there were wide speculations that Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo (GMA) cheated on the 2004 elections, the surfacing of the tapes have acted like a slap on the face of every citizen of this country. Most of us tried to close our eyes to the going-ons of this country, too busy with our daily struggle for survival. When the evidence of GMA’s cheating forced itself on us and proved that we have a fake president, we still tried to go on with our lives. GMA’s admission and apology on national television further cemented the evidence of cheating. It was like we were being pillaged, robbed literally by the very person who is supposed to govern and protect us. GMA’s apology for having a “lapse of judgment” on her part in talking to a COMELEC official was assumed by the president to be a sufficient salve to our tattered dignity and rights as an individual, as a people. Her urgings for us to move on, and saying that ours is a great nation, seems like a cajoling to an immature child. GMA insulted the intelligence of the citizens of this country when she believed that a public apology is all it takes for us to forgive her of her betrayal to the people that she vowed to serve.

The wiretapped conversations exposed the great magnitude of the cheating especially in the provinces of Mindanao. It showed us the repulsive way of how our votes were manipulated, totally disregarding the political will of the people.

Her henchmen’s urgings to forgive the President and let the rule of law take its course is sickening. Once again, they displayed such blatant arrogance in hiding behind legal maneuverings knowing fully well that no legal processes could prosper as they have the numbers, both in the House of Representative and Senate, thwarting every move of the opposition. Again, they tried to make a fool out of the people and made a mockery of the laws of the land.

GMA’s act in manipulating the results of the election through a COMELEC official is an act of betrayal to the people. She stole not only our votes but stripped us of our basic right of suffrage, the very right that is the very heart of every democratic country. How do you call a President who cheated on her people and still demands respect from her constituents? Where’s the sense of justice, fairness and decency? No self-respecting person would allow her/his rights to be trampled upon and still praise the violator of that right.

While we can forgive another person for a wrongdoing, we also seek and deserve justice for the wrong done to us. We cannot just close our eyes for the obscene way GMA deceived and betrayed us. She degrades the very core of our values that a public official, most of all a president, should be a person with integrity and a reputation beyond reproach, a model to her constituents worthy of emulation by the young generation and the generations to come, someone who will make us proud of

being a Filipino. How can we be a great nation if the President herself made us cover our faces with shame and humiliation?!

Further, we cannot allow to be outmaneuvered again by GMA's henchmen by letting them tamper with our legal processes. Let the collective voice of the people be heard! We, from the Mindanao Peoples' Peace Movement (MPPM) together with other Civil Society Organizations, demand that GMA and her cohorts should RESIGN! Install a Revolutionary Transition Government and let the people decide its political future!

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