

Against the state of emergency: Two press releases from Akbayan

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People Power now!

26 February 2006

AKBAYAN Party today reiterated that People Power to oust the GMA regime remains to be the only way to prevent a declaration of martial law amid the looming confrontation between military rebels and government forces. According to the party, the possibility of a bloody coup is the inevitable outcome of President GMA's shameless manipulation of the AFP to win the 2004 polls and to ensure her own political survival.

"Her removal from office is the only way to prevent bloodshed. The people must not be scared and must come out to oust GMA from office and avert the declaration of martial law," AKBAYAN Rep. Risa Hontiveros said.

The solon also urged the public not to be scared. "Our number and our commitment to democracy and freedom are our strength. We have shown the world twenty years ago that we as a nation can unite to protect our freedoms and our civil liberties. The time has come for us to stand up once again to secure the future of our country. Let us all pray for a peaceful and meaningful change in our country," Rep. Hontiveros added.

AKBAYAN Rep. Etta Rosales, meanwhile, said that the recent events in the country point to the possible declaration of martial law. "Due to the President's wanton disregard for our democracy and the independence of our political institutions, our system has already reached the breaking point. She has to step down or be ousted from office by the people to protect the future of democracy in the country. Only the people can prevent a martial law and a junta," Rep. Rosales said.

Fellow AKBAYAN Rep. Mayong Aguja, for his part, said that with or without the coup, the dictatorial fangs of Malacanang have already been revealed by the recent imposition of Presidential Proclamation 1017. "We have no choice but to go to the streets and be vigilant. We have to remind ourselves of the spirit of EDSA - the exuberance of our courage and the power of our righteous outrage. Only this time, let us not put down our banners too soon. Let us resolve this crisis to achieve meaningful and deeper change in our democracy," Rep. Aguja said.

To bury the truth, GMA killed Philippine democracy

25 February 2006

AKBAYAN Party today denounced anew GMA's declaration of a State of National Emergency, saying that the draconian measures that the government imposed yesterday completely exposed the despotic inclinations of the ruling regime. "Yesterday's events were the last of the jigsaw pieces that revealed in full GMA's intention to rule the country through a dictatorship. What she has done is an insult not only to the millions of Filipinos who risked their lives to peacefully dismantle the Marcos dictatorship, but also to a world that was moved and inspired by the strength of our love for democracy and freedom. The dark days of Martial Law have been resurrected and they will haunt us as long as President GMA is in power and as long as systemic changes and democratic reforms are not in place," AKBAYAN Rep. Mayong Aguja said. "Just so she could evade the truth behind the 'Hello Garci' controversy, the President is willing to destroy the already shaky democratic structures of the country."

Meanwhile, AKBAYAN Rep. Etta Rosales expressed fears that the imposition of the State of National Emergency would pave the way for crackdown on democratic anti-government forces. "All the elements of a repressive regime are already in place. There are orders to gag the media, quell dissent in the streets in the name of public order, arrest political figures or conduct raids without warrant. It is in this environment of fear and sense of impunity on the part of the President that massive human rights violations usually occur," Rep. Rosales added.

AKBAYAN President Ronald Llamas, who was arrested along with UP Prof. Randy David in yesterday's protest rally to commemorate the People Power I anniversary, dared Malacanang to pursue the same path that Marcos has taken to continue his stay in power. "President GMA should have learned from history that repression is the breeding ground of People Power. She would suffer the same fate as Marcos. By insulting the ideals of People Power I, she has actually stoked the rage and the moral indignation of the people. Madam President, we are not afraid," Llamas said.

According to Llamas, AKBAYAN would file counter charges against the policemen that arrested leaders of Laban ng Masa. He also said that the group would question the legality of the declaration of State of National Emergency in the Supreme Court.

For her part, AKBAYAN Rep. Risa Hontiveros called on the Filipinos to remain vigilant and ready to protect the people's democratic gains. "Let us continue to struggle for democracy and freedom in the country. However, we must consciously be steadfast in establishing deeper reforms to widen our democratic space and give meaningful voice to the people in the institutions of governance," Rep. Hontiveros said.

Other than the cases against the policemen who arrested Llamas and Prof. David and the filing of a case in the SC against GMA's draconian policies, the solon said that AKBAYAN legislators would also question House Speaker Jose de Venecia's declarations and actions when Malacanang was under red alert. "His call to all congressmen and congresswomen to declare support to what he believes is the duly constituted government is a rejection of the ideals of EDSA, which promote an independent and representative legislature. In his eagerness to succeed President GMA through a GMA-backed charter change, he compromised the integrity of Congress as an institution of representation and democracy," Rep. Hontiveros said.