

Malaysia/Philippines: Statement on the Sabah carnage

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Partido Lakas ng Masa (PLM) condemns the assault on Lahad Datu by the combined forces of Malaysian armed forces, commandos and Marines that led to the death of 12 members of the Sulu sultan's security forces and the death of two Malaysian policemen. Our Filipino Moro brothers camped out in Lahad Datu only to dramatize the claims on Sabah.

We hold the Philippine government equally responsible for neglecting to give them protection during the 'standoff period' with the Malaysian military that lasted for almost a month. Instead of protecting the lives of our Moro brothers, President Aquino added insult to injury by ignoring the sultanate's claim (despite it being the basis of the Philippine government's claim to Sabah) and even threatening to do them harm if they would not leave the encampment.

President Aquino should have used the occasion from day one to undertake negotiations between the Malaysian government, the Sultan's family and followers, and the Philippine government. The spokesman of Sultan Kiram has stated that there was no effort on the part of the Philippine government to intervene by leading a negotiation.

We assert that the Philippine claim to Sabah has its merits and should not be abandoned by the government. More so, the government should not have abandoned the security and lives of our Filipino Moro brothers during this period.

However, we believe that the claim should be pursued in a peaceful manner through firm diplomacy of the Philippine government.

And the final solution to the Sabah claim should also consider the demands and interests of its inhabitants, be it Malaysians, indigenous people or Filipinos who have lived there for a long time — even the disadvantaged groups that have been historically displaced and exiled to other places because of the conflict.

We believe that this democratic process is the only way to prevent a useless war and carnage between Malaysia and the Philippines.

Partido Lakas ng Masa (PLM)

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