

# **Philippines: Statement on the Declaration of Martial Law in Mindanao and the Marawi attacks**

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The Rebolusyonaryong Partido ng Manggagawa – Mindanao (RPM-M) condemns the barbaric killings and senseless destructions of properties in the Islamic City of Marawi, Mindanao. The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) inspired group led by the Maute family and their armed followers tried to put up a diversionary armed attacks in several strategic areas in Marawi City to help the Abu Sayyaf leader (Isnlon Hapilon) escape the raid and dragnet by the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP).

As events have unfolded, the Maute group and the Abu Sayyaf are not only able to effect the safe escape of Isnlon Hapilon but also are able to do precise armed attacks and secure the freedom of hundreds prisoners (including their comrades) in the City Jail. They were able to burn the said jail and buildings and institutions identified with the Christian churches (St Mary Cathedral and the protestant administered Dansalan College). They were also able to hold as hostage peoples in these institutions including a priest and teachers.

It is worth noting that in the process of burning the City, dislocating and killing its people, the Maute group and their extremist armed followers have given much attention on inflicting more damage and suffering on the Christian minority population. They are trying to ignite a religious war.

All these unfortunate events happened when President Rodrigo Duterte and all his top military and security advisers were in Moscow for official talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin regarding defense and military agreements among others. The attack has clearly shown a pre-arranged plan by the Maute and Abu Sayyaf and an extreme failure of AFP Intelligence. But what is worst during the attacks, the 103<sup>rd</sup> Army Brigade (based in the City) was totally caught by surprise. Several of its men and women were on vacation inspite of the fact that there were talks already circulating that something was brewing in the City.

President Duterte did not only cut short the Moscow official visit but from Russia he declared Martial Law in Mindanao.

President Duterte is not only fully aware of the constitutional infirmities of his Martial Law proclamation but he is more aware and concern of the destabilization steps initiated by the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) against his government through the Abu Sayyaf using the Maute family in the guise of religious radicalism.

The US (United States of America) covert operators have acknowledged that it is extremely difficult to destabilize Duterte amidst its high popularity rating (80%). But they have to act urgently because of the Duterte's seemingly unstoppable pivots to Russia and China. The US does not definitely want to lose a strategic ally like the Philippines and it's more than a century of so called friendship.

The declaration of Martial Law in Mindanao is a clear attempt of Duterte to contain the Marawi incident and prevent more escalation in other parts of the country. It has also become obvious that

the handling of the Marawi incident is his (Duterte) method of launching his war on terrorism and links this to his war on illegal drugs. Extra-Judicial Killings (EJK) will be subsumed by Martial Law with the suspension of the Writ of Habeas Corpus and controlled freedom of the press and movements. Definitely this will encourage its implementers (military) to perform their war on terrorism and anti-drugs with impunity.

Meanwhile Marawi City has been flattened, displacing and dislocating its more than two hundred thousand population (93-95% Muslim and 5-7% are Christians). The number of deaths has been daily-increasing like the Maute and Abu Sayyaf deaths have almost reached a hundred, the AFP has lost more than three dozens of lives but the number of dead civilians has been steady to less than twenty. But everybody knows that the streets of Marawi have been literally flooded by unattended dead bodies.

The Marawi incident and the declaration of Martial Law in Mindanao have also revealed another sad reality - which is that both Houses of Congress cannot be relied upon to protect the rights of the people. They have all given their approval without debate for the Duterte's declaration of Martial Law in Mindanao to continue.

Once again, we condemn the barbaric and senseless killings in Marawi City and elsewhere in the country.

We strongly call for President Duterte to revoke immediately its declaration of Martial Law in Mindanao. War on drugs and terrorism cannot be solved by more killings and suppression of peoples' basic rights. Sustained war on drugs and terrorism can only be effective if war on the causes of the evil symptoms will be launched together with the people and by the people.

We call on the US and its covert operators to immediately stop the use of religious war to effect its interventions and protect its interest in the Philippines and elsewhere in the world.

We are calling for mobilization for armed and non-armed activities to defend the peoples' rights and fight terrorism and the illegal drugs.

We call on Solidarity groups and all like-minded and peace loving people in Mindanao, the whole country and the world to offer your support and help in pressuring the Philippine government to revoke immediately Martial Law in Mindanao and further declaring it elsewhere in the country.

We shall overcome!

**The Executive Committee of the Central Committee  
Rebolusyonaryong Partido ng Manggagawa - Mindanao**

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