

PRESS STATEMENT
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REIGN OF TERROR CONTINUES DESPITE LIFTING OF PROCLAMATION 1017

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Gloria M. Arroyo has lifted Proclamation No. 1017 in an obvious bid to render moot and academic the complaints filed before the Supreme Court of the Philippine reactionary government against her regime's curtailment of democratic rights and use of martial law powers without complying with such constitutional requirements as reporting to Congress and seeking its approval.

Proclamation No. 1017 is deceptively called declaration of a "state of national emergency" but its mandatory part is a verbatim copy of the Marcos martial law declaration, Proclamation No. 1081. By this proclamation, Arroyo usurps martial powers.

These include the power to issue decrees and orders, order arrests without judicial warrant, curtail the freedom of speech and assembly, disperse rallies and strikes, take over public utilities, mass media and other businesses supposedly imbued with "public interest" and so on, under the pretext of suppressing lawless violence, rebellion and insurrection.

Arroyo herself and her top subalterns in the cabinet and in the police and military have announced that she can issue again and again a proclamation with a draconian content identical to that of Proclamation 1017. They have also boasted that, with or without such a proclamation, they can continue to carry out repressive measures against the people and the broad united front of patriotic, progressive and other forces opposing the Arroyo regime.

Proclamation No. 1017 was premised on the big lie that there was a coup conspiracy of "communists" and "military adventurists" and that a coup attempt was foiled on February 24. The truth is that the regime used the proclamation to preempt and break up the mass actions celebrating the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Marcos fascist dictatorship.

The regime feared that the military and police would withdraw support from it as they had done in EDSA 1 and EDSA 2 if the people's assembly had been allowed to grow big on February 24. No coup at all was attempted by any group of military and police officers. It was the Arroyo ruling clique that carried out a coup by usurping martial law powers and violating the constitutional requirements of congressional approval and oversight and judicial warrants for arrests and searches.

At great expense of public resources, the Arroyo regime continues to wage a propaganda campaign to misrepresent as a "conspiracy" of communists and military officers of the reactionary government the consensus and active efforts of all anti-Arroyo forces in the broad united front to encourage the military and police to withdraw their support from the regime but not to make a coup for themselves in violation of the principle of civilian supremacy.

Arroyo and her principal accomplices are accountable for concocting the so-called coup conspiracy and coup attempt, adopting and implementing Proclamation 1017 and for violating the democratic rights of those victimized by the proclamation, such as the rallyists

who were brutally attacked, all those arrested without judicial warrant, the six congressmen so grievously persecuted, several newspaper offices raided and messed up to intimidate all mass media, all those falsely charged with rebellion and coup d'etat, and so on.

The Arroyo regime will continue to issue proclamations, decrees and orders for the purpose of curtailing democratic rights and repressing the people in its pursuit to prolong its illegitimate and immoral rule and ram through the treasonous Arroyo-De Venecia charter-change scheme. This scheme is aimed at crowning Arroyo with Marcosian dictatorial powers and making other anti-national and anti-democratic constitutional amendments in line with the economic and military dictates of the US.

The Arroyo regime is obstinately treading the bloody path of fascist dictatorship and state terrorism. Even before the issuance of Proclamation 1017, the regime was already engaged in gross human rights violations, especially in the Bantay Laya military campaigns of suppression against the toiling masses of workers and peasants. So many trade union and peasants leaders, youth and women activists, human rights workers, priests and pastors, journalists, lawyers, officers and members of progressive party list groups have been kidnapped and tortured to death or gunned down in public places by the death squads of the Arroyo regime.

Since 2001 Arroyo has openly approved and praised the reign of terror and has rapidly promoted military and police officers who are notorious torturers and murderers. The terrorism of her regime will continue and increase its viciousness, despite the lifting of Proclamation 1017. It is planned and directed by a cluster of her cabinet members in charge of national security, with the technical assistance of the topmost officers of the various intelligence agencies. The bloody crimes of the growing fascist dictatorship are driving so many people to join the revolutionary underground and wage armed revolution, according to revolutionary publications.

The broad masses of the people and the broad united front of patriotic, progressive and other anti-Arroyo forces have no choice but to intensify their protest mass actions and encourage the civilian officials and military and police officers of the reactionary government to withdraw their support from the Arroyo ruling clique. We can expect the oust-Arroyo mass movement to intensify in the national capital region and nationwide in the days and weeks to come. ###