

Philippines: New party-list solon endorses impeach rap vs Ombudsman

Tuesday 28 April 2009, by [MERUENAS Mark](#), [SISANTE Johanna Camille](#) (Date first published: 27 April 2009).

MANILA, Philippines – A newly-sworn in party-list lawmaker from Akbayan on Monday hit the ground running by endorsing the impeachment complaint filed in March against Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez.

Endorsing the complaint was the first task undertaken by University of the Philippines professor and new Akbayan lawmaker Walden Bello right after he was sworn in by House secretary general Marilyn Yap.

Bello, a known political analyst and economist, endorsed the impeachment complaint filed in early March by at least 31 civil society leaders led by former Senate President Jovito Salonga against the Ombudsman for allegedly sitting on a number of high-profile cases.

“My first act would be to endorse the impeachment complaint against a biased, ineffective Ombudsman,” Bello said.

Bello urged new party-list lawmakers to join him in endorsing the impeachment complaint against the Ombudsman, as well as to take a strong stance against the Arroyo administration.

“Nobody can claim to represent the marginalized and yet support an administration that has consistently alienated the people,” Bello said. “My primary purpose here is to join the Filipino people in getting rid of this extremely corrupt administration.”

Accompanying Bello during his swearing in ceremony were incumbent Akbayan Rep. Risa Hontiveros-Baraquel and former Akbayan Rep. Etta Rosales.

While trying to shore up support from his fellow new lawmakers, Bello said that the only new lawmaker who should not be allowed to join the opposition was retired Army general Jovito Palparan.

“He should neither be in the opposition or the administration. He does not deserve to be here at all,” Bello said, citing the former military official’s alleged human rights violations.

Palparan had repeatedly denied allegations that he was behind a number of extra-legal killings in the past.

Palparan and Bello were two of the 28 new lawmakers who were proclaimed last week by the Commission on Elections following a Supreme Court ruling directing the poll body to increase to 55 the number of legislators at the lower chamber.

Aside from immediately setting his sights on the Gutierrez complaint, Bello also shared his plans to lay down an emergency economic program to fight off the blows of the global economic recession.

Bello was quoted in a radio report as blasting the government for still remaining in “a denial stage”

about the economic crunch, amid international efforts to deflect its effects on their respective economies.

Despite being sworn in at the House secretary general's office, Bello along with the other newly proclaimed lawmakers would still have to face House Speaker Prospero Nograles collectively Tuesday at the plenary for their official oath of office.

Yap, however, clarified that despite not yet taking his official oath of office, Bello's endorsement is already valid. "For all intents and purposes, they are already members of the house," she said.

The House secretary general also assured that the House will request for additional funds following the addition of the 28 new party-list lawmakers, bringing the total number of House legislators to 266.

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