

# Gloria Macapagal Arroyo: Clear and Present Danger

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From 22-25 of February, the Filipino people celebrated the anniversary of the EDSA People Power in the Philippines which ousted the dictator Ferdinand Marcos 20 years ago. Thousands of people were on the streets on these days, living the spirit of the EDSA as they marched and called for the stepping down of yet another growing authoritarian president Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

In defiance of the spirit of power to the people and democracy itself, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo declared the Philippines in a state of emergency with Proclamation 1017, citing a "clear and present danger" posed by the alliance between forces from the extreme left and the military. This proclamation has been challenged by members of the Philippine Senate and declared as unconstitutional by various groups of lawyers. Leaders of progressive groups and party-list members were arrested, in addition to the list of demonstrators who were picked up and detained from the various big protest actions. Ongoing crackdown on people's organisations and progressive NGOs are taking place, coming out with a list of people to be arrested for acts of sedition. Military officials alleged to be involved in the plot to stage a coup de tat have been arrested. Demonstrations, led by progressive groups from the people's movement, supported and joined in by thousands of ordinary citizens, have been violently dispersed; all permits for demonstrations have been revoked. A national newspaper has been raided and taken over because it was a possible source of destabilization materials. A warning has been issued that the police will take over news groups that will not conform to standards set by the government.

This act of desperation of Arroyo to suppress the growing movement calling for her to step down shows that it is her administration which is in the state of emergency.

Last year, Arroyo has been exposed as a cheater and a liar. Audio tapes of her several conversations with a member of the Commission on Election revealed that she cheated her way through the Malacanang Palace. Since then, thousands of people would go on the streets to call for her to step down and respect the results of the elections. Impeachment process started, only to lose as the Senate is manned by her cohorts. Arroyo responded through violent dispersals, justifying this with her program of CPR (Calibrated Pre-emptive Response.) This is needed, she said, to be two steps ahead of the terrorists. This was two steps to tyranny.

The Arroyo administration has put the Filipinos in the state of emergency.

Since last year, more than a hundred activists and community organizers have been killed.

Filipinos living below poverty line increased as more policies have been enacted by the Arroyo administration, such as the new value added tax. Food and agricultural policies following the dictates of the World Trade Organisation have rendered loss of livelihoods for thousands of food producers. The Arroyo government has continued to open up the country's natural resources to pander to the coffers of the transnational corporations, ravishing the ecology and making the rural communities more vulnerable to disasters such as the recent mudslide in Leyte, and the flashfloods in Mindoro in December 2004. The Philippines lost thousands of lives in these disasters.

The Arroyo government continues to unabashedly tow the line of interest of the US government - supporting the occupation of Iraq, bringing the war against terror to the Philippines, waging war against its constituents who are critical and struggling for change; surrendering the call for justice of the people, particularly the Filipina who was allegedly raped by five US soldiers who were in the country for military exercises.

**Indeed, the Philippines is in a state of emergency. And Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo is a clear and present danger to the Filipino people.**

As part of the international solidarity for the movement for change, social justice and a better world, let us echo the call of the Filipino people to the Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo -

**Release ALL detained political leaders and demonstrators! End the crackdown on the people's movement!**

Bring back the civil liberties in the Philippines, lift the unconstitutional Proclamation 1017!

Free the Filipinos from their misery, fear and actual threats to their rights and lives.  
Step down from the presidency! Now!

Put up a pro-people and democratic government!

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