

## **Gloria blamed for activists' murders; ouster call renewed**

Friday 3 March 2006, by [CABIGTING Mel](#), [NEMENZO Francisco "Dodong"](#), [OCAMPO Satur](#), [POLICAR Dona Policar](#)  
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Amid charges of graft, poll fraud and human rights violations against President Arroyo, militant lawmakers have renewed their call for the Chief Executive to leave Malacañang, claiming Mrs. Arroyo has tolerated each and every murder of militant members.

Their step-down plea was raised after another member of Bayan Muna was gunned down last Monday in San Esteban, Ilocos Sur, bringing to 146 the number of activists killed under the Arroyo administration.

Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo yesterday said Mrs. Arroyo should now vacate the presidency if she cannot stop the murders and if she can no longer assure rights to life and liberty of citizens, including activists and critics of her government.

"Worse, the President even encouraged the perpetrators in the military by keeping them in their posts and promoting them to higher positions," the lawmaker noted.

"Mrs. Arroyo is thus guilty of fomenting an epidemic of political murders," Ocampo said.

"It has become a terrible state policy under Mrs. Arroyo to demolish Bayan Muna, discredit its good image and murder our members. We appeal to the government to debate with us, not to fight us with guns and bullets," he added.

Ocampo stressed since Mrs. Arroyo assumed power in 2001, she has allegedly tolerated the killings of militant leaders and members, otherwise she could resolve the problem on these senseless killings long before.

This could be proved when no criminal charges has ever been filed by the government over the murders of 146 activists, that include 72 Bayan Muna members, under the Arroyo administration.

The latest victim of the murder was identified as Pepe Manegdeg, a Bayan Muna member and Northern Luzon coordinator of the Rural Missionaries of the Philippines. He was shot to death by an unidentified armed man on Monday night where he spoke at a paralegal training at Apatot, San Esteban, Ilocos Sur.

Manegdeg was the seventh militant member killed in November alone.

Also, a peasant organization pushing a transitional revolutionary government yesterday vowed to continue its fight until Mrs. Arroyo is ousted from office.

Francisco Nemenzo, chairman of the Laban ng Masa, during a press conference, said his group will continue with its effort to unseat the President for them to form a transition government.

"We're not losing self-esteem, the people should not lose their patience. We will continue our fight,

in order to save our country. We believe that only the transition form of government would save this country from the elitist rule and from the worsening crisis," he stressed.

According to Nemenzo, Laban ng Masa is aimed at replacing the Arroyo administration to address the twin problems of corruption and mass poverty that "lie at the heart of our country's worsening crisis."

"This is not just a crisis of the Arroyo regime; it is a crisis of the entire system of elite rule. The system has bred self-seeking and deceitful government functionaries such as (former poll official) Virgilio Garcillano and politicians who habitually cheat, buy votes and waste public funds to win and prolong their stay in office. It has failed to bring out leaders who serve the interest of the whole nation." he said.

The group stressed only the transition form of government would charge or prosecute government officials including Mrs. Arroyo and Garcillano from alleged graft and corrupt practices.

The Laban ng Masa expressed belief there is no way these officials will be charged unless a transition form of government will replace the current administration.

"The fact that he (Garcillano) still roams free and even has access to the media is an indication that he is being protected by those with the highest authority in government. He's treated like a celebrity instead of someone charged with committing a criminal offense," Nemenzo noted.

"All fraudulent contracts and deals entered into by previous regimes would be reopened and examined. Mechanisms that ensure transparency and accountability in public service shall be put in place and strictly observed," he said, adding portions of the transitional revolutionary government platform apply precisely to corrupt officials.

"Instead of being allowed to holiday in some beach resort, Garcillano will be arrested and prosecuted under a TRG," Nemenzo said.

The group stressed it considers it an outrage that a top level government official charged with corruption should be allowed to freely roam the world in this manner.

"It's a total indictment of the government and political system that allows and even tolerates such an outrage. This is why we demand the ouster of Mrs. Arroyo, as well as a system change," it added.

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\* <http://www.tribune.net.ph/headlines/20051130.hed04.html>