

# **Philippines: Walden Bello, Akbayan party-list Rep., cuts ties with Palace over Mamasapano 'cover-up'**

Wednesday 11 March 2015, by [CABACUNGAN Gil C. Jr.](#) (Date first published: 11 March 2015).

MANILA, Philippines—A staunch but critical ally of President Aquino has cut his ties with Malacañang due to the Chief Executive's continuing "cover-up" of the Mamasapano fiasco and protection of his friend, resigned Philippine National Police Director General Alan Purisima.

In a text message to the *Inquirer*, Akbayan party-list Rep. Walden Bello said: "I can no longer support this President. He can go ahead and scratch me off the list of his allies, as his spokesperson Abigail Valte has already implied."

Bello's resignation from the administration coalition came a day after the President claimed before an audience of evangelical church leaders, led by Jesus is Lord Church head Bro. Eddie Villanueva, that he was made a fool by fired Special Action Force (SAF) Director Getulio Napeñas.

Aquino claimed Napeñas had failed to coordinate with the military, had refused to abort the mission even if the risks were getting higher, and had given him conflicting reports on the Mamasapano mission to get Malaysian terrorist Zulkifli bin Hir, alias "Marwan," and his Filipino deputy, Basit Usman. Marwan was killed but Usman was able to escape.

Forty-four SAF troopers, 18 members of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and five civilians died on Jan. 25 when the police commandos ran into the MILF and Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters. The civilians died in the crossfire.

## **Brazen cover-up**

"Mamasapano is a deadly acid eating at the presidency. Now, the President is engaging in a brazen cover-up of his responsibility and that of his trusted aide Purisima for the tragic SAF mission and placing all blame on the ground commander Napeñas," Bello said.

"This is the latest development in the shrinking of the man from a credible President to a small-minded bureaucrat trying to erase his fingerprints from a disastrous project," added Bello, who led Akbayan in supporting Aquino's run for the presidency in 2010.

Bello earlier criticized the President for depending on the Disbursement Acceleration Program, which the Supreme Court nullified, and for retaining Agriculture Secretary Proceso Alcala, Agrarian Reform Secretary Virgilio de los Reyes and Budget Secretary Florencio Abad whom he described as "deadweights."

## **Bello's numerous complaints**

Aquino was peeved at Bello's numerous complaints that the President suggested that if the former street protester had felt his views were the only correct ones, he should consider running in the 2016 presidential election.

It remains to be seen whether Bello will be retained by the Akbayan party-list group in the House of Representatives.

"I am remaining with Akbayan as a party. Whether I will remain a representative of the party in Congress will depend on my discussion with the party leadership," Bello said.

"Personally, I feel that I cannot continue to remain the congressional representative of the party if our positions on the administration are diametrically opposed."

A number of Akbayan members are holding government posts, including Presidential Adviser on Political Affairs Ronald Llamas, PhilHealth Insurance Corp. Office Director Risa Hontiveros, Commission on Human Rights Chair Etta Rosales and National Antipoverty Commission Chair Joel Rocamora.

**Gil C. Cabacungan**

---

**P.S.**

\* "Walden Bello cuts ties with Palace over Mamasapano 'cover-up'". Philippine Daily Inquirer. 4:14 AM | Wednesday, March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2015:

<http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/678114/walden-bello-cuts-ties-with-palace-over-mamasapano-cover-up#ixzz3U3fJppsA>