

Akbayan Solon: Filipino women won't regret removal of a woman President

Saturday 29 March 2008, by [HONTIVEROS Risa](#) (Date first published: 7 March 2008).

As anti-GMA women's groups prepare for the commemoration of the International Women's Day, AKBAYAN Rep. Risa Hontiveros said that Filipino women would not regret the removal of GMA, the country's second woman President.

"For a woman President, she has done tremendous harm to Filipino women, a clear setback to the gains made by other women in politics," Rep. Hontiveros said.

The string of unresolved allegations of corruption and fraud leveled against GMA has only deepened negative stereotypes about women in general. "Her incompetent, draconian and graft-ridden regime has become an easy target of machismo, feeding into widespread but flawed notions that women are unfit to lead. The women's movement and various women leaders struggled so hard to correct these notions, but gains that we have made to advance the cause of Filipino women have been singlehandedly ruined by GMA," Rep. Hontiveros said.

Sadly, GMA is the best weapon that any macho Filipino could deploy to claim that women must not be allowed to enter politics, according to the feminist solon.

"Count Filipino women to be the first to rejoice once GMA steps out of Malacañang," said Rep. Hontiveros, adding an end to GMA's regime would be greeted with a sigh of relief from fellow women. "We would actually welcome her removal. It turned out that she is as macho, if not more macho, than some of our male Presidents," Rep. Hontiveros said.

Among GMA's macho sins, according to Rep. Hontiveros, is her propensity to abuse her power to quash efforts to unearth the truth behind the scandals confronting her administration. "If she were a true woman leader, she would confronted the allegations fair and square, even if it means leaving her position. Instead, what GMA has been doing is to use her position to quash the truth. She willfully furthered partisanship in the military and allowed the use of coercion to stifle democratic dissent against her administration," Rep. Hontiveros said.

Under the GMA administration, the plight of Filipino women changed for the worse.

"The persistence of hunger and poverty could only mean that the lives of Filipino women grew worse. Only a genuine woman leader would understand that the face of poverty and hunger is female, since women carry the brunt of economic hardship. Confronted with hunger, it is usually the mother who'd rather be hungry and give whatever food is available to her children and husband. Faced with unequal opportunities, women have to work harder even if it means getting lesser salaries than their male counterparts for an equal amount of work," she added.

GMA's refusal to support the Reproductive Health bill also betrays her machismo. "The bill would greatly alleviate the condition of women. But GMA would rather betray her kabaros to please conservative forces and secure their support for her embattled administration," she said.###