

Statement of Concern on Proclamation 1017 in the Philippines

Thursday 2 March 2006, by [Bisig Netherlands](#), [BOND Belgium](#), [CFMW](#), [FGN](#), [Finnish-Philippine Society](#), [KASAPI-HELLAS](#), [PESC-KSP](#), [Philippine Indigenous Peoples Links](#), [Philippinenbureau \(Asia House\)](#), [Transnational Institute](#) (Date first published: 28 February 2006).

We are deeply concerned with the issuance of Proclamation 1017 by President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, on 24 February 2006, which declared a national state of emergency in the Philippines. We note that this was accompanied by the violent dispersal of peaceful demonstrations on that day, the arrest without warrant of numerous opposition personalities e.g. academic Randy David, Akbayan President Ronald Llamas and two congressmen, including Crispin Beltran who was arrested based on a warrant issued in 1985!. This was followed by the raid of the Daily Tribune newspaper, the stationing of troops in front of TV and radio stations, and the threat to issue government editorial "guidelines" for media. These all threaten to jeopardize democratic advances of the last 20 years.

As human rights advocates, we are concerned about the possible negative effects of Proclamation 1017 on Filipinos' civil liberties. We remember that President Marcos used an alleged coup plot as an excuse to declare martial law in 1972. It was only after many years of struggle that Filipinos were able to regain their freedom of expression, the right to assembly and other freedoms with the overthrow of the Marcos dictatorship in February 1986. It is ironic that they now have to fear losing these freedoms on the 20th anniversary of their victory over Marcos.

We are one with the Filipino people in their struggle to preserve freedom, democracy and defend their human rights. We urge President Arroyo to lift Proclamation 1017 immediately - stop arresting people without warrants and release those arrested, respect the freedom of the press, and restore to right to assembly. We call on the appropriate UN human rights bodies, international NGOs, churches and other civil society groups to urge the Arroyo government to immediately rescind Proclamation 1017.

We will inform our respective governments and the European Union of our concern about the curtailing of freedom, democratic rights and civil liberties in the Philippines. We will call on them to closely monitor developments in the Philippines and to urge the Philippine government to respect and protect basic human rights.

28 February 2006

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