

PRESS STATEMENT

## On Arroyo's P1-B "murder" funds

Thursday 22 June 2006, by [Freedom from Debt Coalition](#) (Date first published: 20 June 2006).

Reference: Milo Tanchuling, FDC secretary-general

### **"If you can't beat them, kill them."**

This is the concrete message echoed by Mrs. Gloria Macapagal Arroyo when she decided to allocate an additional P1 billion to the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) to revitalize its aim to crush the 37-year-old communist insurgency. However, Mrs. Arroyo's declaration of war is a sure recipe for more state-sanctioned violence and carnage against legitimate political dissent using peoples' money.

It is also a confirmation of the danger of a beleaguered administration operating under a reenacted budget. Due to the failure of Congress and much to the delight of the executive branch to enact a budget for this year, Mrs. Arroyo virtually became a more powerful incumbent having discretionary authority in the allocation of public funds. This time, her regime is not only using peoples' money to politically survive but to commit murder in a colossal scale.

Although disguised as an all-out military offensive out to smash the "communist threat" under the flagship of Oplan Bantay Laya, Mrs. Arroyo is also declaring an all-out war on the legal political opposition by making no distinctions whatsoever between armed rebels and open political dissenters. Mrs. Arroyo's declaration that "the fight against the left remains the glue that binds" is a clear endorsement for the massacre of more political activists and personalities just by simply branding them as leftists.

In the span of three years, several hundred activists and legal leftists were tortured and killed in a systematic effort to squash the last and most effective bastion of political opposition-the legal progressive movement. This kind of initiative is but commonsensical of a government that cannot wash away its issue of legitimacy. This embattled regime is so desperate to survive that it will use everything at its disposal particularly public funds to confirm its right to rule.

This is happening in a juncture where resource allocations to vital social services are at its lowest. Under the Arroyo regime, the education's share in the fiscal pie went down by 27.9% while spending on health is 0.27% of our GDP. Our people are dying of communicable diseases like malaria and tuberculosis-diseases that are highly preventable and treatable. And yet, Mrs. Arroyo has the nerve to buy attack helicopters and aircraft to smash an insurgency that is precisely rooted and fanned by an atmosphere of lack of needed social services and social justice. Truly, Mrs. Arroyo's callousness is without comparison.

Without a doubt, the funds that will be allocated to Oplan Bantay Laya are nothing but annihilation funds out to exterminate all citizens humbly exercising their right in exposing and opposing the illegitimacy of the Arroyo regime. However, the first victims of this mad endeavor will not be armed rebels but the student activists, priests, journalists, NGO workers and sectoral leaders who struggle with the poor in aspiring for a better life.

We remind this pretend government that no amount of militarism will smother an insurgency motivated by poverty and powerlessness. Historically, all military campaigns based on this warmongering assumption wasted not only scarce public resources but thousands of innocent lives as well. The only paramount way of addressing this issue is by confronting the lack of social justice and economic well-being dominant in our society. Unfortunately, the bogus Arroyo regime has other priorities in mind.

Now more than ever, the Freedom from Debt Coalition (FDC) is challenging the earnestness of Mrs. Gloria Macapagal Arroyo. If Mrs. Arroyo is truly sincere in solving the insurgency problem and in paving way for genuine national development and unity, then the last best thing she can do is for her to surrender power and abandon all attempts in pretending to be president.