

Macapagal-Arroyo State Terrorism and US Domination of the Philippines

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An interview with Senator Jamby Madrigal E. San Juan, Jr. (with an interview by Dr. Rainer Werning)

"Huwag po nating payagan na bumalik tayo sa kadiliman at takot na dinala ng martial law. Panahon na upang tumindig at lumaban." (Let us not allow ourselves to return to the darkness and terror of [President Ferdinand Marcos'] martial law [1972-86]. It is time to stand up and fight.) - Senator Jamby Madrigal, "Martial Law in the Guise of Anti-Terrorism Bill," Joint Statement with Senator Aquilino Pimentel Jr., Legend Restaurant, Oct 9, 2006

Last June 26, we attended a historic rally-demonstration of over 4,000 people in Washington, DC, called "Day of Action to Restore Law and Justice." It was the first national mass mobilization of this kind undertaken by the American Civil Liberties Union, a rather staid institution, in cooperation with Amnesty International (USA), Leadership Conference on Civil Rights and the National Religious Campaign Against Torture. It was a coalition representing a fairly broad spectrum of left to right civil-society lobbying groups. A petition bearing tens of thousands of signatures was delivered to Congress expressing five demands on behalf of rights gutted by the 2006 Military Commissions Act (MCA): the restoration of habeas corpus and due process, ending torture and abuse in secret prisons, stopping extraordinary renditions (secretly kidnapping people and sending them to countries that torture), the closing of Guantanamo Bay prisons and allowing prisoners held there access to justice; and the restoration of the rule of Law. The tide is turning against the rightist, neoimperialist Bush policy of gung-ho war of terror on humanity.

Together with the USA Patriot Act, the MCA is part of the Bush administration's deceptive schemes to carry out the "global war on terrorism" on behalf of the corporate elite. It operates by casting aside basic democratic freedoms, chief of which is the principle of habeas corpus that protects against unlawful and indefinite imprisonment, a tenet enshrined in the U.S. Constitution (Article 1, section 9). By abolishing this doctrine of fundamental due process, the Bush regime can hold hundreds of prisoners-designated "unlawful combatants"-for more than five years without charges.

The USA Patriot Act and the MCA are the two weapons the fascistic Bush administration is using to fight what it designates as "terrorism." "Terrorism" for the U.S. ruling class includes the just struggles of peoples for self-determination, a right enshrined in the UN Charter; nonetheless, after 9/11, the U.S. State Department branded the New People's Army and the Communist Party of the Philippines as "terrorist organizations." With these legal instruments, Bush has the power to declare who is a terrorist "enemy combatant," who should be held indefinitely without being charged, define what is torture and abuse, and so on. The MCA permits convictions based on evidence extracted from a witness by torture. Numerous legislators, among them Senators Leahy, Dodd and others have introduced legislation to nullify MCA and key provisions of the USA Patriot Act, in particular warrantless domestic spying or surveillance through the National Security Letter provision, and other violations of free speech and privacy rights that defy the Constitution and ignore the principle of checks and balances. In short, the war on terror has been used to justify the undermining of the Constitution and the rule of law, the essential civil liberties guaranteed by the Constitution and basic democratic principles. Polls indicate that the majority of U.S. citizens, especially after the rejection of the war-mongering policies of the Bush leadership in the November 2006 elections, support the scrapping of the MCA and the repeal of the USA Patriot Act. Such laws against terrorism destroy security and civil liberties, engendering a worse kind of terror: inhumane, brutal treatment of civilians by State violence.

Revisiting Benevolent Assimilation

Meanwhile, we read in the Inquirer.net (June 27) an opposite, retrogressive trend in the Philippines: the Arroyo regime is harnessing all means to apply the anti-terror law, officially known as the Human Security Act (Republic Act No. 9372), which is set to take effect on July 15. This Act is patterned after the USA Patriot Act and the MCA, ostensibly designed to be used in the fight against what Arroyo and her US patrons perceive as "terrorism." It goes beyond the U.S. models by including under the rubric of "terrorism" the political conduct of rebellion or insurrection, which is punishable with 40 years of imprisonment. Suspects can be jailed without charges. Surveillance of terror suspects, including the use of wiretaps and tracking devices, and the freezing of the suspect's personal assets, are unconscionably permitted by this Act. The Philippine law tries to out-do Bush's draconian measures, already condemned by international opinion and rejected by the U.S. public.

Despite the recent claims of Deputy National Security adviser Pedro Cabuay that the Act, considered as "the cornerstone in the Philippines' fight against global terrorism," will first be publicized and discussed before its application (Inquirer, 7/04), its eventual implementation seems certain. Arroyo is readying the public for the proscription of groups such as BAYAN, Bayan Muna, Gabriela, Anakpawis, and numerous organizations-all considered "communist fronts." One proof of this is the continuing refusal of the Arroyo regime to take command responsibility for the thousands of victims of extra-judicial killings and forced disappearances.

Aside from the previous demonstrations of government military-police complicity with these heinous acts (Amnesty International, United Nations Rapporteurs, even by Arroyo's Melo Commission), the recent Human Rights Watch report

(28 June) reaffirmed the international principle of command responsibility-the top officials of the State, the President, the Armed Forces of the Philippines high command, and other security officials (particular Norberto Gonzales and Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez), are all accountable for the forced "disappearances," torture, and murders of activists and other innocent civilians. Three generals have come out in support of Senator-elect Antonio Trillanes IV's plan to investigate the involvement of military officials and other State agents in the continuing atrocities. Finding itself on the defensive, the Arroyo clique retools via mock-repentant compromises, cajoling, hypocritical apologies, and-by the end of the day-convenient scapegoats, and desperate appeals for more U.S./IMF/World Bank sympathy.

One example of the Arroyo regime's hard-headed refusal to acknowledge responsibility is the revelation that three kidnapped victims-Sherlyn Cadapan, Karen Empeno, and Manuel Merino-have been witnessed by many to be in military custody. A petition for habeas corpus filed last July 17, 2006, was already served to Generals Romeo Tolentino and Jovito Palparan; but the military chiefs deny any wrongdoing. General Esperon and Secretary Ermita can repeat to kingdom-come their tiresome refrain that the government has no stated policy of killing political enemies or critics who are publicly stigmatized as "communist fronts" by government propaganda and media flunkies, by OPLAN Bantay Laya 1 and 2, and countless covert schemes. Whom are they trying to fool?

It might be instructive to recall how UN Special Rapporteur Prof. Philip Alston's comment last February that the government's "passivity bordering on an abdication of responsibility" fell on deaf ears. Secretary Gonzalez, however, perked up and berated Alston for being "blind, mute and deaf." In his report to the UN Human Rights Council last March 27, Alston reiterated that "based on my fact-finding, there is no reasonable doubt that the military is responsible for a significant number of the killings." So, whatever protestations of Arroyo, Esperon and Ermita to the contrary, Alston's earlier criticism that the military "remains in a state of almost total denial" cannot be met with more asinine denials. Indeed, no one so far has been prosecuted; no military or police personnel has been investigated, or brought to trial.

We all know that denials are cheap and easy for tricksters in public relations. This is the confidence game Norberto Gonzales is playing when he recently quipped that "leftist propaganda is successful" (Inquirer, July 3). The same goes for hundreds of abducted victims, the most recent being the esteemed Jonas Burgos in Manila, Nilo Arado and Luisa Posa Dominado in Iloilo, and more starkly, the torture of Pastor Berlin Guerrero by the Naval Intelligence Security Forces and elements of the Cavite Provincial police last May (see Carol Pagaduan-Araullo's "Smoking Gun," Bulatlat June 10-16).

Unravelling the Web of Lies

Despite hedged admissions that the counterinsurgency program may not be sensitive to human rights-Secretary Ermita's coy response to the European Union's mission that categorized the political killings as a serious liability that may interrupt European aid and investments-Arroyo persists in spinning her "web of lies," to quote Dr. Carol P. Araullo's phrase. Dr. Araullo, chairperson of BAYAN, captured the prevailing climate of opinion in her recent column "streetwise" (Business World June 28): "Outrage, long pent-up and mounting, is bound to explode over the killings, unabated by universal condemnation and earnest appeals. In the short term, it can find expression in public support for the trailblazing efforts of the Puno Supreme Court to use the judiciary's 'expanded powers' under the 1987 Constitution as a guardian of civil liberties and human rights....That outrage may also bring about the popular will and force that could oust the fascist criminals from power and put a stop to the extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances." Prophetic words for the powerful who no longer have a future.

One of the most militant and formidable opponents of the State terrorism practised by the Arroyo regime, aided with U.S. Special Forces courtesy of Washington/the Pentagon, is Senator Ana Maria Consuelo "Jamby" Madrigal. Senator Madrigal has already earned a well-deserved reputation as a leader in the crusade against government corruption and for social reform. She is sustained by a legacy of nationalist activism in her family: she is the granddaughter of the national martyr, Supreme Court chief justice Jose Abad Santos; and her grand-uncle is the well known revolutionary Pedro Abad Santos, the founder of the Socialist Party of the Philippines (which later joined forces with advanced sections of the working class to form the Communist Party of the Philippines in the thirties). Before becoming a Senator, she was active in managing several charitable foundations such as Books-for-the-Barangay Foundation, the Abad Santos Madrigal Foundation, and ABLE Foundatiion, to help the poor, especially women and children. In the Senate, Jamby Madrigal chairs two senate committees: one on Youth, Women and Family Relations, and another on Cultural Communities.

Three of Senator Madrigal's recent nationalist bills are strikingly progressive and deserve national-democratic support: first, the repeal of the Downstream Oil Industry Deregulation Act of 1998, the bill to protect the national patrimony by repealing the Mining Act of 1995 (RA 7942), and another to impose a total log ban. While attending a religious procession on October 4, 2005, with other activists, Jamby was hit by Manila Police water cannons-a kind of baptism of fire for her.

While attending the Permanent People's Tribunal Session 2 on the Philippines last March at The Hague, Netherlands, I had the privilege of meeting Senator Madrigal. She was one of the witnesses in the trial against the anti-people crimes of Arroyo and Bush. Her testimony cantered on the continuing displacement of indigenous communities and the plunder of

the environment. Senator Madrigal criticized Executive Order No. 364 which subordinated the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples to the Department of Land Reform, thus rendering it inutile in its task of protecting and promoting the rights of indigenous peoples. She also condemned various multinational corporations for the devastation of our natural resources (for example, mining company Toronto Ventures, Inc. in Zamboanga del Norte; Lafayette Mining Corporation in Rapu-Rapu Island, Sorsogon, Marcopper Mining Company). She concluded her speech before the Tribunal with these words: "As a Filipino, I accuse and seek a guilty verdict for the regime of Gloria Macapagal Arroyo for the violations of the economic, social and cultural rights of the people, including the violation of economic sovereignty and the national patrimony through iniquitous agreements and economic plunder by foreign and local exploiters."

Devil's Wager: Exchanging Security for State Terror

Concerning the Anti-Terrorism Bill (ATB), Senator Madrigal called my attention to her joint statement with Senator Aquilino Pimentel Jr. at the Legend Restaurant, October 9, 2006. In that statement, she charged that the Bill (Senate Bill No. 2137, sponsored by Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile) "legislates martial law." She asserted that the bill "will create a shadow criminal justice system that in turn will be used as an instrument of a greater terror perpetrated by people in power against their critics and political opponents." Sacrificing human rights for an alleged guarantee of security, ATB contains vague and sweeping provisions that practically abolish "the rights to freedom of expression and association, the liberty of movement, the prohibition against arbitrary detention, and the rights to the presumption of innocence and fair trial." Exactly what thousands of demonstrators in Washington DC last June 26 were saying about the MCA and the USA Patriot Act.

Senator Madrigal also recounted to me her trip to Europe in October 2006, specifically to the World Council of Churches in Geneva, and the International Parliamentary Union, the International Federation of Journalists, the Belgian and Flemish parliaments, the House of Lords in UK, and Amnesty International. She focused on the "repressive provisions of the proposed ATB," intent on broadcasting to the international community that "Mrs Arroyo is bent on adopting policies and measures that will only further strengthen her control over Filipinos and encourage widespread human rights abuses" (Press Statement, 17 October; from Senator Madrigal's Official Website).

Senator Madrigal finally referred me to her presentation entitled "Legislating Insecurity through State Terrorism" to the Eminent Jurists Panel on Terrorism, Counter-Terrorism and Human Rights at the conference of the International Commission of Jurists in Jakarta, Indonesia, on 5 December 2006. In this extremely valuable speech, Senator Madrigal reiterated her principled stand against the ATB, an "oppressive" law that would legitimize Arroyo's "State terrorism" because of its "terrifying provisions." I have already cited some: the likelihood that persons may be labelled terrorist "by reason solely of his religious or political beliefs," which is already the practice of the AFP, their para-military death squads, and Arroyo's security council. As illustration, Senator Madrigal cited the case of six progressive parliamentarians [Satur Ocampo, Crispin Beltran and colleagues]...who were accused of participating in a rebellion against the current regime," as well as the case of the Tagaytay 2 who were arrested and tortured without any warrant. One of the provisions of the ATB (on detention of suspects for 5 days or more) has already been judged by the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) as violating Article 9, paragraph 3, of the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which requires that a person arrested be brought "promptly [not exceeding 48 hours] before a judicial authority."

Last March 12, the UN Special Rapporteur for promotion and protection of human rights, Martin Scheinin, issued a statement that the overly broad definition of terrorist acts contradicts "the principle of legality and [is] thus incompatible with Article 15 of the ICCPR." Moreover, Scheinin noted other defective features, such as the 40 years imprisonment for suspects which "undermines judicial discretion in individual cases" and results into disproportionate punishment, and the questionable competence of various bodies authorized to review detention, as well as the restrictions on movement, including the imposition of house arrest-all amount to the conclusion that many provisions of the ATB "are not in accordance with international human rights standards" (see his website).

Senator Madrigal also warns of other extreme provisions of the ATB which are tantamount to disregarding "with impunity constitutional guarantees" and therefore sanctioning State terrorism. In her press statement of March 11, 2007, supporting Rep. Satur Ocampo's defense, Senator Madrigal described the current dispensation as "martial law with a de facto civilian and military junta in control."

What Is To Be Done?

At this juncture, I call the readers to the substantial and thorough critique of the ATB by the militant organization BAYAN, entitled "The Anti-Terrorism Act: Recipe for Undeclared Martial Law (June 13, 2007), accessible in BAYAN Website; and also to a recent letter of Amie Dural, secretary general of the Promotion of Church People's Response, posted in Inquirer's Opinion Section (June 27). Dural stressed the points raised by Senator Madrigal, BAYAN, and others: the ATB will embolden the abductors and torturers of activists like Pastor Berlin Guerrero and "multiply the number of unjustified arrests, forced disappearances and extrajudicial killings in the name of the Arroyo administration's 'war on terror.... The full implementation of the anti-terror law threatens to arrest progressive parliamentarians and anyone who will participate

in protest actions, such as nationally coordinated rallies, during the State of the Nation Address (SONA)," as well as legalize "the unconstitutional deployment of military troops in urban communities," a step which proved useful for the regime in terrorizing citizen-voters during the May electoral campaigns and depriving citizens of their democratic rights.

Senator Madrigal articulates with great eloquence her nationalist and libertarian convictions in the following exchange with my colleague Dr. Rainer Werning (RW), lecturer at the Internationale Weiterbildung und Entwicklung of Bad Honef, Germany. He has asked me to edit (for style and readability) the transcript of this taped interview of Senator Madrigal (AMM) during the session of the Permanent People's Tribunal [words in brackets are the editor's].

DR. RAINER WERNING INTERVIEWS SENATOR MADRIGAL

RW: Madam Senator, you listened to the presentation of Prof. Roland Simbulan on U.S.-Philippines relations. What is your response to that?

AMM: Well, he gave a very interesting and detailed historical perspective on the continued control of the USA over the Philippines with regard to sovereignty and the country on national defence. I listened very intently and he explained the situation in a very, I would say, factual manner and it is very worrisome when you see that we are - as he said - the last country in Asia to have an army capable of defending ourselves from external threats...merely having an army under the beck and call of the government of the USA to be used as a pawn in its so-called war on insurgency and terrorism.

So yes, I believe very strongly in what the Professor says, because the Philippines continues to be a country with not much pride in our own sovereignty because we continue to exist as a neo-colonial state, as a de facto American colony with regard to economic and national defence issues.

RW: It's now almost 61 years after independence. You must get the impression that the Philippine isn't a sovereign country at all with the AFP acting as a mere appendage of the U.S. military. Isn't it?

AMM: Yes, it is merely an appendage of the US Army because we are bound by the treaties to be trained by the US Army and to buy all arms from the US. This would be tantamount in economic terms to a U.S. monopoly. Instead of being able to choose the best armaments, the best arms with the best prices in the free market, we are bound to the US without the right nor the power to choose and buy [what we need at a] price more suitable to us. So this is very inefficient. [We are caught in] a controlled economy where there is only one supplier; and monopolies, as you know, are never really very efficient.

And this has led to a steady decline of the capability of our armed forces when it comes to national sovereignty but they are continuously aided by the US Army to kill the perceived terrorists and insurgents who are not really terrorists and insurgents but opponents of American imperialism and the present regime albeit illegal (because Mrs. Arroyo cheated her way to election of 2004). Many people do not think she is the legitimate president.

So the goals and aims of the American government is to preserve their monopoly of power in the Philippines, both economic and military. It is exactly the same as Mrs. Arroyo's desire to preserve herself in power, so they are mutually beneficial for each other but not for the country as a whole.

RW: Irony of history ... there's so much talk about free economy but when it comes to military equipment, obviously it's exactly the opposite.

AMM: I just want to say, it is very ironic because when they say, oh we should be grateful to America, they are giving us so much military aid, only to pay themselves back ...so there is really not much given because the money given to us is used to buy armaments back to pay the Americans. So net-net, there is really nothing much that the Philippines gets but America has all the gain.

RW: Who is mainly responsible for this kind of ongoing counter-insurgency - the U.S. or the GMA administration?

AMM: Well, as I said, I believe that the GMA administration is being used as a pawn to keep the US influence on the Philippines intact both militarily (in matters of defence) and politically. So that they can continue also to keep their multinationals in the Philippines with all the privileges that a multinational has. But in terms of killing the insurgents, I believe that the Macapagal Arroyo government [with its security advisers, AFP and PNP] are the ones who pinpoint who to kill because they are their political opposition, legitimate political opposition.

And I don't think that the US really is concerned as to who is killed as long as it helps prop up the government and as long as their interests are not compromised. As the Professor said, he believes that the US knows about these extra-judicial killings; however, they do not condemn them. But as to who to kill - I think this is really more the job of the Macapagal Arroyo government because she is killing her political opponents. She wants the Americans to turn a blind eye to the killing, as long as they can keep military and economic hold over the Philippines.

RW: Would you agree that there is sort of dirty "division of labor" going on?

AMM: Shall we call it an immoral division of labor to keep both of them in power - the illegitimate Macapagal-Arroyo government - and to keep American interests forever in power in the Philippines, militarily, economically and politically?

RW: Quite amazing, you hardly come across a politician, in this case even a senator, who so openly speaks about US-imperialism...

AMM: Well, I think during the Cory Aquino time there were few of the patriotic senators who had spoken about it. I have a few of my colleagues who continue to speak about it, but I think the litmus test was when these colleagues voted for the Anti-Terror Bill, which I did not vote for. At the end, there were only about two of us who voted no to this bill which will be used as an instrument for further oppression of our people and further weaken the national sovereignty of the Filipino people.

RW: You mean to say, out of 24 Senators, only two voted against it?

AMM: Two voted against it, one was in his office when the vote was called but he is a good colleague of mine and I believe he is one of the best senators we've ever had, ...Senator Osmena II would have voted against it. But aside from that, of the 23, only three perhaps in conscience would have voted against it.

RW: What do you think has been the reason for this? These people aren't stupid, rather well-versed in political issues ...

AMM: Well, "political compromise," I think would be the best way to put it. Some point to other [reasons], they were just justifying their "yes" votes because their amendments were accepted. Yes, the amendments which changed only the grammar [or wording] of the bill. But the amendments which would have changed the spirit of the bill were not accepted and the amendments to safeguard human rights were not really there.

They say, oh the bill is safe now because we've put enough safeguards. To me...and I would not say it...it is a four-lettered word but that is all foolishness. There are no safeguards in the bill. You do not have to be a lawyer to see it, I've discussed it with the International Court of Justice. I've recently discussed it with United Nations Rapporteur on Counter Terrorism and Human Rights who issued a press statement asking the Philippines to repeal or amend the bill because it is not in harmony with the Covenant of Human Rights that the Philippines has signed. So it really makes a mockery of democracy, this is a licence to kill and legitimize state terror against its people.

RW: Could you sum up your main arguments that made you vote against it? What are the most perfidious elements?

AMM: First of all, you can be arrested without any warrant on mere suspicion so it is back to the Inquisition of the Middle Ages.

If they don't like your face, they can say I suspect you to be a terrorist and you can be arrested without warrant, your assets frozen, and you are put under surveillance and those of your family and friends who come in contact with you can be put under surveillance.

And what is worse is not only that there is a very vague provision in the law which the United Nations Rapporteur pointed out: [namely,] that aside from a judge, any member of the Philippine Commission of Human Rights who is not even a judge can issue a warrant. So...they are making a mockery of our Commission of Human Rights by making them now an instrument to make possible state terrorism against the people.

RW: I thought the Commission just investigates cases?

AMM: Yes, but it says, upon mere suspicion of someone being a terrorist, you can apply for a warrant from your [local] judge or you can go to the representative of the Commission of Human Rights in the area and get a warrant to arrest and bring that person into jail but you can just...on mere suspicion though. You can arrest someone and detain him for three days without warrant. So there are really no safeguards.

If you look at it, the main sponsor was Senator Juan Ponce Enrile, who in 1972 was the architect of Martial Law and he was the Minister of Defence under which Mr. Marcos committed human rights violations. The [first] Permanent People's Tribunal, when it indicted President Marcos, also indicted Senator Juan Ponce Enrile, then Defence Minister. And Mrs. Arroyo has used this same man to be again her architect of martial law... they say, first time martial law was imposed, it was a tragedy. The second time with the Anti-Terror bill, it is a comedy of errors

RW: What in your view marks the difference between the Marcos era and the GMA administration?

AMM: Very easy. Marcos was a lawyer and he was very conscious of his place in history. When he wanted to extend his power way beyond his term, he was not a hypocrite and used all the excuses to declare Martial Law. At least the people

then knew, that we were under dictatorship and that we had limited freedom.

With Mrs. Arroyo, it is worse because she is the best hypocrite that ever lived. The Filipinos are living today under a dictatorship masquerading as democracy. It is even harder when Mrs. Arroyo tries to tell the international community that the Philippines is a democracy when she has killed more - if you look at the number of years - more people than Marcos killed in his 20 years in power. Marcos killed three thousand or more people under that regime. There were about three thousand people killed. In the Macapagal Arroyo government we have almost 800 people in less than five years.

Pound for pound, although she is a little, a very small woman, I think she packs more repression, more hypocrisy, more killings, more violations of human rights, more violations of the constitution than Mr. Marcos ever did.

Do not forget, Mr. Marcos had a vision for the Philippines. Mrs. Arroyo has the myopic vision only of furthering herself in power way beyond 2010. And that is why should she get the majority in the lower and upper house this election - she would try to change the constitution into a parliamentary form and reign as Prime Minister for an indefinite number of years. Don't forget we have no monarchy, our constitutional...institutions are very weak, and so to be a prime minister would again be tantamount to an indefinite period of having a dictator in the Philippines.

RW: It must be awkward to travel around the globe and project such an image of the Philippines. How do your colleagues perceive the Permanent People's Tribunal Session 2?

AMM: Well, my colleagues who are very much against Mrs. Arroyo are very happy that I am here. And we'll use this indictment of Mrs. Arroyo to open the eyes of the Filipino people with regards to their gradual loss of freedom.

I feel as if we are living in a military junta with a puppet president willing to do what the military wants just to stay in power. And legislators like me have very limited power. All we can do is talk - if we are not killed.

I was water-cannoned last October for participating in a procession. And the last time I came here to [to Europe] and tried to negotiate peace talks with the NDF, I was under threat of being arrested when I arrived [home] for doing nothing. Sen. Jamby Madrigal (center) NDFP Negotiating Panel Luis Jalandoni (left) and NDFP Chief Political Consultant Jose Ma. Sison

In the Philippines, the modus operandi is that you are presumed the guilty unless otherwise proven innocent, whereas the presumption of innocence is what should be held especially under a constitution.

Mr. Satur Ocampo, a congressman, was not presumed innocent. [The government] got a warrant of arrest under trumped-up charges, he was arrested - I was with him in jail, I saw it. And then at the break of dawn [after his arrest], the police tried to kidnap him to bring him to a small town where his life could have been lost.

This is not a democracy. We are living under the worst form of dictatorship because it is masquerading as a democracy. To live in the Philippines is very frustrating at the moment. Whereas they tell you, you have your own freedoms, what they tell you...what is in the law is not what is happening.

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