

Written by

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By JOSEPH G. LARIOS

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CHICAGO (jGLi) – On the eve of the 28th anniversary of the assassination of Sen. Benigno Aquino, Jr. last Monday (Aug. 21), *Karapatan* (Alliance for Advancement of People's Rights) rolled out a statement, appealing to Aquino's son, President Noyoy Aquino, to free 341 political prisoners from various jails throughout the Philippines.

In a press statement, Marie Hilao Enrique and Angie Santos, chairperson and media liaison of *Karapatan*, respectively, reminded President Aquino that before his father was assassinated, his father was a political prisoner for seven years under the Marcos dictatorship.

Mesdames Enrique and Santos said Marcos is gone but there are still 341 political prisoners in many jails all over the country. As of August 11 this year, 50 of the 341 political prisoners were

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arrested and detained under the Noynoy Aquino presidency.

They said, of the 341 political prisoners, 30 are women, 11 are elderly and 28 are diagnosed with various illnesses.

Marcos is gone but Ninoy's statement echoes the sentiments of today's political prisoners: "What terrible crimes have I committed to deserve this fate?" Many political prisoners, if not all, are detained because of false charges and/or charged with criminal offenses in an effort to deny the legitimacy of their struggles, many of which were against the corrupt and repressive GMA regime.

"The magnanakaws (thieves) are living it up... is this justice" asked Ninoy decades ago; now being asked by today's political prisoners.

The justice that Ninoy was searching for years ago, when Noynoy Aquino was still a teenager, may be served to the political prisoners of today, now that Noynoy is the President of the Philippines

He now has the power to release all the political prisoners.

## Free 341 Political Prisoners, Karapatan Urges President Aquino - MabuhayRadio

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“Today, as we commemorate the death of Ninoy, we also remember him as a political prisoner who cried justice. We take this occasion to call on the President to serve justice to political prisoners by releasing them through a general, unconditional and omnibus amnesty.

“Like Ninoy, they have suffered long enough in jails. But unlike Ninoy’s time, there is no existing dictatorship at the moment and the President is a son of a political prisoner.” the statement concluded. # # #

**Editor’s Note:** To contact the author, please e-mail him at: ([lariosa\\_jos@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lariosa_jos@sbcglobal.net))

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