

The Philippine Council for Islam and Democracy (PCID) condemns the heinous massacre of at least 22 persons (*Editor's Note: Number has been now updated to 52 victims*), including the wife of Buluan town Vice Mayor Ishmael "Toto" Mangudadatu, who were found dead in Datu Abdullah Sangki town in Maguindanao. Alleged to be a politically-motivated attack, the convoy of the Mangudadatus led by his wife Genalyn was waylaid at 10:30 a.m.

on Monday, according to the military. Mrs. Mangudadatu was accompanied by Mangudadatu town's Vice Mayor Eden Mangudadatu, relatives, two lawyers and journalists to file her husband Toto's certificate of candidacy for governor of Maguindanao at the provincial office of the Commission on Elections in Shariff Aguak.

There are no words that can adequately describe our feelings of outrage and horror over the brutal, inhuman violence that has brought the state of lawlessness in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) to a new low. Even the most-corrupt politicians, the most-barbaric of warlords, have not employed such monstrous acts. We can only surmise that the brains of the perpetrators were either scrambled by illegal drugs, or that they believed themselves to be beyond the reach of the law. This is the abhorrent feature of politics in the areas of armed conflict, such as Maguindanao: Rule of law takes a back seat to the rule of the powerful.

{xtypo_quote} President Arroyo must act immediately on this shameful example of warlordism in Maguindanao. If she cannot uphold the rule of law, she should resign especially because the main suspect is reportedly her man. – Sen. Aquilino Pimentel, Jr., on the Maguindanao Massacre {/xtypo_quote}

This culture of impunity has been supported by national political leaders. Mrs. Gloria Arroyo has been widely perceived to have benefited from ARMM's "reservoir of votes" during the 2004 elections. The ARMM has perennially been tagged as the cheating capital of the Philippines, especially following the "Hello, Garci" scandal and, recently, the "statistically improbable" results of the Maguindanao elections that gave the administration slate a 12-0 win.

In addition, this administration has failed to implement the rule of law as evidenced by the sheer

number of loose firearms in the region. Philippine National Police records show that the second highest number of loose firearms placed at 114,189 is in ARMM.

Former Peace Adviser Jesus Dureza has called for the imposition of emergency rule, perhaps fearful that a bloody "rido" or clan vendetta will ensue. The imposition of emergency rule is clearly an admission by the national and regional government of their complete failure of governance. Secretary Dureza's suggestion requires careful consideration for its many implications.

The question is this: Can this administration disarm the political warlords in the ARMM? Does it have the political will to punish the perpetrators of this criminal act even if it can be proven to be a political ally?

The Philippine Council for Islam and Democracy appeals for calm and sobriety. The rule of law needs to be strengthened. We urge local-and-national authorities to maintain order and prevent the situation from escalating into a full-blown political clan war.

We ask the police, the military, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and all who may be able to help expedite the manhunt for the perpetrators of this ghastly massacre so that they will be brought before the bar of justice.

We appeal to the Commissions on Elections (COMELEC) and other enforcement agencies to ensure that no further acts of violence will mark the electoral exercises in ARMM. The exercise of the people's will must be protected from criminal attempts to subvert the democratic process, particularly those attempts coupled by violence.

In the light of this brutal act of political violence, the PCID reiterates the call made as early as 2007 by two of its Convenors, former Commission of Human Rights Commissioner Atty. Nasser Marohomsalic and former COMELEC Commissioner Atty. Mehol Sadain, to hold separate elections for ARMM.

While Atty. Marohomsalic and Atty. Sadain recognize the legal question that such a proposal might entail, the holding of separate elections in ARMM will enable the Commission on Elections and its deputies, the media, the civic-minded citizenry, and poll watchers to marshal focus all their strengths and resources needed to safeguard the integrity of the electoral process. # # #

E ditor's Notes: The preceding statements were issued by PCID Lead Convenor Ms. Amina Rasul and

PCID Founding Co-convenor Atty. Nasser Marohomsalic. Request for interviews may be directed to +63 2 532658 or +63 9178069783.

PCID's Leaders Appeal for Calm Amidst the Heinous Massacre in Maguindanao; Demand Separate ARMM

Written by PCID Press Office

Monday, 23 November 2009 21:38 - Last Updated Tuesday, 24 November 2009 23:33

The PCID holds office at

Unit 2D Tower 1

Governor's Place Condominium

Shaw Blvd., Mandaluyong City

1005 PHILIPPINES

Tel: +6 32 5313522

Telefax: +6 32 5326058

www.pcid.org.ph

[Joomla SEO powered by JoomSEF](#)