

Written by Melvin Barcenas

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Los Angeles, California – The Philippine Peasant Support Network (Pesante-USA), a United States-based environmental-and-peasant advocacy group existing since 1991, expressed outrage over the criminal neglect and extreme arrogance of the US-backed Arroyo regime and its hirelings.

President Arroyo coddles the National Power Corporation's (NAPOCOR's) criminal neglect. And now the Arroyo administration plays dumb and blind to the Department of Social Welfare and Development's (DSWD)'s incompetence.

While donations are rotting in its warehouses, the DSWD is driving the affected people out the relocations centers and forcing them to register.

It is not enough for the US-backed Arroyo regime to blame the victims but it is punishing them with such uncalled-for sanctions.

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It is not the fault of the people that in the two flooding disasters they suffered exposed the failure of our disaster-response systems. The PAGASA has no radar system and it relied on the US military system for information for too long.

Even the much touted "hazard mapping" was not done. If it was done at all, it was given to foreigners like the United Nations agencies that took time to map the hazards area.

The UN "urban planning" advisers admitted that they have mapped only 23 of the 77 hazard areas that are prone to landslides, tsunamis and earthquakes. It looks like that they are really waiting for another disaster to happen.

The disasters just compounded the long-standing environmental problems and gross mismanagement at all levels. The river system has not been dredged for years. The drainage system and waterways are as antiquated and cannot even be compared to the Roman Empire's infrastructures.

The Laguna Lake ecosystem was totally destroyed because it was never dredged and illegal fish pens and subdivisions were tolerated. Large-scale deforestation and open-pit mining and quarrying destroyed the mountains. And the US-backed Arroyo regime never cared.

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If ever the US-backed Gloria Arroyo leaves a legacy to the Filipinos, it is her criminal neglect that caused the greatest suffering of the Filipino people in Luzon, which was unequalled in the last 40 years.

But the Filipino people will make Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo pay for her and her cohorts' crimes in the near future. # # #

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