

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino “Nene” Q. Pimentel, Jr. (PDP-Laban) today said the issue of continuing repression of the human rights of the people of Myanmar under a military regime should be addressed by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations even as it calls on its member-countries to ratify the ASEAN Charter.

Noting that the ASEAN Charter mandates the creation of a Human Rights Commission, Pimentel said the purpose of this specific provision will be defeated if nothing is done to compel Myanmar to go back to the democratic track, hold free elections and release opposition leaders from detention or house arrest.

“We have to determine whether or not the ASEAN Charter may only turn out to be a charade of words that Myanmar could ignore at its pleasure,” he said.

The minority leader issued the statement following his meeting with Ambassador Rosario Manalo in which they discussed the salient points of the ASEAN Charter which has been forwarded by Malacañang to the Senate for its ratification. Senator Pimentel, a member of the five-man Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, said Myanmar, under the rule of a military junta, has proven itself unworthy of membership of ASEAN in view of the following:

1. Its continued repression of the rights of the Burmese people;
2. Its callous disregard of the welfare of the victims of the cyclone Nargis manifested in its refusal to allow humanitarian aid to freely flow into the country; and
3. Its failure to adhere to its own rules in the matter of the detention of opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi whose supposed one year house arrest has time and again been extended by the ruling junta.

Senator Pimentel has presented two proposals to sanction the ruling junta -- First, ASEAN should expel Myanmar from the regional grouping. And second, the United Nations Security Council should use reasonable force to compel the junta to accept humanitarian aid without qualifications.

He also assailed the military rulers for holding a sham referendum on Myanmar’s new Constitution by not tolerating a free discussion of the new fundamental law. He said this has further cast doubts on the junta’s sincerity to take steps to restore democracy and the liberties of the Burmese people.

“In any event, the sad state of affairs in Myanmar should not be allowed to continue. The human rights of the people of Myanmar should be protected. And democracy should be restored to the hapless land,” he said. # # #

Myanmar Should Comply with Human-Rights Provisions of ASEAN Charter - MabuhayRadio

Written by Senator Pimentel's Press Office

Monday, 02 June 2008 02:44 - Last Updated Monday, 02 June 2008 02:59

[Joomla SEO powered by JoomSEF](#)