



NATIONAL CITIZENS' MOVEMENT FOR FREE ELECTIONS (NAMFREL)

Unit 601, DMG Center, D.M. Guevara corner
Calbayog Extension St., Mandaluyong City
Philippines 1550

Telephone: +63 (2) 484-7590
Telefax: +63 (2) 470-4151
E-Mail: secretariat@namfrel.com.ph
Website: www.namfrel.org.ph

PRESS STATEMENT

November 22, 2010

NAMFREL statement on the first anniversary of the Ampatuan massacre

NAMFREL joins the victims' families, the Filipino nation as well as human rights and press freedom advocates throughout the world in calling for the swift resolution of the Ampatuan, Maguindanao murders. Twelve months after the most inhumane election-related killings in recent memory, the 58 victims, their families and supporters, have yet to receive justice that Philippine laws supposedly assure. Instead, what we see are delays in the trial; inability to swiftly round up all suspects, both those directly linked to the massacre and their accomplices; the continuous rule of warlords and their kin in their respective areas; the continuous display of wealth and power as their people languish in poverty; the continued silencing of journalists; private armies not just in Mindanao but throughout the country not yet dismantled; the climate of fear that has not subsided; and the culture of impunity that sees no end.

We reiterate our call for the government to cancel all licenses and permits to carry firearms that are being used for political purposes, disband armed paramilitary groups used by politicians, and take a firm and decisive action to go after the perpetrators of this heinous crime, regardless of their positions and connections. The work has been cut out for the new administration. We continue to urge the Philippine government to have the political will and fortitude to see through this case so that justice prevails, including cases of political violence and human rights abuses in the country that remain unresolved. We appeal to Filipinos to end the cycle of violence that characterize local politics, by restraining themselves from retributive acts of justice. We also encourage all, especially those in the media, to be ever vigilant, and to not be discouraged by acts that are meant to silence your voice.