



## **NATIONAL CITIZENS' MOVEMENT FOR FREE ELECTIONS (NAMFREL)**

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### PRESS STATEMENT

November 25, 2009

#### **NAMFREL Statement on the spate of recent politically motivated violence & Maguindanao massacre**

The National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections (NAMFREL) strongly condemns the brutal politically-motivated killings in Maguindanao of political supporters and journalists.

We call upon President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to take a firm and decisive action immediately to go after the perpetrators of this heinous crime, and for the government to consider this and other recent tragedies involving elected officials and election staff not mere election-related violence but criminal acts that need to be dealt with to the fullest extent of the law.

For Maguindanao, we call on President Arroyo to create an impartial investigative team composed of the NBI, PNP, CHR, & DOJ, that would look into this matter and submit a report that will be made public within a reasonable time. We also call upon the PNP to completely revamp their ranks in the province to ensure that their people are non-partisan. Once perpetrators are positively identified, we urge that they be immediately arrested and brought to Manila.

We call upon the COMELEC to move their Maguindanao office to another location, perhaps to the former provincial capitol in Simuay, Sultan Kudarat. We also urge the COMELEC to consider holding an early election in the ARMM, perhaps one week early, and to put the entire ARMM, especially Maguindanao, under COMELEC control.

NAMFREL appeals to all parties concerned to restrain themselves from retributive acts of justice, and we condemn the pervading climate of impunity, coercion and terror to maintain or secure elective positions, that give rise to warlordism and further violence

We urge the dismantling of all private armies and the confiscation of their firearms, starting with known warring factions not only in Maguindanao but also in places that historically are considered hot spots every election.

We call on the COMELEC to impose the total gun ban now and not wait until January 2010. We call on the PNP to strictly implement the ban to prevent further violence as we approach the 2010 elections.

We call upon the PNP to expedite the investigations and resolution of past incidences of violence against elected officials and political rivals, to have the will to prosecute the perpetrators of the crime regardless of political positions and connections. We urge both the AFP and the PNP to ensure their non-partisanship especially on the ground.

NAMFREL also calls upon the Filipino people and on its volunteers nationwide to strengthen their ranks, exercise vigilance, and in their own respective areas lead in identifying and monitoring potential threat to the security situation.

Namfrel supports the COMELEC and encourages the PNP to fulfill their tasks to ensure the holding of a truly credible and peaceful elections in May 2010.