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Press Statement

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US' custody of GIs accused of rape tramples on Philippine sovereignty; GMA's inaction, a betrayal of the nation

The refusal of the United States government to surrender GIs accused of rape and the continuing silence of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo on this injustice is a travesty of Philippine sovereignty and an insult to women victims of violence.

Once again, the US has shown its arrogance and disregard of the right of other nations and peoples when they arbitrarily decided to keep custody of four US marines accused of raping a 22-year old Filipina. The victim was unceremoniously dumped, unconscious, near the former US military bases in Subic.

The conceit of the US government who takes it upon itself to become the world police and judge in order to protect their interests indeed has extended to trampling on the dignity of nations. By refusing to respect the Philippine judicial system, the US is conveying the message that it can always do what it wants, when it wants it, and how they want things done.

As well, such an act gravely endangers the chance of the rape victim to seek justice and redress for the violence done to her.

It can be recalled that when the previous US-RP Military Bases Agreement was still in effect, Filipino women and children who were victims of rape other abuses were denied justice by the US' simple recall of their accused troops. Now, the US government is using the anomalous Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) just so their military personnel can again escape from their various crimes and for the US to maintain its military interventions on the affairs of other countries.

We say no more. The Filipino people shall ensure that the culprits of this crime shall be arrested, properly tried and justly punished. We call on the Philippine Congress and Senate to abrogate the VFA as proposed by the Legislative Oversight on the VFA.

Equally condemnable, if not more, is the continued silence of GMA over this issue. Such an attitude is so unbecoming for the person whose first responsibility is to protect its own people.

GMA has been proven time and again to be a US stooge. Her silence and inaction of the case is her way to avoid antagonizing the US government. In the midst of the political crisis shaking the very foundation of her administration, GMA courts the US' continued approval of her stay in power by following the lead of her US masters in economic, political and social affairs.

If GMA cannot even lift a finger on this evident issue of justice for her people, she doesn't deserve to stay anymore.

Justice should be served – to the rape victim and to the Filipino people.#