

<https://internationalviewpoint.org/spip.php?article4697>



Philippines

On the Davao bombing and the war against illegal drug syndicates

- News from around the world -

Publication date: Tuesday 13 September 2016

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The Rebolusyonyong Partido ng Manggagawa - Mindanao and the Revolutionary Peoples' Army (RPM-M/RPA) expressed strong condemnation to the tragic Davao City bombing on September 2, 2016 that claimed 14 lives and injured 67 individuals. We profoundly condole with the bereaved families of all those killed and injured.

This inhuman and cowardice attack to civilians and public spaces is only to sow fear, terror and division among the population, and must be faced squarely and with firm resolve. As a response, the Philippine President put the country under the State of National Emergency on the account of the widespread existence of Lawless Violence. This is aimed principally to dismantle illegal drug syndicates, terrorism and to suppress all threats to national security.

We stand of the same rage against terrorism and illegal drugs, but we have reservations on the formal declaration of State of National Emergency. As experienced in the country, massive deployment and mobilization of military and police personnel have resulted to massive curtailment of civilian civil liberties. This can be used also by the militarist group within the Duterte's government and imperialist interests of foreign powers in the name of anti-terrorism campaign and nip in the bud the nationalist initiatives within the ruling power of the new government.

President Duterte can easily mobilize the National Police and the Armed Forces of the country to fight against the proliferation of the illegal drug syndicate and the terrorist actions, since he has basically won over the support of the former in his war against these social and national ills. The formal declaration of the State of National Emergency is rather aimed to psychologically prepare the whole population for more intense and higher level of war against drug syndicates, narco-politicians and terrorist groups. This is more timely in starting the second phase of his war against these social and national problems. This is also the best time to implement the war against illegal drug syndicates, narco-politicians and terrorists while the government is engaged in the peace talks with different revolutionary groups and the police and armed forces will have more time to face the former.

The domestic abuses and foreign power interventions are not helping in solving our national concerns and we believe that purely militarist methods and approaches will only end to piling up of more bodies, displacements, uncertainties and extremisms and is not helping the peace processes at the top and the community levels from below. Such actions can even create more victims and more enemies in fighting these social ills.

The war against drugs, criminalities and terroristic activities shall not be a threat to peoples' and communities' civil liberties instead, it must encourage more spaces for comprehensive and proactive efforts involving the peoples' and communities themselves.

We join the clamor for justice for the victims of Davao City bombing as well as those who suffered human rights violations in the name of war against illegal drugs with a deep concern for reaching objective investigation and to avoid arrests to mistaken identities.

The on-going law enforcement operations against the Abu Sayaff Group in Sulu have already displaced thousands of civilians. Of the same weight, this law enforcement must not sacrifice the rights and welfare of the communities. Agencies must attend to all necessary needs of these civilians. We can never attain the right objectives by going the wrong way.

The RPM-M and RPA believe that the war against drugs, criminalities and terrorism must be accompanied with

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sincere delivery of quality social services, fulfilment and respect of the inherent human rights directed towards the solution of the root causes of such social and political illness and conflicts.

We strongly call on civilian population and progressive groups to be more vigilant and strengthen community relations and do not allow intrigues and religious differences to sow divisions and fears. But more than ever we believe that now is the time to transcend our actions from complains and reactions but rather the time for proactive actions in building unity and solving these social and political ills of the country.

4 September 2016