



PRESS STATEMENT OF SOLICITOR GENERAL JOSE C. CALIDA
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The proclamation of martial law and the suspension of the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus in Mindanao should not be a cause of unnecessary concern for law-abiding citizens in our country.

President Rodrigo Roa Duterte has ample factual basis for such a proclamation. The festering rebellion of the Maute terrorist which has pledged allegiance to the virulent ISIS, otherwise known as "DAESH" in Arabic, is a compelling reason why martial law was declared.

Our security and intelligence units have monitored ISIS and Maute literature and publications containing orders to their adherents to attack the Philippine government and establish a "wilayat" or ISIS province in Mindanao. The order to attack is not only focused on the government. People they consider as "infidels", whether Christians or Muslims, are also targets of opportunity, whether they are found in Marawi, Cagayan de Oro, Davao, Zamboanga, Cebu, Manila, and other cities.

What is worrisome is that the ISIS has radicalized a number of Filipino Muslim youth. This is evidenced in the Davao City bombing last September where young Moros were involved. The Hilongos, Leyte bombing was the handiwork of young "balik-Islam" recruits. Several bombings in Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, Sulu, and Basilan were all perpetrated by either the Maute terrorist group or Abu Sayyaf. Between the two, the Maute group is more dangerous as it represents the ISIS Islamic extremists here in our country. In fact, the Maute group has been involved in video-recorded beheadings of hapless victims.

What's happening in Mindanao is no longer a rebellion of Filipino citizens. It has transmogrified into an invasion by foreign terrorists who heeded the clarion call of the ISIS to go to the Philippines if they find difficulty in going to Iraq or Syria. The dream of the Maute group, which has pledged allegiance to the ISIS and to its flag, is to transform Mindanao as an Islamic State or, in their language, "Daulah Islamiya." The infamous Abu Sayyaf Isnilon Hapilon has been declared by the ISIS as its "Emir" or leader in Mindanao.

Given the above clear and present dangers and atrocities happening in Mindanao, it is the President's constitutional duty to unsheathe the Republic's sword of martial law to crush the rebellion that threatens to divide our country. The least we can do as law-abiding citizens is to repose our trust in the wisdom and determination of President Duterte to excise this evil from our land.