



The message is clear

It is time to go. The Filipino people have been seeking out the truth and justice on the lingering issue of massive fraud and violence in the last national elections.

In the Philippines and in overseas Filipino communities abroad, more and more of our compatriots are rallying to the call for the most anti-overseas Filipino worker and most corrupt President to resign.

No amount of Malacanang's manufacturing efforts can put up a semblance of support to the crumbling Macapagal-Arroyo administration.

We are conducting all forms of actions here and abroad: from petitions, forums, assemblies to the ongoing boycott of remitting via formal channels.

The message is clear. Gloria has lost what she claims is her mandate to govern. She is losing whatever friends she has left.

Simply said, she has lost it.

Gloria must heed the people's clamor. Or she must face the growing outrage of the people working for her ouster.

Gloria must step down. ♦

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Editorial

Withhold remittances via banking channels until Gloria steps down!

No resign, no remit. – OUTRAGE !

This is the rallying call of the new alliance formed by migrants and advocates pressing for Gloria's immediate resignation or ouster. OUTRAGE or Overseas Filipinos, their families and advocates Unite, Rise to oust the Arroyo regime is an umbrella formation of groups and individuals across the Philippines and in 20 countries.

Foremost among our forms of protest actions is the campaign for the withholding of remittances through formal banking channels as long as Gloria Arroyo remains in power. This is to illustrate our complete withdrawal of support from the Gloria administration (*see page 8 for the Outrage Unity Statement*). Other forms of action that we shall undertake include internationally-coordinated days of action, forums and petition signings.

MIGRANTE Sectoral Party

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MIGRANTE Newsletter is published quarterly by the MIGRANTE Sectoral Party Executive Board. MIGRANTE Sectoral Party may be reached at the following contact information:

Mailing Address: # 49 Mayaman corner Matahimik Streets, UP Village, Quezon City, PHILIPPINES
Email: migparty@tri-isys.com
Telefax: (63-2) 926-2838 Tel: (63-2) 920-3705

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Instead of trying to cover up her fraudulent foul play by resorting to repressive measures and harassment tactics, Gloria must face the people's cry for justice to be served.

In recent weeks, Gloria has admitted that she "called Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano of the Commission on Elections" but "did not commit electoral fraud."

She has been courting the military, police and business sector for support to her illegitimate presidency.

But she is fast losing support even from her own Cabinet, rank and file government employees, and an increasing number of the impoverished populace.

We shall pursue our campaign until the end of Macapagal-Arroyo's fake presidency and the rise of a transition council wherein OFWs and their families shall be ably represented.

We shall also push for the transition council to render null and void all Executive Orders, Administrative Orders and issuances under the illegitimate Macapagal-Arroyo presidency. These orders and issuances include the creation of the Office of External Affairs (OEA) and Executive Order 392 that illegally transferred more than P530 million of OFW health care trust funds from Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) to PhilHealth. This also includes the anti-OFW OWWA Omnibus Policies. We shall also push for the repeal of all anti-people laws enacted under Gloria, which includes the expanded Value Added Tax.

Across the country and around the world, the Filipino people will not be fooled. We will not be deceived by diversionary tactics of self-exile or a revamp of the Cabinet. Clearly, Gloria is an anti-OFW, anti-people, corrupt and fake President. She has no legal or moral basis to govern. If she does not resign, the people will oust her from Malacanang. ♦

News

Israel should apologize for discriminating Filipinos

“IT IS THE Israeli government that should issue an apology for its treatment of migrant workers to the Philippines and not the other way around.”

Thus declared MIGRANTE Sectoral Party chairperson Connie Bragas-Regalado on the Israeli government's reactions to Philippine Ambassador Antonio Modena's comments stipulating that “the treatment of foreign workers by Israeli immigration police was comparable with that of Jews at the hands of the Gestapo secret police.”

“We commend Ambassador Modena for protesting the racist and discriminatory treatment Filipinos suffer in Israel. This is what Philippine diplomats should do, defend the rights of Filipinos in their areas of responsibility. But sadly, most of the Philippine ambassadors are exactly the opposite,” Bragas-Regalado said.

“From segregating Filipino travelers at the back of aircraft on flights to Tel Aviv, the confiscation of cell phones and night raids of overseas Filipino workers' homes, the Israel government is the entity that offended us. They should be the one's to issue an apology not Amb. Modena,” she added.

Filipinos boarding flights to Israel's main Ben Gurion International Airport are made to undergo overly strict scrutiny and assigned seats at the rear of the aircraft. Cellular phones of Filipino workers are also confiscated, preventing them from seeking help with the Philippine consulate.

More than 30,000 Filipinos work in Israel. This is 10 percent of Israel's 300,000 foreign workers. Most of the Filipinos are domestic workers and caregivers based in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, and Haifa.



Ambassador Antonio Modena showing an Israeli newspaper story on his diatribe against racist immigration police.

“A large number of them are undocumented and live in difficult conditions and extremely low wages. The Philippine government must pursue its diplomatic protest against Israel and seek indemnification for all Filipinos offended by its anti-migrant policies,” Bragas-Regalado concluded. ♦

Rightly angered, Modena filed several diplomatic protests with Israel's Interior Ministry, only to be rebuffed and ignored. Until he called them Nazis for their arrest sweeps and airplane and airport segregations.

I agree with OFW's Migrante, whose chair Connie Regalado denounces Israel's demand for Modena's apology: “For segregating Filipino travelers at the back of aircrafts on flights to Tel Aviv, the confiscation of cell phones and night raids of overseas Filipino workers' homes, the Israel government is the one that is offensive. It should be the one to issue an apology to the Filipino people, not Ambassador Modena.”

In: DOUBLETAKE, Manila Times Column by Eric F. Mallonga, June 13, 2005

Officials who neglected OFWs in Saudi

WHILE appealing to President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to do all possible diplomatic means to save OFW Reynaldo Cortez, the MIGRANTE Sectoral Party also pushed for “the immediate dismissal of negligent officials who do not attend to distressed OFWs in Saudi Arabia.”

“Reynaldo Cortez, was abandoned by the President’s alter-ego representatives in the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) and the Philippine Embassy in Riyadh. The same goes for the 1,115 jailed OFWs in Saudi Arabia. Pres. Arroyo must move to save Cortez, and immediately fire Foreign Affairs secretary Alberto Romulo and Ambassador Bahnarim Guinomla,” MIGRANTE Sectoral Party chairperson Connie Bragas-Regalado said.

Cortez, a 39-year old Bicolano and resident of Guagua, Pampanga, was working as a car body technician in Riyadh before his arrest. He killed a Pakistani taxi driver in self-defense in 2002 and was sentenced to death by a Riyadh high court last May 30, 2005.

“Cortez was arrested for the alleged murder of the unnamed Pakistani taxi driver in May 2002. Saudi Arabian police shot Rey twice in the left foot even after he already raised his arms to surrender. Not a note of concern and appropriate action was ever extended by the DFA to Cortez. He was not even paid a prison visit by Amb. Guinomla. His ordeal was even heightened as no embassy



RELATIVES of Filipino worker Rey Cortez picket the Department of Foreign Affairs to press the Philippine government to take action to save him from death row in Saudi Arabia.

representative was present in the last two court hearings of his case,” Bragas-Regalado said.

In December 22, 2003, Cortez was sentenced him to 15 years imprisonment and 1,000 lashes. He filed an appeal in the Riyadh Appellate Court. On November 27, 2004, the court, on hearing his claim that he had killed the taxi driver in an act of self-defense, reduced his jail sentence to 10 years.

On May 11, 2005, Riyadh Grand Court Judge Muhahmmad Abdul Aziz Al-Sheikh asked the brother of the victim if the family would be willing to accept blood money of 100,000 Saudi Riyals (P1.453 million), but the brother rejected the offer or any other amount of money. The family insisted on the death sentence by beheading.

Under Shariah law, as regards private right, the victim’s family has the option of pardoning the killer and accepting blood

Arabia death row must be sacked



REY'S wife Melody and children at a press conference in Guagua, Pampanga, Northern Philippines. Their main placard states: "Save the life of my father!"

money, in which case the death sentence can be annulled.

"President Macapagal-Arroyo must immediately intervene and seek out Pakistani President Pervez Musharaf and Saudi Arabia Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud to plead with the relatives of the victim to forgive Cortez," Bragas-Regalado pressed.

MIGRANTE also pushed for "the fullest diplomatic intervention for all the 1,115 overseas Filipinos – including 12 in death row – who are in various jails across Saudi Arabia must be done by Arroyo."

"These OFWs, like Rey Cortez, were forced to leave the Philippines to find jobs abroad in order to feed their families and in effect help prop up the economy with their dollar remittances. The least thing that Malacanang can do is extend free, timely, appropriate and full assistance to Cortez and all distressed Filipino migrant workers and their families," Bragas-Regalado ended. ♦



Chronology of Rey Cortez' case

May 2002 Rey arrested for the alleged murder of a Pakistani taxi driver; Rey maintains his action was in self-defense. Before arresting him, Saudi Arabian police shot Rey twice in the left foot even after he already raised his arms to surrender.

Previous to his arrest, Rey was a welder at the Al-Allah Car Workshop in Riyadh's Sinaya District. He first went to Saudi Arabia in 1993 and his wife says he planned to return home "for good" June 2002 to set up a motor repair shop. He is the father of six children ranging from 6 years to 18 years old.

December 22, 2003 Judge Mohammad Abdul Aziz Al-Sheikh and two other judges of the Riyadh Grand Court find Cortez guilty of the charge murder and frustrated murder; the Judges sentenced him to 15 years imprisonment and 1,000 lashes

November 27, 2004 Following an appeal filed by Cortez with the Riyadh Appellate Court, the court upon hearing his claim that he killed the taxi driver in self-defense, reduced his jail sentence to 10 years.

May 11, 2005 Noting that the victim's private right or computation of blood money was not addressed, a hearing on the victim's private right was held in the Riyadh Grand Court; Judge Mohammad Abdul Aziz Al-Sheikh asked the victim's brother if they would accept SR100,000 in blood money but the victim's brother rejected the offer and any other amount.

May 30, 2005 Rey's sentence is read to him by the Riyadh Grand Court Judge through a Filipino court interpreter

Tarongoy freed, Gloria tries to cover-up scandal

Migrante expressed its joy over the return of OFW Robert Tarongoy – after more than 8 months of being held hostage by Iraqi rebels.

“Robert’s release is certainly ecstatic news for his family. Many Filipinos empathized with the family over the past seven months and many also offered prayers and support to urge the Arroyo administration to exhaust all means for Robert’s freedom,” Migrante Sectoral Party Chairperson Connie Bragas-Regalado said.

For its part, Migrante circulated an internet petition for Robert that gathered more than 400 signatures from individuals and organizations around the world. The alliance of overseas Filipino groups’ campaign for Robert included countless forums and activities across the Philippines and amongst its members in different countries.

An accountant from Davao, Robert, 31 years old, left the Philippines on July 23, 2004. About a month later, he crossed into Baghdad from Qatar to work for the Saudi Arabia Trading Company, which caters food for the Iraqi military.

“Given the worsening economic crisis at home, it’s inevitable that many are pushed into

risking their lives in warzones in a bid to earn a decent living for their families,” said Bragas-Regalado, noting that the Arroyo administration’s “deployment ban” to Iraq is ineffective unless accompanied by policies that offer Filipino workers decent jobs in the Philippines.



Robert hugs his mother Isabelita on his arrival in Manila.

“We also take this opportunity to reiterate our call that the Arroyo administration must withdraw its support of the US’ ‘war on terror’ immediately – otherwise, the possibility of other OFWs hostaged, like Angelo dela Cruz and Robert Tarongoy, are high,” she said.

Bragas-Regalado added that, “while we rejoice, we also remember the countless other OFWs who suffered, and continue to be hit by a range of human rights violations – while the Arroyo



Robert, his wife Ivy Grace and embattled Pres. Macapagal-Arroyo

administration remains criminally negligent about their plight. In fact, Arroyo has again used Tarongoy’s homecoming in attempts to cover up the raging wiretapping scandal.”

Bragas-Regalado said the concrete experiences of OFWs and their families with Gloria over the past four years serves as the strong basis for Migrante’s call to oust Gloria – especially in the wake of the massive fraud and deceit she committed in the past elections. ♦

**Gloria:
anti-OFW,
step down
now!**

Announcements

Migrante National Consultation in August 2005

On August 25-26, 2005 we shall be holding a National Planning Consultation for Good Governance and Democratic Participation to Uplift the Rights and Welfare of Overseas Filipinos and their Families.

This activity, that shall be held in the National Capital Region, will gather Migrante Sectoral Party leader-representatives from its municipal, city, regional and select country chapters such as Hong Kong and Saudi Arabia, to tackle its ongoing Legislative Agenda, the assessment of our participation in the 2004 elections, arrive at a Forward Plan and Resolutions for the expansion of its machinery for the 2007 polls. Also in the agenda of the said Consultation will be updates on the overseas Filipino situation and the current issues confronting the current government.

For further inquiries and details please contact the National Secretariat at (632) 926-2838 and 920-3705 or email us at migparty@tri-isys.com ♦

**MAGHANDA NA
PARA SA
MIGRANTE
SECTORAL PARTY
*National Planning
Consultation
for Good
Governance and
Democratic
Participation to
Uplift the Rights
and Welfare of
Overseas Filipinos
and their Families
August 25-26, 2005
Metro Manila***



OUTRAGE!

Overseas Filipinos, their families and advocates Unite, Rise to Oust the Arroyo regime!

Basis of Unity

OUTRAGE is a sectoral alliance composed of individuals and organizations of overseas Filipinos, their families and advocates. Its advocates include those from the church, academe, professional and business communities who support the struggle for migrants' rights and welfare.

OUTRAGE convenors and members are across the Philippines and around the world, in more than twenty countries. We are an umbrella formation through which the distinct concerns and voices of our sector will be heard. Our basis of unity is our call for the complete truth and justice about the massive electoral fraud committed by Gloria in the last national elections. We unite in calling for her immediate resignation or ouster because she has lost all legal and moral credibility as President.

Our activities as OUTRAGE will include participating and organizing events that will help raise the public's awareness about Gloria's massive fraud. We will project how our sector joins the ranks of many other Filipinos also crying for the truth and demanding justice. Further, OUTRAGE serves as a venue for us to illustrate the realities of migrants and their families under four years of the Gloria administration.

Greater hardship under Gloria

For our sector, the so-called first phase of Gloria's economic or job-creation program means increased poverty.

She fuels the intensifying economic hardship of the people by implementing globalization policies that serve foreign interests instead of the people's welfare. Manifestations of this include the expanded value added tax, the unbridled skyrocketing of oil prices and increases in the prices of other goods and services. Thus, we are not surprised that survey after survey reveals increasing numbers of Filipinos who are poorer, hungrier and more desperate to survive. For migrants and their families, this explains why almost 3,000 Filipinos daily are forced to work abroad in their bid to earn a decent living and attain even the simplest dreams in life – food, shelter and education.

Instead of raising wages, generating long-term jobs and viable livelihood opportunities in the Philippines, Gloria intensifies the export of Filipino workers overseas as cheap and flexible labor. From the onset, her target is the export of one million workers a year – with little regard about the high social cost this policy wreaks on countless OFWs and their families.

She readily admits that the export of labor is part of her national development strategy, playing blind to the reality that our nation will never genuinely develop by exporting our best and brightest. Especially since the billions of dollars in remittances infused into the country yearly actually serves to prop up and thus keep our economy in this impoverished state. According to government figures, last year was a record one for Arroyo's

labor export policy in that US\$8.5 billion were remitted through official bank channels while more than 900,000 Filipino workers were forced to work overseas to survive. According to the International Labor Organization, an estimated US\$21 billion in remittances through formal and non-formal channels are sent yearly.

In this light, foremost among the forms of protest actions OUTRAGE will lead is the call for the withholding of remittances through formal banking channels as long as Gloria Arroyo remains in power in order to illustrate our complete withdrawal of support from the Gloria administration.

To conclude, OUTRAGE is the alliance that brings together the broadest range of OFWs, returned migrants, their families and advocates. We unite in our call for the complete truth to come out regarding the massive fraud committed by Gloria during the last elections and we believe that Gloria's Presidency is indeed illegitimate, corrupt, anti-people and has no moral basis. We call for her immediate resignation or ouster. #

***Ilabas ang buong katotohanan,
Kamtin ang katarungan!***

**Gloria:
resign or
be ousted!**

OUTRAGE Convenors: Dr. Minguita Padilla, President, Sinag ng Bayan Foundation; Connie Bragas-Regalado, Chairperson, Migrant Sectoral Party; Amado Gat Inciong, Alyansang Nagkakaisa para sa Inang Bayan (ANIB); Prof. Ruel Pepa, Trinity College of Quezon City; Hanah Seneres, External Vice-President, OFW Family Club; Prof. Millie R. Espinas, Asian Center, UP Diliman; Maita Santiago, Secretary-General, Migrant International; Josue Loyola, Chairperson, Friends of Migrant; Dr. Rommel Linatoc, Migrant-United Kingdom; Josh Castro, Secretary-General, League of Filipino Students (LFS)- California; Mazel Trinidad, Migrant-Youth.