

BISIG enjoins all Filipinos who cherish peace and democracy to actively oppose all attempts to rob us of our sovereignty by means of a coup d'etat. BISIG reiterates its support for the Constitution and the constitutional order.

BISIG Political Council
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(Editor's note: This is a translation of the original statement in Filipino.)

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Bansang Nagkaisa sa Diwa at Layunin (Bandila) condemns in the strongest terms the latest and bloodiest attempt by criminal military adventurers to overthrow our constitutional democracy. Once again, these elements from a discredited past have employed violence to derail our painstaking struggle towards a society based on peace and justice. The cost in lives of soldiers and civilians, in destroyed property and disrupted livelihood has been appalling. The damage to the economy, and its repercussion on the lives of millions of our countrymen, has yet to be calculated.

Yet these mutineers who call themselves "Soldiers of the Filipino People" have not shown a trace of remorse for all this suffering and anguish, even as their cause was rejected by the people, preferring to prolong it instead. This, if nothing else, exposes their adventure as nothing more than a naked grab for power -- for themselves and their political allies.

We call on the legally-constituted government to stand steadfast against all efforts to erode our constitutional order and to rely on the support of the people as its ultimate line of defense.

We salute the men of the Armed Forces of the Philippines who have remained true to their responsibilities and duties and to the Constitution.

We grieve for those who have suffered and died in defense of our democracy.

We demand the punishment, according to the full rigor of the law, of all those who participated in the assault on our democracy. We demand the same punishment for the treacherous politicians and businessmen who financed and supported this assault.

We call on all sectors of society to stand firm and fully support our constitutional institutions against all attempts by enemies of democracy to overthrow them or to undermine their authority.

We recognize that ours is not a perfect political and social system. Serious problems plague our society -- e.g., the poverty and social injustice that continue to haunt the masses of our people, endemic graft in our bureaucracy, and the deterioration of basic services -- and government has yet to demonstrate the necessary political will to address them. The lines of communication and the partnership between the people and government, so much a bright promise at EDSA, have weakened. And the people themselves -- and especially we, the people's organizations -- have failed to maintain the level of commitment that ousted an entrenched dictatorship. For all of us, there is an urgent need for soul-searching.

But that will be in the days to come. Now the immediate task is to ensure the survival of constitutional democracy, without which stock-taking would be irrelevant and impossible. Our all-too-recent experience should remind us that a democratic society and government, however imperfect, is infinitely preferable to a militarized dictatorial order which will not recognize its own flaws and will suppress criticism.

The end of the immediate threat must not lull us into complacency. The past days have proven the ruthlessness, the resourcefulness -- and the resources -- of the enemies of democracy. We, in Bandila, will remain vigilant even as the task of renewal begins.

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