

Election Violence: Extrajudicial assassinations in the Philippines

By [Global Research](#)

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[Poll-related violence in Philippines fostered by culture of impunity — Beltran](#)

MANILA — Anakpawis Representative and political detainee Crispin Beltran today said that the worsening election-related violence in the country is related to the seemingly endless spate of extra-judicial killings targeting political activists and human rights advocates.

He said that the Macapagal-Arroyo administration deliberate failure to put an end to the killings of members and officials of the progressive party-lists and militant people's organizations has created a culture of impunity which is now being taken full advantage of by hired guns of traditional politicians. He said that the government's failure to solve the killings of activists serve to encourage hired killers to peddle their trade with less worry and fear that they will be apprehended and brought to justice.

"It's a culture and atmosphere of impunity that's being fostered in the Philippines, and at the core of this is the Arroyo government's failure to apprehend the killers of activists and journalists. Criminals and assassins have become even more bold in carrying out their bloody and mercenary missions because they are confident that the Philippine National Police (PNP) is essentially clueless when it comes to finding killers and solving crimes of extrajudicial killings," he said.

"The Philippines' peace and order situation is also rapidly deteriorating along with the plight of civil, political and human rights. Hired killers are running amok and taking advantage of the government's lame duck stance when it comes to going after shoot and run criminals," he added.

Dismantle private armies, monitor security teams of rival political camps

The activist lawmaker said that instead of dismantling the private armies and mercenary gangs being kept and maintained by certain politicians in the provinces, the Macapagal-Arroyo government continues to go after civilians sympathetic to the progressive party-lists by militarizing the urban centers. He said that the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Philippine National Police (PNP) should be conducting bilateral campaigns to weed out, disarm and dismantle the private armies of big landlords and politicians.

"What has happened to the Commission on Election's gun ban? It has allowed so many exemptions this election season that the security agents of most politicians and candidates are walking around carrying a regular armory with them," he said.

He also expressed criticism for Malacanang's attempts to downplay election-related violence. He said that the prevalence of violence during this campaign season give lie to the assertions of the administration that it has the peace and order situation under control and that the May 14 polls will go without a hitch.

"This is where the help of the military is needed. The AFP is more suited to monitoring the actions of politicians private armies and the rivalries between political dynasties instead of conducting their supposed clean elections awareness campaign seminars. They should direct their armed expertise towards going after the private armies and security teams of politicians where election rivalry and competition is heated, particularly in the provinces," he concluded.

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