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## MAP Statement on the Imposition of Martial Law in Maguindanao

7 December 2009

The members of the Management Association of the Philippines (MAP) join others in the business community in expressing their deep concern over the imposition of Martial Law in Maguindanao.

We fully support the President's realization of the need for swift and dramatic action to restore law and order in Maguindanao. But Martial Law is a very serious step that completely disrupts the normal processes of democracy and should only be imposed in extreme cases of rebellion or invasion (as provided by the Constitution). The Maguindanao massacre, as horrific and dastardly as it was, does not justify such a drastic step.

The government has more than enough laws and adequate power to bring the criminals to justice and quell any unrest in Maguindanao and associated areas. In fact, the Constitution so mandates in Article XVIII Section 24 that: *"Private armies and other armed groups not recognized by duly constituted authority shall be dismantled. All paramilitary forces including Civilian Home Defense Forces not consistent with the citizen armed force established in this Constitution, shall be dissolved or, where appropriate, converted into the regular force"*. The Emergency Rule the President announced on November 23 gives her sufficient additional powers.

We are concerned that the message that is being sent to the world, and possible investors in our country, is that this is an unstable country with a government that is not strong enough to ensure an environment of peace and safety for its citizens. The job-creating investment we so desperately need will be even further deterred from coming; as it is, we already have the lowest level of foreign investment among the major countries in Asia.

We call on the President to immediately rescind this declaration and instead bring down the full force of the law upon the perpetrators and all those suspected of involvement in the massacre of 57 of our fellow Filipinos. We call on the President to immediately disarm all political warlords. We call on the President to immediately investigate the sale of arms and ammunition by the military and police to private armies and punish all those found guilty of this terrible crime against the state and in violation of their sacred vows to protect the country and its citizens.

We call on the President to abandon her desire to run for Congress and instead to focus on the many critical issues that face our country. Bringing peace to Mindanao is just one of them. There are many others: The rehabilitation of the areas devastated by the recent typhoons. The automation of elections. The investigations into the many cases of corruption involving government officials. The return of competence, dedication, and integrity to government service.

We expect the President to expend all her energies on these issues in the remaining months of her term, nothing could be more important.

The declaration of Martial Law is tantamount to an admission of failure on the government's part to ensure peace and order and to enforce the rule of law.

We say No to Martial Law!