

# Critics to file another impeachment case vs GMA next year

Critics of President Arroyo will file another impeachment case against her in 2009 – the fifth in a row – to prove that they are serious in holding her accountable for her misdeeds.

"We wish to send the very strong message to the President that she cannot kill or steal and get away with it. We will pursue this even when she steps down from power in 2010," said Iloilo Vice Governor Rolex Suplico, one of the complainants.

Like the impeachment complaints filed in 2005 to 2007, President Arroyo is again accused of betrayal of public trust, violation of the Constitution, bribery and graft and corruption, which were the grounds cited in the impeachment complaint.

The main causes of actions enumerated were the bungled \$329-million ZTE deal, human rights violations, the allegedly anomalous Northrail project, the ZTE-tainted Mt. Diwalwal project, the P728-million fertilizer scam, the P500,000 bribery of congressmen and the alleged electoral fraud in the May 2004 presidential election.

Suplico, who helped businessman Jose de Venecia III expose the bungled \$329-million national broadband network-ZTE deal, said it is their obligation to expose government anomalies and hold Mrs. Arroyo accountable for her misdeeds even beyond her term.

"We will pursue this against private

citizen Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, her family and her cronies, the moment she finishes her term on June 30, 2010. A long list of criminal cases is waiting for her," Suplico warned.

De Venecia, son of the former Speaker, said losing the impeachment process was immaterial because they simply want to "send the strong message" to the President, and to the public in general, that they did something to make the Chief Executive accountable for what she did.

"I think wherever this ends up, it is important to know that we are not backing off on these allegations that need to be addressed, that we should always stay vigilant," the young De Venecia stressed.

House Minority Leader Ronaldo Zamora said the impeachment case may lose again for the fourth time for lack of numbers, with the 30-member opposition bloc up against the administration-dominated House of Representatives.

But he clarified that the 80

votes they need is a "work in progress" and that they are still "hoping for miracles" once they consult other political parties, including administration allies, to convince them to support the impeachment.

Among the other complainants are lawyer Harry Roque, Editha Burgos, mother of missing activist Jonas Burgos, Erlinda Cadapan and Concepcion Empeno, mothers of missing UP students Sherlyn Cadapan and Karen Empeno, STAR columnist and former DOTC undersecretary Josefina Lichauco, activist Renato Constantino, actor Rex Cortez, Linggoy Alcuaz, Leah Navarro, and KMP chairman Danilo Ramos.

## Senator wannabes

But administration stalwarts said the latest impeachment complaint will just be used by personalities who want to run for senator in the May 2010 elections.

"A two-ring impeachment circus of reshaped tiring acts. The country is suffering from

impeachment-fatigue and the only persons who have the energy to mount this kind of distraction are people who want free publicity to jumpstart their senatorial bid," said Isabela Rep. Rodolfo Albano III.

Quezon Rep. Danilo Suarez said the impeachment is "one set of unbelievable complaints filed by a senatorial lawyer and endorsed by three senators."

He was probably referring to Roque and Reps. Teofisto Guingona III of Bukidnon, Teddy Casiño and Satur Ocampo of Bayan Muna, Risa Hontiveros of Akbayan, Rafael Mariano of Anakpawis, and Liza Maza and Luz Ilagan of women's group Gabriela.

"An impeachment will always be a distraction since it is politically divisive. Unfortunately, it becomes a venue for a would-be senatorial candidates to seek undue mileage, which we do not need right now," said House Deputy Majority Leader Neptali Gonzalez II.

"The start of the campaign period for next election is very near. That's about one year and five months so you really have to do something by last quarter of 2008. It's very expensive to finance one's ad campaign and only through this event will you get free mileage," he added.

For Camarines

Sur Rep. Luis Villafuerte, "any impeachment filed by (Elly) Pamatong, Lozano and Roque

are not, contrary to popular belief, acts of political ambulance chasing."