

# 'GMA faces upheaval from awakened public with Cory's death'

Makati City Mayor Jejomar Binay yesterday said President Arroyo should take the massive outpouring of grief over the death of former President Corason Aquino as a warning that the government faces a "political upheaval" should it push through with alleged plans to cling to power beyond 2010.

Binay, president of the United Opposition (UNO), said Aquino's death has led to the political awakening of a new generation of Filipinos.

"Cory's death has awakened the people. She has bridged the generation that took part in EDSA 1 with the younger generation who are now aware that the freedom they enjoy was earned through struggle against a dictatorship," he said.

Binay said Cory's spirit will rally the people to oppose Charter change (Cha-cha) through a constituent assembly (con-ass).

"I am certain that if Mrs. Arroyo pushes through with her selfish agenda, the spirit of Cory Aquino will rally the people. Mrs. Arroyo faces a political upheaval if she goes through with her plans," he said.

The Makati mayor said Cory Aquino

stood up against the martial law regime, fought for clean and honest elections, and stood for morality and transparency in government when she became president.

"The younger generation got a crash course in contemporary history. In a span of four days, they learned how difficult life was under a dictatorship, and how our freedom was earned with the sacrifice of so many lives, among them Cory's husband Ninoy Aquino," he said.

Moves are pending in Congress to amend the Constitution through a con-ass and there are persistent reports of a plan to declare a state of emergency and even martial law.

## Emulate Cory

San Juan Mayor JV Ejercito, on the other hand, said President Arroyo and her allies in the House of Representatives should follow the example of Mrs. Aquino.

"Our country needs honest leaders and good governance. There are more capable leaders who do not seek glory or power, but find satisfaction in

By JOSE RODEL CLAPANO

serving the people. Why not leave gracefully after their term and pass the positions on to those fitting for the job? It would be a good way to honor Mrs. Aquino," Ejercito said.

He said the volume of people, mostly in yellow and flashing the "Laban" sign, escorting Aquino's funeral cortege is an indication that the fight for democracy is far from over.

"The number of people mourning for Mrs. Aquino should serve as a warning to GMA. The time has come for Mrs. Arroyo to be afraid, be very afraid," Ejercito said.

## A stark contrast

Overseas Filipino workers also paid tribute to the icon of democracy, saying people should emulate Mrs. Aquino by opposing despotism, corruption, cheating, plunder and other attributes that the present dispensation represents.

Migrante International, the biggest alliance worldwide of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs), said Mrs. Aquino was the direct opposite of President

Arroyo.

"OFWs in almost 200 countries across the world mourn with the family of Cory Aquino and the Filipino people in general as we have lost not only a stalwart in fighting against tyranny but also the president who established the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) at the start of her term," Migrante International chairman Garry Martinez said in a statement.

Aquino signed Executive Order 126 on Jan. 30, 1987 establishing the OWWA to provide services and benefits to OFWs and their families.

"President Gloria Arroyo, however, ruined the original intent of OWWA in servicing OFWs by imposing the OWWA Omnibus Policies which immediately disenfranchised hundreds of thousands of OFW contributors of their benefits. For us, this is a clear example why Gloria is the antithesis of Cory," Martinez said.

He said it is also during the term of Mrs. Arroyo when issues of corruption involving the funds of OWWA have become rampant.

"The OFW fund intended for ser-

ving distressed migrants has suddenly become the personal purse of President Arroyo - an attribute that we have not seen during the term of Cory Aquino. Utilizing the OWWA fund for President Arroyo's electoral campaign during the election in 2004 along with other scams involving OFW funds makes the difference between the two presidents clearer," Martinez said.

Meanwhile, a group of doctors said the united front displayed by Filipinos over the death of former President Aquino should not end with her burial.

"Now that President Aquino has been buried, we hope that we won't just go back to live our own life, unmindful of others. We should continue to clamor and work for a change for the sake of the future generation of Filipinos," said Health Alliance for Democracy (HEAD) president Dr. Gene Nisperos.

He added that Filipinos should not go back to their silent corner and forget how Aquino had sacrificed herself to restore democracy in our country before, during and after her presidency.

- With Sheila Crisostomo