

# Managers: Gov't execs in scandals should quit

## GMA-quit movement launched

The country's largest organization of managers and business executives yesterday called on government officials implicated in anomalies to resign and for President Arroyo to sack them if they refuse to give up their posts.

The Management Association of the Philippines (MAP) issued the call in the wake of the damning Senate testimony of Rodolfo Noel Lozada Jr. on the alleged irregularities in the government's national broadband network deal with ZTE Corp. of China.

Lozada also spoke of how armed men escorted him out of the airport against his will and held him for hours, apparently to prevent him from testifying at the Senate. He said several ranking officials knew of his ordeal.

"If the President's men involved in abuse of authority and alleged anomalies refuse to heed the call for their resignation, should they not be removed from office by the President herself? If the President fails to act, can we conclude that she is either tolerating grave wrongdoings or is not in control? In either case, under the principle of command responsibility, would it be time for all of us to join in asking the President to step down?" the MAP said in its statement, released at noon yesterday.

It said Mrs. Arroyo should allow or even encourage Commission on Higher Education chairman Romulo Neri to testify on the NBN issue.

Turn to Page 12

**Threats real**

"We are now compelled to speak out in the face of the frequency of corruption cases and scandals that have been growing in speed and intensity," MAP said.

It said that aside from the NBN deal, the Arroyo administration should address other corruption issues like the fertilizer scam involving former agriculture undersecretary "Loleng" Bote, the plunder case of former military commander Gen. Carlos Garcia, the Jose Pidal scandal, the Diosdado Macapagal Boulevard overprice, the North Luzon Expressway (NLEX) bid-rigging case of election counting machines, among others.

"That these cases can happen in a bureaucracy that is supposedly protected and somewhat insulated by the elaborate set of checks and balances indicates a serious breakdown in public governance, marked by either inability to execute or the outright unwillingness to perform what is expected of leaders and managers," MAP said.

"The obvious consequences of this breakdown are the wide-scale wastage of scarce resources, the deterioration in the quality of public service, and the creeping apathy among public servants who initially try to do well but are eventually demoralized by the glaring contradictions in their leaders' behavior," it pointed out.

MAP stressed it is the poor who are the hardest hit by corruption. "The public money that goes to private pockets could have otherwise been used to build schoolhouses, buy textbooks, and train the teachers of our public schools," MAP said.

"They could have built hospitals and bought much needed medicine for the indigent patients. They could have upgraded salaries and built homes for our soldiers, policemen, teachers, and government employees," MAP stressed.

"If corruption cases happened under our watch in our corporations, what would we do? As business leaders and managers, we would immediately order an impartial and thorough investigation, fire all those involved, and offer to resign for having failed in our duty to protect our company's assets and reputation," MAP maintained.

"Are we to tolerate a lesser standard for those who manage the affairs of government?" it asked.

MAP also expressed its support for Lozada and urged the administration to take the same protection he deserves. MAP said it hopes the administration will "command" its forces "to cease the acts of harassment which he is currently experiencing."

"We call on the military and the police to support the people and the Constitution, and not allow themselves to be used by those who continually violate the oath of public office and betray the people's trust for their personal aggrandizement," it added.

"We call on all religious leaders to finally speak out in thunderous language and condemn the moral degradation of our government bureaucracy, and we unequivocally join the Catholic bishops' call for 'communal action' to regain our moral compass and, with it, our nation's dignity and self-respect," MAP said.

"The only thing necessary for evil to flourish is for good men and women to do nothing," MAP said, paraphrasing 18th century Irish-born British politician and political theorist Edmund Burke.

A nine-member Board of Governors runs the 57-year-old MAP, which counts over 850 CEOs, presidents and managers of the country's largest corporations as members. Its incumbent president is Ed Chua, chair and president of Philippines Shell Petroleum Corp. Other members of the MAP Board are Albert del Rosario, Jaime Ladao, Rafael Alaman, Baltazar Endriga, Pacita Juan, Jose Bernudez, Vicky Garchitorena and Cesar Purisima.

Sources said the statement was discussed at length at the MAP Board meeting on Wednesday and circulated by email to all its members for comment before being released yesterday noon.

**New anti-GMA group**

The civilians arrested after the siege of the Peninsula Manila hotel in Makati last November have formed a new group to serve as their vehicle in working for the resignation of Mrs. Arroyo and for the holding of a snap election.

The group, called N29 or Nov. 29, also urged Vice President Noli de Castro to resign to pave the way for a meaningful change in the political leadership.

"The nation must start with a clean slate. No room should be left for elements of the old and corrupt regime to perpetuate itself in a political succession that ensures the protection and continuation of the Arroyo regime," former Vice President Teofisto Guingona said.

"The surrogate Noli de Castro must also resign with Gloria, lest all hope for change and justice, recovery and progress, be dashed and obliterated. Snap elections must be called posthaste," Guingona, on behalf of the group, said.

Guingona was arrested after the Peninsula siege together with lawyers Arce Guevarra, JV Bautista, "running priest" Fr.

Roberto Reyes and more than a dozen other key opposition figures.

Also present during the launching of the N29 at a Quezon City restaurant were several dismissed Magdala soldiers.

"Today, we are one with Jun Lozada and the nation to bring down corruption and tyranny that plagues this land. We call for action, for dissent without action is consent," Guingona said.

Reyes, for his part, urged Catholic bishops to be more firm in their condemnation of the administration.

"My dear bishops, you are moderating your statements because you are afraid Malacañang will moderate their donations to you?" Reyes asked.

Meanwhile, Guevarra and Bautista dismissed as plain fabrication military intelligence reports that the New People's Army is planning to infiltrate and sabotage anti-government mass actions today.

"If there are elements who wanted to infiltrate to sow confusion in our planned peaceful assemblies, it will be the military and the

Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) chief Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr. maintained that the intelligence report on NPA threats is real.

At a press briefing yesterday, Esperon said the NPA leadership has deployed men in Metro Manila specifically to sabotage anti-government rallies today.

"We are concerned about this," Esperon said while assuring that police and the military will not stop the rallies as long as they are peaceful.

But he said checkpoints would be set up around Metro Manila to prevent communists and other rebels from taking advantage of the tense political situation.

National Capital Region Police Office Director Geary Barias said they are optimistic that the protest action will go on smoothly and as planned. "That is why as early as now, we would like to allay fears of the citizens concerning untoward incidents (that) may most likely take place as a result of the mass action," Barias told reporters at the Makati City Hall.

Superintendent Gilbert Cruz, Makati police chief, said that they are expecting close to 3,000 participants in the protest rally.

Cruz said around 200 city policemen will be deployed to monitor the situation starting from the Ninoy Aquino Monument located at the corner of Ayala Avenue and Paseo de Roxas, where the rallyists will converge.

"We are, however, anticipating that the rally will be a peaceful one and that no untoward incident will take place while the activity is ongoing," Cruz said.

Makati Mayor and United Opposition president Jejomar Binay said many opposition congressmen will join the rally. "There will also be those coming from the religious sector. I will be there to ensure that peace and order will prevail as what we've agreed upon with the police," the mayor said.

"Given the public outcry over the revelations of Mr. Jun Lozada, it is only prudent for the police authorities to allow the participants to express their grievances. They should refrain from taking any action that will be interpreted as an act of provocation," Binay said. — Willy Jaime Laude, Rhodina Villanueva