

Arrest of Maguindanao fugitives urged

Families of the victims in the massacre has appealed to the Department of Justice to wrap up the resolution of the cases they filed against 50 more suspects

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One of the lawyers for relatives of the Maguindanao massacre victims called on the Philippine National Police and the local government units to cooperate in the arrest of 80 more suspects in the Maguindanao massacre who have gone into hiding. Santos, who guested in the weekly Report to the Nation media forum at the National Press Club, said it is now the time to hunt down the remaining suspects in the massacre that happened 10 years ago in Maguindanao.

At the same time, families of the victims in the massacre has appealed to the Department of Justice (DoJ) to wrap up the resolution of the cases they filed against 50 more suspects in the crime.

The lady lawyer also asked Justice Secretary Menardo Guevarra to again review the Witness Protection Program (WPP) due to numerous complaints from witnesses that they are not receiving the benefits particularly the P10,000 allowance per month.

Santos hailed the decision of the **Quezon Regional Trial Court** after it convicted the Ampatuan brothers and all the others who were responsible for the crime.

“Fair and just decision, evidence based, but we only have some questions since Sajid should have been included among those guilty,”

Santos said.

Santos likewise called on the leadership of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) to help in locating the other suspects who have gone into hiding so their arrests could be made immediately since she believed they are only gravitating in Mindanao area.

She revealed receiving continuous death threats right after she accepted the controversial case up to now.

After 10 years, the Ampatuan brothers were found guilty of murdering 57 people. Brothers Datu Andal Jr., Zaldy and Anwar Sr. were convicted of 57 counts of murder in the gory massacre of 2009, but their brother Datu Sajid Islam Ampatuan was acquitted.

Other Ampatuan clan members Anwar Jr and Anwar Sajid were also convicted.

Quezon City Regional Trial Court (RTC) Branch 221 Judge Jocelyn Solis Reyes handed the sentence of reclusion perpetua or up to 40 years in jail the Ampatuan brothers without parole.

This was for the massacre of 58 people on 23 November 2009, where 32 who died were journalists.

Since Andal Jr. and Zaldy has already been jailed for 10 years they will serve 30 years out of their 40 years.

In the Ampatuan massacre case, 28 were convicted of 57 counts of murder and sentenced to 40 years, 15 were sentenced to 6-10 years for being accessories to crime, while 55 were acquitted.

It was handed down by Judge Reyes in a tightly-secured courtroom inside Camp Bagong Diwa in Taguig.

The 58 people were part of a convoy that sought to file the certificate of candidacy of then Maguindanao governor aspirant Esmael "Toto" Mangudadatu.