

Resolution No. 2019-02-13

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**RESOLUTION CALLING FOR THE RELEASE OF THE MANIFESTO ON THE  
ARREST OF RAPPLER CEO MARIA RESSA**

Whereas, the Legislative Assembly is the highest policy-making body of the University Student Government (University Student Government Constitution, Article XIV, Section 1);

Whereas, the USG shall have the power of which emanates from the student body. It shall be the sole, unified, autonomous and democratic representative body of the students (University Student Government Constitution, Article III, Section 1);

Whereas, the National Affairs Committee shall discuss national and sectoral issues and present recommendations on such to the Legislative Assembly (University Student Government Constitution, Article V, Section 11);

Whereas, Maria Ressa, CEO of Rappler, was arrested due to a cyber libel case filed against her;

Whereas, the cyber libel charges against Maria Ressa was over a story published in May of 2012, which was 4 months before the law allegedly violated was enacted;

Wherefore, be it resolved that this manifesto (see Appendix A) be presented and approved by the Legislative Assembly;

Wherefore, be it finally resolved that this manifesto be approved and be posted on the LA-PIO and the University Student Government's social media accounts as the University Student Government's stand.

Adopted,

## **Appendix A**

### **A MANIFESTO ON THE UNJUST ARREST OF RAPPLER CEO MARIA RESSA**

Last February 13, Rappler CEO and executive editor, Maria Ressa, was arrested by officers from the National Bureau of Investigation due to a cyber libel case filed against her. The cyber libel charges were made against her and former Rappler researcher Reynaldo Santos Jr. over an article published in May 2012, where businessman Wilfredo Keng was alleged to have connections to illegal drugs and human trafficking. This was allegedly in violation of the Cybercrime Act, which was implemented on September 2012, 4 months after the article was made public.

We strongly condemn the unjust arrest of Maria Ressa. According to Article 3, Section 4 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution, “No law shall be passed abridging the freedom of speech, of expression, of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble and petition the government for redress of grievances.” Her arrest is a threat to press freedom and more importantly, a threat to the freedom of expression. Press freedom is necessary as the press seeks out, confronts, and publicizes the truth for our fellow Filipinos to be informed. Suppressing press freedom is thus not only a violation of the freedom of speech but is also a transgression against the right of every citizen to the truth and the pursuit of it.

A democratic society cannot exist with a mute press. Democracy is premised on freedom of expression which enshrines an independent unconstrained press, free to ferret out the truth to its ultimate end. The marketplace of ideas which can only exist with free speech allows the people to hold its leaders accountable as it promotes discourse necessary for judgement.

We call on the Lasallian community to uphold justice and truth. We must stand by press freedom and defend all avenues that secure the preservation and expression of truth for all. The brazen arrest of Maria Ressa is another attempt to silence anyone who will voice opposition to the current administration. We also call on the government to not misuse its power to silence legitimate media who practice the highest standards of journalism. We must stand against this abuse and defend free and fearless journalism. We cannot be silenced.

## **Appendix B**

Rey, A. (2019, February 13). Rappler CEO Maria Ressa arrested for cyber libel.

Retrieved from

<https://www.rappler.com/nation/223411-maria-ressa-arrested-for-cyber-libel-february-2019>

Santos, V. O. (2019, February 16). [OPINION | NEWSPOINT] The ambush of Maria Ressa. Retrieved from

<https://www.rappler.com/thought-leaders/223621-ambush-of-maria-ressa>