

Presidential Communications Office

Presidential News Desk

SPEECH OF PRESIDENT RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE DURING THE AWARDING OF THE PNP MEDAL OF VALOR AND ORDER OF LAPU-LAPU TO MEMBERS OF THE PNP-SAF 44

[Delivered at the Heroes Hall in Malacañan Palace | 17 April 2018]

Kindly sit down.

Eh nagpaalam ho ako that I'd be late for about 30 minutes 'yung endo --- ang pinagkaguluhan ngayon contractualization. There was another copy submitted to me mga 10 minutes before 3 o'clock. Sabi ko I would need time to... Eh nagmamadali pati 'yung unrest ng labor. So we are trying our best to help the Filipino people.

Foreign Affairs Secretary Alan Peter Cayetano, Interior and Local Government Officer-in-Charge Eduardo Año, Police Director Ronald dela Rosa, member of the... Ano ba ang gusto mo governor o senador? *[laughter]* Nag-uusap pa sila ni Inday. Inday has... Sabi ko you just talk to Inday then maybe if we have time we can talk together.

The officials and enlisted personnel of the civilian employees of the Philippine National Police, mga kapamilya ng ating mga bayaning SAF 44, mga kababayan.

You know it comes late but better late than never. So I am not attributing anything to anybody except that I am happy that we are able to recognize today the bravery of our police officers.

Today, we pay tribute to the gallant troopers from the Special Action Force who gave their lives in Mamasapano a few years ago. Their extraordinary display of bravery during that fateful operation does not just qualify them to receive this highly-coveted decoration. It also makes them worthy to be called as heroes.

Their tragic death in the hands of enemies who outnumbered them and surrounded them from all sides may be one of the darkest and saddest parts of our nation's history.

Yet, this sad episode just proved that [through their] commitment to their sworn duty to protect our nation from terror and violence, they have successfully neutralized one of the world's most wanted terrorists.

Yet the sad episode just --- to their commitment, let us also remember that their valor not only with pride and honor. Despite the difficulties they encountered during combat, our troops demonstrated genuine selflessness and showed us how Filipino resilience could sustain us even during the most trying times.

Indeed, the SAF 44 is not only a group of dedicated, capable and commendable police officers. They are also individuals worthy of emulation and admiration. We therefore recognize their heroism so they may inspire other men and women in uniform to also demonstrate the values of service, honor and justice in all pursuits.

It is my hope that this recognition will further invigorate our police officers and military personnel to perform their duties with utmost dedication, excellence, loyalty and love of country.

To the families of our fallen troops, I join you in remembering their legacy and honoring their memory. Rest assured that the government is doing its best to ensure that their sacrifices will not go in vain.

We continue to pursue welfare assistance programs such as housing projects, scholarships and employment opportunities that will benefit the families that our troops left behind.

Most importantly, I assure you that we remain resolute in ensuring that justice—no matter how long it takes—will be served.

We still have a long way to go in the task of completely liberating our country from the ills that threaten our path to genuine and lasting peace and progress, but I am confident that we can succeed because we have the full support of the PNP in our efforts to maintain law and order in this nation.

The fate of the SAF 44 in the hands of the enemies will live on in the annals of our nation's history. This will continue to inspire us and the generations after us to pursue genuine peace in our country.

Let us not just honor our troops' remarkable display of patriotism through ceremonies like this. Let us also fight for genuine and lasting peace in our communities and across the nation because it is only through this that we can truly honor the legacy of the 44 [men] who gave the ultimate sacrifice in Mamasapano.

Maraming salamat po sa inyo.

Wala ng...? You know I have eight more to go. Naghintay 'yung... Eight ako ngayon hanggang... But I'd like to have pictures.

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