



# Asian Federation Against Involuntary Disappearances (AFAD)

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## 44 YEARS LATER: REMEMBERING THE MARTIAL LAW AS AN ACT OF RESISTANCE

Today, the Filipino people commemorate the writing of Proclamation No. 1081 on September 21, 1972, which declared the Philippines as under Martial Law. The Martial Law was a period in our history that altered the lives of so many people. The change that it brought about was not the good kind, contrary to what historical revisionists claim. The declaration legitimized the transfer to, and unfettered use of, power by President Marcos, the suspension of the privilege of the writ of *habeas corpus* which allows for warrantless arrests, the enforcement of curfew and banning of public assemblies. What resulted from these is the systematic and widespread violations of human rights in the Philippines. Similarly, this allowed the unconstrained plundering of our nation's resources by the Marcoses.

According to the Human Rights Victims Claims Board, there are a total of 75,730 claims of human rights violations that were perpetrated between 1972-1986. Among them are 878 documented enforced disappearance cases, 3,257 extrajudicial killings, 34,000 torture cases and thousands of arbitrary arrests. Up until now, victims of these human rights violations have yet to achieve justice. Families of victims of enforced disappearances during the Martial Law still suffer from not knowing the fate and whereabouts of their loved ones.

Meanwhile, the current administration is pushing for the burial of Marcos in the Heroes' Cemetery, which is a slap in the face of the thousands of victims of human rights abuse. Similarly, there is a consolidated effort by the Marcoses and their supporters in the government to distort our history by touting the Martial Law as the "golden years" of the Philippine history.

So today, AFAD's remembrance is an act of defiance against the lies that are being spread by those in power. We remember as an act of honoring the martyrs who fought for our civil freedoms and the emancipation of the Filipino people. We remember to be able to tell the tales of darkness and grief to the younger generation. We remember in order to continue the unfinished struggle for truth and justice. We remember so that our people will never again have to go through such dark times. And we remember so that such tyrannical and rapacious regime will never ever be repeated in any part of the world.

In Solidarity,

Mary Aileen Diez-Bacalso

AFAD Secretary-General

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AFAD Chairperson