

AN OPEN LETTER FOR PROFESSOR JOMA SISON AND THE ARMED NATIONAL DEMOCRATS

PROFESSOR JOSE MA. SISON

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National Democratic Front

Dear Ka Joma:

Thank you very much for being more open in making statements on the issues and proposals of the National Democratic Front (NDF) online.

At the very least, it shows that you may now be ready to agree to the conduct of an open and participatory comprehensive peace process even as you still hold on to the position that it be held outside the country primarily because of your deeply held concerns for the your personal security and safety as well as those of your peace negotiators and consultants. It is understandable that those waging an armed struggle would rather enjoy its fruits than be counted among those whose lives were sacrificed in the name of national democracy.

Your declaration that, “The changes we wanted to happen in our country are very doable if the Duterte government is determined , together with the NDF, to have a fundamental change, genuine freedom, and development,” is -- at surface – very laudable and worth pursuing.

However, many questions come to mind when one ponders upon these. Exactly what do you mean by these complex phrases? How do you define these motherhood concepts plainly and simply to be understood by the people? Do you honestly believe that these can be clearly defined for us exclusively by government and NDF negotiators among themselves half-way across the world? How can peace negotiations held outside the country, facilitated by well-meaning foreigners and using a language that nosebleeds most Filipinos ever solve national issues that need everybody’s attention?

For the past three decades, the government -- in its desire to set in place and era of a just, comprehensive and lasting peace – has consistently acceded to your “demand” for peace negotiations to be held in the Netherlands facilitated by unquestionably sincere Dutchmen. And yet, all through these years, nothing substantial has been agreed upon. Up until this day, not a single doable agreement on how to go about bringing social change has been reached. Apparently, even supposed to be simple procedural matters to facilitate the peace negotiations cannot be agreed upon.

Undeniably, it is now time for change!

Maybe it is about time for you to seriously rethink the NDF position on the venue of talks. Perhaps, it is time for you to listen to the sentiments of 98.3% -- based on results of the peace education and advocacy phase of YES FOR PEACE Bayanihan para sa KKK (Kapayapaan, Kaunlaran at Kasaganahan) – of the Filipino people that peace negotiations be held here instead of abroad. You may want to seriously consider the University of the Philippines System as venue and mediating institution in peace negotiations as resolved by its Board of Regents in 1992.

Also, you may want to live-stream and post in real-time the formal proceedings of the peace talks and/or joint statements to openly show the Filipino people that, indeed, you represent our interests and not only your own.

After all, “Sovereignty resides in the people and all government authority emanates from them.” Therefore, we, the people, need to know what you are claiming in our behalf.

By accepting the foregoing propositions, you can enjoy equal propaganda mileage with the government and the ruling elite while enabling the negotiators to focus on the job at hand – crafting peace agreements that will breeze through Congress and not suffer the same fate of the proposed Bangsamoro Basic Law – with carefully considered inputs from the Filipino people.

Of course, your security and safety as well as those of your peace negotiators and consultants will have to be guaranteed by the government for all these to happen.

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