



## **STATEMENT OF THE INTEGRATED BAR OF THE PHILIPPINES ON THE PROPOSED DIRECTIVE IN BARRING CABINET MEMBERS FROM ATTENDING THE HEARINGS IN THE SENATE**

It is the objective and purpose of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines to uphold the rule of law, improve and assist in the administration of justice and foster and maintain high ideals of integrity, public service and conduct. This call to service is engraved not only in its By-Laws but in the very Rules of Court (Section 1, Rule 139-A).

In view of the brewing conflict between the Executive and the Legislative branches of the government, the Integrated Bar of the Philippines calls for calm, sobriety, and unity among the said two (2) branches of government and its agencies, and for the same to cooperate and work together to combat corruption and abuse.

It is imperative for our government to fight corruption, wherever it maybe, and to assist, rather than obstruct, any investigation that seeks to identify the root of corruption and the perpetrators behind them.

Corruption is measured not just in the billions of pesos of our taxpayers' money lost to government malfeasance, but more importantly, in the deficiency of effective healthcare and medicine that could have saved the lives of many of our countrymen, as well as financial assistance to households and businesses in distress due to the pandemic.

A transparent government is one of the hallmarks of a truly republican state. The only way to succeed is for all branches of government to work together in combating corruption and abuse.

We call on the President to heed the words of the Supreme Court in the case of *Senate vs. Ermita* (G.R. No. 169777, April 20, 2006) which provides as follows:

Ultimately, the power of Congress to compel the appearance of executive officials under Section 21 and the lack of it under Section 22 find their basis in the principle of separation of powers. While the executive branch is a co-equal branch of the legislature, it cannot

frustrate the power of Congress to legislate by refusing to comply with its demands for information.

We thus urge the President to reconsider his decision to bar his Cabinet from attending the Senate investigation on the alleged irregularities in the Department of Health (DOH) spending related to the COVID-19 pandemic program. It is only by granting our Congress free access to information that we can empower them to formulate policies that fully reflect the will of our people.



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