

FROM THE FRONT PAGE

'GMA will not be toppled'

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vital government offices. Ermita also noted the spate of bombings and anti-government rallies had increased as the President prepares for her SONA.

"There are those who are not exactly with the government—let's call them detractors—who are trying to set up a situation so that there is reason for them to cause some mischief," he said.

The worst that could happen, Ermita said, is "a destabilized environment."

Ermita also dismissed allegations that the administration is behind the spate of bombings to justify the imposition of martial law.

Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro also slammed reports involving "disgruntled military officers" in the latest destabilization attempts against the government. Teodoro expressed his disgust over the reports that once again implicated military men in the latest power grab.

"Recently we have seen once again some sinister attempts to create division and disharmony among our ranks, pitting brother officer against brother officer," he said.

"We appeal to those who are doing this for their selfish ends, choose another playground to

play your games in. The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) is solidly behind the Constitution," Teodoro said in his speech during the 62nd anniversary of the Philippine Air Force at Villamor Air Base in Pasay City.

**Threat pattern**

Ermita also said police investigators are still looking at the "signature" of the explosive devices retrieved from the DA office and fragments from the Office of the Ombudsman to possibly determine their maker.

Police also confirmed another bomb was planted at a condominium in Quezon City a day after the explosion at the Office of the Ombudsman.

"It would appear based on initial assessment, it's not the signature of the usual terrorists, meaning the Abu Sayyaf," Ermita said.

Philippine National Police (PNP) chief Director General Jesus Verzosa said the AFP is helping out in analyzing the explosive devices.

He said the police are analyzing the pattern of bomb threats whenever President Arroyo is about to deliver her SONA.

Investigators learned the bomb attack at the Ombudsman bore similarities with the bombing of Philtrust Bank in Quezon City in 2005. ■

Fil-Am to sue RP gov't for alleged torture

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made. For example, cutting off of military aid," Valera said in an ANC Dateline Philippines interview.

**Roxas recounts abduction**

Roxas, a member of Bagong Alyansang Makabayan US Chapter (BAYAN-USA), spoke to the media for the first time since her alleged abduction by the AFP.

During a lengthy and emotional press conference, the 31-year-old fought tears as she read from her sworn affidavit and described the events that led to her capture and six-day ordeal by her torturers.

The UC San Diego alum said that she was in the Philippines to research on a writing project and help assist in a medical mission in La Paz, Tarlac.

After coming back from a recent survey trip on May 19, she claims that 15 armed military men wearing "ski masks" and holding "high powered rifles" barged through the door of the house where she was staying and abducted her and two companions—Juanito Carabeo and John Edward Jandoc.

"I kept shouting my name and was being punched repeatedly," said Roxas during the press conference held at the Echo Park Methodist Church and broadcast online simultaneously to the Philippines last Saturday, June 27. "They kept trying to tape my mouth but I kept taking it off and continued to say my name over and over again."

According to reports in the Philippines, neighbors recall hearing the commotion and told local authorities about what they witnessed.

Roxas said that she was held for six days in what she believes was a military base. She recalls hearing construction activities, gunfire as though from a firing range and planes taking off and landing.

She said she was blindfolded and handcuffed to the back. She said that interrogators "punched", choked and accused of her of being a member of the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army (CPP-NPA).

She denied their accusations and repeatedly told her interrogators that she was a US citizen. She demanded a lawyer.

"They told me even if a year passes, I would never see a lawyer, that in there I had no rights," she said. "They told me that it was

people like me that is costing the government so much money."

Her captors continued to interrogate her and questioned her about the location of other members of the CPP-NPA, she recalls.

After six days, her captors brought her to a nearby relative's home. They threatened her to keep her silence about her abduction.

Roxas said that one of her two companions—John Edward Jandoc—is still missing. Carabeo was brought home. However, he has not spoken about the events.

"I want the Philippine government and the military to be held accountable for what they did to me," said Roxas. "What they did has been happening and continues to happen. I want them to be held accountable so this does not happen to anyone else."

**Staged abduction**

The Philippine government and military officials have denied any responsibility for Roxas and her two friends disappearance claiming her story and abduction was "scripted."

"There are two possibilities here and one is that indeed government troops may have something to do with it," Brig. Gen. Gaudencio Pangilinan of the Civil Relations Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines said in a statement.

If military agents were involved in the torture and abduction of Roxas, Pangilinan vowed that he would personally make certain that they would be punished "with the full might of the law."

"If that is the case, we guarantee you that to this date, our

intelligence and investigative outfit are searching for any lead to identify these human rights violators," he said to Inquirer.net.

Pangilinan said another possibility was that Roxas' allegations were "scripted" to make it appear that her abductors were members of the AFP.

"If you read through the revelations, the supposed abductors must be morons to allow those information to be heard by Ms. Roxas," he told Inquirer.net.

Deputy Presidential Spokesperson Lorelei Fajardo said Roxas should come up with evidence to prove her allegations.

And Malacañang, Press Secretary Cerge Remonde was also not immediately buying Roxas' account. "We know that there are groups that do nothing but destroy the President," he said.

Roxas was surprised by the denials of the government and military officials.

"No amount of their lies or denials could ever deny the truth of what happened to me," she said.

"It is such an absurd argument," added Rhonda Ramiro of BAYAN-USA. "Anyone who sees Melissa or reads or listen to her testimony or any of the thousands of victims of human rights violations knows that this is real...It's time for the government to stop being in denial and start doing something to stop the human rights violations."

Roxas will meet with California Senator Barbara Boxer and Senator Sanchez, according to Ramiro.

Roxas also said that she plans to pursue her legal action in the Philippines and the US. ■

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**US embassy probes Fil-Am's torture claims**

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ing mission investigating human rights violations throughout the Philippines under the Arroyo administration.

Lieutenant Colonel Romeo Brawner Jr., Armed Forces of the Philippines spokesman, denied the AFP involvement, saying an internal inquiry conducted showed that the 7th Infantry Division in Tarlac where the torture allegedly happened had nothing to do with it.

On May 26, Roxas resurfaced to tell her story and sought court protection by filing a petition for the issuance of the writ of amparo at the Supreme Court.

The high tribunal granted Roxas' plea and ordered the Court of Appeals to conduct the proceedings on the case. Roxas returned to the US in the first week of June. ■

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