Erasing, distorting, and revising foundational narratives of the Bangsamoro struggle during the dark years of Martial Law

April 27, 2022, Wednesday – 4:00 pm Hawaii Standard Time

Register in advance for this meeting:
https://hawaii.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJMrdOitpj8iHte5jCBegNeQpNZ2MnCNOpYx
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Abstract:
The dark period of Martial Law under the late President Marcos Sr brought massive changes in the lives of the Islamized populations (Moro or now Bangsamoro) in southern Philippines, particularly in the new region now called Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM). Details on the inordinate suffering of the Bangsamoro people are being constantly challenged by efforts first to erase, distort and revise peoples’ narratives of their horrendous experiences especially in the current political context when the son and namesake of the late dictator is now perceived to be the frontrunner among the candidates for president in the coming May 9 elections. But such efforts hark back when colonial powers starting with the Spaniards promoted a deep hatred against the Islamized southern populations, then perpetuated by the next set of colonial leaders, the Americans. From being ‘infieles’ during the Spanish rule, the Moros were then given various derogatory epithets, among them, being ‘blood hungry’ by the American colonial masters. One American governor general captured this animosity against the Moros in this remark: “A good Moro is a dead Moro.” After the emblematic Jabidah Massacre in Corregidor on 18 March 1968, several groups of Moro leaders started to mobilize themselves leading to the founding of the Moro National Liberation Front. According to the late dictator, the so-called growing and violent Moro insurgency was a strong justification to declare Martial Law on September 21, 1972. Contrary to this claim, the Moro struggle at that time did not reach a level when they could wage destructive offensives against the massive Philippine armed forces; instead, Martial Law and its brutal campaigns on Moro activists and rebels became a strong push for them to fight fiercely for ‘victory or the graveyard’ to defend both ‘agama’ (faith or way of life) and homeland.

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