

By Remedios F. Marmoleño

Antonio Trillanes IV was first elected to the Philippine Senate in 2007, which means he has been a senator for the past 11 years. I did not once vote for him and so the opinions I express in this piece are not in defense of this particular senator but more my opinions of what should be the use of law in our country. The media have recently made known the intent of this administration to have Trillanes arrested because of the coup attempt he led against the government when GMA was president. However, Trillanes was granted amnesty under Pres Noynoy Aquino and if so he, as well as the other military people involved with him in the Magdalo and Oakwood incidents, are no longer the social and legal pariahs they are made out to be.

Not so, as claimed by this present administration which has also brought in the military. Pres Duterte has revoked the amnesty granted to Trillanes by Pres Aquino, and which same amnesty is verified by Aquino himself. The claims against the validity of the amnesty are based on the basis that Trillanes cannot present a copy of the original of the amnesty grant and also that he has not admitted to his guilt in the staging of the incidents he was charged with. As a result Duterte has instructed that Trillanes be put under arrest and the military has also said that since the amnesty can be questioned Trillanes is now subject to court martial.

I don't know how lawyers will argue for and against the charges brought forth on Trillanes. Not being a lawyer my own questions may sound naive and laughable. But bear with me.

Trillanes has been a senator since 2007. How come he is only being questioned now about the amnesty he was supposed to have been given in the past? Mr. Duterte has experience as a prosecutor so I am sure he sees the law as a weapon to make things right in any given society. Did he just now realize there was a question about the amnesty? Or did he just now realize that this is one way of getting back at someone who has been a burr to his side and that of his family? This is a disturbing situation for me. I believe the law is there to make our society better. The law is not to be used to promote the interest of any one person or any one family.

The involvement of the military in these machinations is also most disturbing. Has it taken the military all these years to decide that Trillanes should have undergone a court martial during which he would have the chance to prove his guilt or his innocence? Or is the military being used for political reasons?

The answers to these questions are quite important to us citizens who still believe that we are under a democratic government.