

PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE
PRESIDENTIAL NEWS DESK
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SPEECH BY
PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR.
AT THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION OF THE PHILIPPINES, INC. (PAPI)

[Delivered at Philippine International Convention Center in Pasay City | 20 September 2024]

Maraming salamat.

[Please take your seats.]

Maraming salamat sa ating Presidential Communications Office Acting Secretary Cesar Chavez sa pagpakilala mo.

Nakasama natin dito ang kalihim ng DOST, Science and Technology Secretary Renato Solidum Jr.; Ang SAGIP Party List Representative, si Ka Dan Marcoleta, who has become the defender of the congressional traditions in our history. Basta't lalabas ka, lagi kitang pinapanood. Laging maganda 'yung papanoorin ko.

Pasay City Mayor Imelda Calixto-Rubiano; Publishers Association of the Philippines, Incorporated chairman Emeritus Johnny P. Dayang; and your President who just spoke, President Nelson Santos; ang aking mga kapwa manggagawa sa pamahalaan; mga binibini at ginoo, magandang gabi po sa inyong lahat.

As we mark the 50th Anniversary of the Publishers Association of the Philippines, Inc., we celebrate not just the pages that you have printed, but the values that you have upheld with every word, every story, and every truth you fought hard to tell.

After all, the true measure of journalism is not just about telling stories and writing headlines; it is about standing firm even when the ground beneath our feet begins to shake.

Fifty years ago, PAPI was founded on a dream: to bring truth to every Filipino doorstep, to put ink on paper, and to let the stories of our nation come alive.

I imagine the first meetings of this organization were not all that different from the bustling newsrooms that you came from—quick exchanges of story leads, discussions on how to keep the paper running, and of course, the occasional scramble to meet a printing deadline, all in the pursuit of what is right.

From the beginning as a small, non-profit media organization in 1974, you have grown into a formidable organization that has been the vigilant vanguards of our communities and the tireless defenders of press freedom.

Press freedom—two simple words but they carry the weight of our collective history.

Journalism is about human stories—barangay officials who assist in rescue missions during typhoons, parents who work tirelessly to put their children through school, young students who read your pages and dream of a better future.

You do not just report the news; you remind us of our shared struggles, our shared aspirations, and the many, many ways that we connect with each other as a nation.

The road ahead may be riddled with challenges, but remember—great things are never easy.

With the rise of a new technology, we face a different kind of enemy.

Misinformation, cyber libel threats, [and] the relentless pressures of the digital age have added layers of complexity in ensuring press freedom. Every post, every share, every careless click—these are the new battlegrounds.

From the anonymous troll farms to the deliberate spread of conspiracy theories, this fight has evolved far beyond the newsroom; it is now in the palm of every hand that scrolls through social media.

So I call on every Filipino: do not just fight; lead the change. Verify, question, hold the line. We have a duty to protect the sanctity of facts, not just as citizens, but as guardians of our shared reality.

Sa Bagong Pilipinas, walang puwang ang kasinungalingan.

Sama-sama tayong titindig sa katotohanan.

In this fight, we are the lighthouse keepers in the storm; that light that we keep must stay steady, even as the winds blow.

This is why the government initiated the Media and Information Literacy Campaign: to equip the public, youth especially, with skills to critically evaluate information that they consume and to help us fight misinformation and disinformation.

As we reflect on our struggle [for] truth, it is crucial to remember the journalists who have sacrificed their lives in this relentless pursuit: Percival “Percy Lapid” Mabasa, [Juan] “DJ Johnny Walker” Jumalon, Cresenciano Bundoquin, and many others.

These are not just names in a report; they are faces with families, colleagues, and communities that grieve their loss.

And yet, even as we mourn, let us find resolve.

All our efforts to bring them justice is a testament to [the] belief that no story, however dangerous, is too small or too insignificant to be told.

Be assured that we are doubling down on our commitment to protect our journalists and to uphold press freedom.

We stand with you, hand in hand in this fight.

Together, let us foster responsible journalism for we know that more than a democratic ideal; it is a necessity for an informed and an empowered citizenry to make the proper, intelligent, well-informed decisions about their leaders, about their situation, about their condition.

As we mark this golden milestone, I urge you to keep pushing the boundaries of what it means to be a journalist. Innovate. Adapt. But never compromise your principles.

This Administration is here to support you in shaping our narrative as a people, not just for today's headlines but for the history we are yet to create.

Let us continue to tell the stories that truly matter. Let us keep that light steady, no matter how fierce the storm.

Here's to fifty years of making a difference and to the many more chapters ahead.

Mabuhay ang PAPI!

Mabuhay ang malayang pamamahayag!

Maraming salamat po sa inyong lahat, at patuloy nating ipahayag at ipaglaban ang katotohanan.

Magandang gabi sa inyong lahat.

[applause]

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