



# Beyond Nostalgia

## Statement of the UP Diliman University Council on the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the EDSA People Power uprising

23 February 2026

Forty years ago, from February 22 to 25, 1986, more than a million Filipinos asserted a simple and enduring democratic truth: sovereignty resides in the people. The EDSA People Power uprising ended a dictatorship sustained by repression, patronage, and fear, thereby restoring democratic space that had been forcibly closed. University of the Philippines (UP) students, faculty, staff, and communities were at the forefront of this historic mobilization, following years of resistance to the Ferdinand Marcos dictatorship. Yet EDSA also remains an unfinished revolution because its work was never fully done. The fight against impunity, historical distortion, and elite capture did not cease when the dictator fled Malacañang.

Remembering EDSA requires clarity about what was defeated in 1986. Marcos 1.0 was not merely “strongman rule”; it was a system of plunder and coercion supported by domestic and international enablers. Today, we cannot be misled by the semblance of the state’s “anti-corruption crusade” that fails to hold the corrupt system’s architects and protectors accountable. Accountability cannot be selective against rivals while protective of allies and family members. The President bears command responsibility for the integrity of executive governance, public spending, and the enforcement of law—especially when allegations describe durable, system-wide mechanisms rather than isolated abuses.

In a democracy, serious allegations, especially those involving high-ranking officials, must be examined through credible processes, not dismissed through procedural shortcuts or political arithmetic. In recent weeks, the House of Representatives dismissed impeachment complaints against President Ferdinand Marcos, Jr., causing a one-year ban on further complaints. The swift dismissal deepens public cynicism and widens the gap between elite protection and popular calls for truth. Public discussion has also highlighted potential “smoking gun” evidence that requires full and independent review.

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Multiple impeachment complaints have again been filed against Vice President Sara Duterte. This University Council has **previously stated** that, when constitutionally initiated, the impeachment process requires good-faith adherence to due process. A pattern of stalled, invalid, or politically controlled proceedings, regardless of who is involved, suggests that holding high office is a shield from scrutiny.

In the spirit of the EDSA People Power uprising in its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the UP Diliman University Council affirms the following:

1. We recognize that People Power is needed more than ever to defend truth, rights, and the public interest.
2. We call for accountability without half-measures. Investigations into flood control and infrastructure corruption must be strengthened, insulated from political interference, and pursued to their logical conclusions—especially as recent resignations and setbacks have raised serious concerns about credibility.
3. We support structural democratic reforms that address the roots of elite capture, including laws on genuine anti-political dynasty and party-list reform to restore representation to marginalized groups.
4. We encourage the University of the Philippines community—faculty, students, staff, alumni, and partners—to participate in peaceful commemorations and protests on February 25, 2026. We also urge civil society and progressive opposition parties to continue working toward unity so that we can be stronger together.

Systemic corruption and compromised accountability reflect a deeper problem: a crisis of credible leadership and democratic legitimacy. People Power is therefore not nostalgia but a democratic necessity.

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