



Statement of the UP Diliman Committee on the Protection of Academic Freedom and Human Rights on the killing of University Student Council (USC) councilor Alyssa Alano in Negros

23 April 2026

The Committee on the Protection of Academic Freedom and Human Rights (CPAFHR) of UP Diliman condemns the killing of incumbent USC councilor Alyssa Alano, a political science student of the College of Social Sciences and Philosophy. Alyssa, along with 18 other individuals, was killed by the AFP, in what it reported as an hours-long clash with the New People's Army (NPA) on April 19, in Brgy. Salamanca, Toboso, Negros Occidental.

Alyssa was widely admired by her peers and teachers as a decisive student leader with a sharp, critical mind that discerned the structure of injustice perpetuating the deep poverty and oppression of the landless farmers and agricultural workers of Negros. She understood how work in the student council intersected with service to the basic masses that sustain the education of the Iskolar ng Bayan. Through her work with progressive organizations, she learned that violence waged to silence the voices of truth and enrich those in power must always be met with resistance. This is the enduring lesson that took her from the lecture halls of the University to the sugarcane fields of Negros, where the sakadas then became her teachers. She will also be remembered for her warmth, generosity, and infectious energy that inspired all who knew her to live more fully.

We cannot ever rejoice in the “triumph” of a state that maintains the dehumanization of the poorest Filipinos and then snuffs out our brightest lights—supposedly to protect us. But protect us from whom? Systemic injustice and inequality are the biggest threats to our freedoms and rights. As long as they remain, it is our responsibility to confront their reality, dismantle their mechanisms, and bring their perpetrators to justice. The root of decades-long suffering on the island of Negros is the exploitation of sugarcane workers by powerful hacienderos, heightened by counter-insurgency military operations that seek to suppress dissent and organization through manifold killings and human rights violations throughout history.



We call on the Philippine government to account for the death of Alyssa and the other Toboso killings, among them an alumna of UP Open University and a community journalist. We demand the conduct of a transparent and impartial investigation into their killings, and give human rights organizations and response teams access to information and resources in order to launch their own. The AFP's official narrative that they were combatants of the NPA must be challenged by fact-finding, especially since these narratives have historically been used to justify the killings of civilians in the province: activists, community organizers, human rights workers, and organized farmers such as the Sagay 9, massacred in 2018. As a non-combatant, Alyssa and her companions should have been secured by humanitarian law and protocol, even during active operations.

We enjoin our community in the University of the Philippines to honor Alyssa's life of service and call for accountability for her death. We mourn with her family, friends, teachers, and peers, and request everyone to support them at this difficult time.

We call on the state to divert public resources from a counter-insurgency campaign that does not begin to address the needs of our people for genuine social change, towards education, support for human rights, and pursuit of a peace truly founded on social justice. Our youth and activists are not the enemies of the people—it is the corrupt and the greedy who deserve our wrath and condemnation.

Our claim for justice for Alyssa should not just be lip service. Academic freedom empowers our students to critique and engage with urgent social realities. Its limits are not classroom walls or book pages, rather, it remains the active expression of the desire to change unjust systems, especially in places where these are most apparent. Alyssa's life is an example of the practice of this freedom for the good of others.

Justice for Alyssa Alano! Defend academic freedom and human rights!

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