



MESSAGE



As our nation commemorates today the 78th *Araw ng Kagitingan* (Day of Valor), we pay homage to the martyrdom of our gallant forebears – the soldiers and the guerrillas who bore the brunt of battles and paid the ultimate price of freedom, for our country and our race.

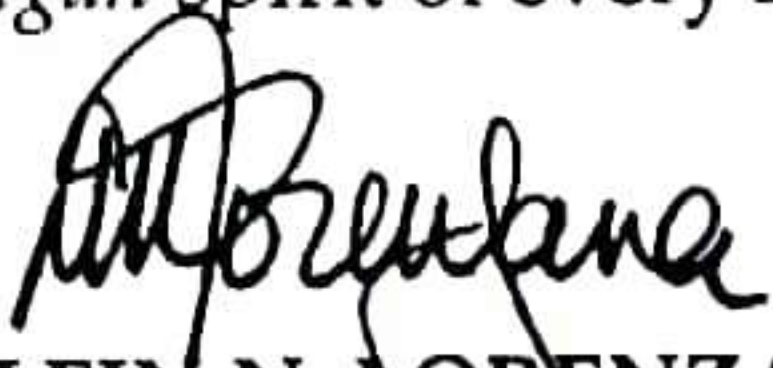
Many generations have since passed, yet the resilient and indomitable spirit known as *kagitingan* continues to pulsate in the veins of the Filipino people. For many times in recent history, our country was put to extreme test and it has always been this unconquerable faith that made us overcome all odds.

Today is no different. The Filipino people, together with the entire world, is fighting an invisible enemy that has already claimed thousands of lives all around the globe. The past few months have been rough and tough, but we continue to be courageous and hopeful because of our modern day heroes in the frontline, brandishing a brand of service that is beyond duty, totally selfless, and justly typifies valor.

As we thank our dear veterans, defenders, and patriots for blazing the trail of love for country, it is but fitting to likewise honor the valor of our front liners. We owe them so much for bearing the brunt of the crisis on our behalf. Just like us, they have families to protect in this time of fear and uncertainty, but they bravely opted to be out of their homes, fulfilling their patriotic duty of serving and protecting the Filipino people.

Now, more than ever, we see the glaring realization that nation-states cannot work in isolation anymore in dealing with non-traditional security challenges such as this pandemic. To put an end to COVID-19, it behooves upon countries to transcend beyond borders and differences to address this contagion in the soonest and most inclusive way possible. And this cooperation and collaboration should apply not only to the challenge at hand but to all present and emerging threats to humanity.

On our own as one nation, this is the best opportunity to manifest the unique Filipino spirit of *bayanihan*. Thankfully, we have seen the fruits of our cooperation in the past days and weeks, with the private sector pitching in. However, the crisis is far from over. We should therefore continue working together for everyone's safety and welfare. With the *kagitingan* spirit of every Filipino doing *bayanihan*, we will soon triumph and heal as one.


DELFIN N. LORENZANA
Secretary