

Role of Human Rights Desk Officers in the PNP's Transformation

Speech of
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ICOW Opening Ceremony Forum-Workshop for PNP Human Rights Desk Officers
July 15, 2010 Thursday 8:30 a.m. Eurotel, Bulacan St. cor North EDSA,
Quezon City (across SM North EDSA Annex)

(APPROPRIATE GREETINGS)

AT THE OUTSET, LET ME COMMEND THE PARTICIPANTS OF THIS FORUM-WORKSHOP FOR YOUR PROFESSIONALISM, COMPETENCY, AND COMMITMENT TO SERVE AS HUMAN RIGHTS DESK OFFICERS.

LET ME ALSO THANK OUR FRIENDS FROM **HANNS SEIDEL FOUNDATION** LED BY OUR GOOD FRIEND, **MR. PAUL SCHAEFER**, FOR THEIR UNTIRING EFFORTS AND FOR BEING A RELIABLE PARTNER IN HUMAN RIGHTS PROMOTION.

THIS MORNING, ALLOW ME TO SPEAK ABOUT THE CRUCIAL ROLE OF HUMAN RIGHTS DESK OFFICERS IN THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE.

BUT FIRST, ALLOW ME TO HIGHLIGHT THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS FORUM-WORKSHOP TO OUR ONGOING TRANSFORMATION EFFORTS. PROMOTING HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE PNP INCLUDES A DEMOCRATIZATION OF OUR PROCESSES. SINCE WE BEGAN OUR TRANSFORMATION PROGRAM, A NUMBER OF CONSULTATIONS HAVE BEEN MADE. THIS FORUM-WORKSHOP IS ONE SUCH CONSULTATION. OUR PURPOSE IS TO IDENTIFY AND DISCUSS WITH YOU THE VARIOUS ISSUES AND CONCERNS FACED BY OUR HUMAN RIGHTS DESKS. IN LINE WITH THE PRINCIPLE OF DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION, WE ALSO WANT OUR HUMAN RIGHTS DESK OFFICERS TO BE MORE INVOLVED IN FINDING SOLUTIONS TO THESE ISSUES AND CONCERNS.

ONE MAJOR CONCERN IS THE USUAL CRITICISMS ABOUT THE PNP'S HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD. WE WELCOME THESE CRITICISMS BECAUSE THESE ARE OPPORTUNITIES FOR US TO SELF-EXAMINE AND IMPROVE OUR POLICIES, PERSONNEL, PLANS, AND PROCESSES.

IN HIS SPEECH DURING THE COMMAND CONFERENCE YESTERDAY IN CAMP CRAME, DILG SECRETARY JESSE ROBREDO SAID THAT THE PNP MUST CONSTRUCTIVELY ENGAGE ITS CRITICS, IF IT WANTS TO REMAIN MISSION-EFFECTIVE AND RESPONSIVE TO ITS CLIENTELE.

THE SILG ALSO NOTED THE NEED FOR THE PNP TO TAKE ACTION ON MATTERS THAT INFLUENCE THE PUBLIC'S SENSE OF PEACE AND SECURITY, WHICH INCLUDES THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN THE COUNTRY. INDEED, SECRETARY ROBREDO WAS CORRECT WHEN HE SAID THAT ADDRESSING CRIME, TERRORISM AND HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES IS ALSO A "BATTLE FOR THE HEARTS AND MINDS" OF OUR PEOPLE.

WE ALSO REALIZE THAT THE INVESTIGATION AND ARREST OF SUSPECTS ARE NOT ENOUGH TO STOP UNEXPLAINED KILLINGS. WE MUST ALSO HAVE A STRONG PROSECUTION THAT LEADS TO THE CONVICTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATORS. WE AGREE WITH THE RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY **U.N. SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR PHILIP ALSTON** AND THE POSITION OF OUR COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS ON UNEXPLAINED KILLINGS.

WE WILL CONTINUE TO SEEK CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT IN PASSING A LAW THAT WOULD DEFINE EXTRALEGAL KILLINGS, INCLUDING VERY STIFF PENALTIES FOR SUCH CRIMES.

I ALSO BELIEVE THERE IS STILL A NEED TO RENEW OUR MINDS --- ESPECIALLY ABOUT THE ISSUE OF HUMAN RIGHTS. ONE CLEAR CHALLENGE BEFORE US IS THE NEED TO BUILD A CULTURE OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE PNP, AND IN THE ENTIRE SECURITY SECTOR.

IT IS HIGH TIME TO CHANGE OUR PERCEPTION AND EMBRACE A MORE INFORMED AND ENLIGHTENED UNDERSTANDING ABOUT THE ESSENCE OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN LAW ENFORCEMENT.

ONE OF THE CRUCIAL ROLES OF HUMAN RIGHTS DESK OFFICERS IS TO ADVOCATE AND INFORM OTHER POLICE OFFICERS ABOUT THE ESSENCE OF HUMAN RIGHTS. VIEWED IN THE PROPER PERSPECTIVE, UPHOLDING HUMAN RIGHTS IS ESSENTIALLY ABOUT PROFESSIONALISM AND COMPETENCY IN LAW ENFORCEMENT.

WITH PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCY, WE CAN AVOID OPERATIONAL LAPSES. WITH PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCY, WE DO NOT NEED TO TAKE “SHORTCUTS” IN OUR WORK BECAUSE OUR KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS ARE SUFFICIENT TO SOLVE A CRIME OR ACCOMPLISH A MISSION.

THROUGH THE PNP HUMAN RIGHTS AFFAIRS OFFICE, WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO ISSUE NEW POLICIES, PROVIDE CAPACITY BUILDING, PREVENT ABUSE, AND IMPROVE OUR COOPERATION WITH VARIOUS SECTORS IN PROMOTING HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE PNP. THROUGH THE PROGRAM OR LOI PAMANA, THE TASK OF DEEPENING HUMAN RIGHTS AWARENESS IN THE PNP HAS NEVER BEEN AS FOCUSED AND SUSTAINED AS IT IS TODAY.

ASIDE FROM HUMAN RIGHTS PROMOTION, OTHER ASPECTS OF OUR TRANSFORMATION PROGRAM ARE ALSO GAINING GROUND. THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE PNP’S CAPABILITIES TO **“MOVE, SHOOT, COMMUNICATE, AND INVESTIGATE”** ARE STILL ON-GOING. WE HAVE ALSO BEGUN THE PROCESS OF **ISO CERTIFICATION** STARTING WITH THE OFFICE OF THE CHIEF, PNP.

SEEKING ISO CERTIFICATION IS ABOUT MAKING OUR ORGANIZATION MORE CONSCIOUS ABOUT QUALITY AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION. THE IMPROVEMENTS IN OUR SERVICE DELIVERY HAVE ALSO BEEN VALIDATED BY THE IMPROVED PUBLIC TRUST RATINGS OF THE PNP.

HOWEVER, OUR EFFORTS TO TRANSFORM THE PNP CANNOT BE SUSTAINED WITHOUT THE SUPPORT AND HARD WORK OF OUR PERSONNEL IN THE FIELD, WHICH INCLUDES OUR HUMAN RIGHTS DESK OFFICERS.

REFORM INITIATIVES AT NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS WILL ONLY SUCCEED IF THOSE REFORMS ARE CARRIED OUT WHERE IT MATTERS MOST --- IN OUR FRONTLINE UNITS.

OUR PEOPLE WILL ONLY BELIEVE AND SUPPORT OUR TRANSFORMATION PROGRAM IF THEY SEE, HEAR, FEEL, AND EXPERIENCE QUALITY, RIGHTS-BASED POLICE SERVICES.

MOST OF YOU WORK BEHIND THE SCENES, FAR FROM THE LIMELIGHT, USUALLY UNNOTICED, AND RARELY THANKED FOR YOUR EFFORTS AND SACRIFICE.

BUT I WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT YOUR LABORS TO SERVE AND PROTECT OUR PEOPLE, INCLUDING THEIR RIGHTS UNDER THE LAW, WILL POSITIVELY IMPACT THIS GENERATION AND THE OTHERS TO COME.

INDEED, REFORMS IN THE PNP AND IN THE SECURITY SECTOR AS A WHOLE MUST GO BEYOND POLICY DEVELOPMENT, CAPACITY BUILDING, AND INVESTMENTS IN TECHNOLOGY, EQUIPMENT, AND FACILITIES. LET US BE REMINDED THAT EVEN OTHER POLICE ORGANIZATIONS IN MORE ADVANCED COUNTRIES CANNOT CLAIM 100 PERCENT COMPLIANCE WITH HUMAN RIGHTS STANDARDS DESPITE THEIR ENORMOUS RESOURCES.

CLEARLY, THE SOLUTIONS TO OUR PEACE AND HUMAN RIGHTS CHALLENGES WOULD NOT BE COMPLETE WITHOUT MORAL, CULTURAL, AND SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION. AS WE OFTEN SAY IN THE PNP, THE HEART OF TRANSFORMATION IS THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE HEART.

ALL THE CHANGES WE SEEK CANNOT BE ATTAINED OVERNIGHT. WHILE WE HAVE ALREADY ATTAINED MANY MILESTONES IN OUR TRANSFORMATION PROGRAM, THERE IS STILL MUCH WORK TO BE DONE. I TRUST THAT OUR HUMAN RIGHTS DESKS OFFICERS WILL DO THEIR PART IN PUSHING FOR MORE GENUINE, LASTING TRANSFORMATION.

IN CLOSING, I URGE ALL HUMAN RIGHTS DESK OFFICERS TO CONTINUE YOUR SINCERE EFFORTS TO MAINSTREAM HUMAN RIGHTS STANDARDS IN OUR OFFICES AND POLICE STATIONS.

LET US REMEMBER: **“TO SERVE AND PROTECT IS UPHOLDING HUMAN RIGHTS THROUGH COMPETENCY AND PROFESSIONALISM.”**

THANK YOU!
