

Press Release

Ombudsman Morales penalizes 21 PNP officers over Davao Death Squad

29 March 2012

OMBUDSMAN Conchita Carpio Morales has penalized 21 high-ranking officers of the Philippine National Police (PNP) arising from the unabated killings in Davao City in the recent years attributed to the "Davao Death Squad (DDS)".

Found guilty of Simple Neglect of Duty, for which they were meted the penalty of fine equivalent to one month salary, were P/SSUPT Catalino Cuy, P/SSUPT Jaime Morente, P/CINSP Matthew Baccay, P/CINSP Filmore Escobal, P/CINSP Leandro Felonia, P/CINSP Marvin Manuel Pepino, P/CINSP Ranulfo Cabanog, P/CINSP Vicente Danao, P/SUPT Harry Espela, P/SUPT Michael John Dubria, P/SUPT Rommil Mitra, P/SINSP Maximiano Atuel and P/SINSP Arnulfo Mahinay, both of the Davao City Police Office (DCPO).

Also fined were P/CINSP Alden Delvo, P/INSP Rolly Tropico, P/INSP Dionisio Abude, P/SINSP Antonio Alberio Jr., P/CINSP Juel Neil Salcedo, P/CINSP Joselito Loriza, P/CINSP Joel Neil Rojo and P/CINSP Napoleon Eguia.

Ombudsman Morales approved the Decision with modification as to penalty from one (1) month suspension to fine equivalent to one (1) month salary.

The case stemmed from a Letter-Complaint addressed to the Office of the Ombudsman sent by a person purporting to represent a group named Davao City Deserves Good Government Movement, claiming that a certain group known as the DDS was "responsible for the unsolved killings of more than 800 persons."

The same complaint alleged that high-ranking officers of the PNP were directly involved in the murders.

Records showed that from 2005 to 2008, the Davao City Police Office registered an unusually high number of unsolved killings.

The perpetrators of these executions were usually 2 motorcycle-riding gunmen and the killings were mostly drug-related.

The OMB-MOLEO fact-finding team reported that in 4 years, there were 720 persons murdered; 97 in 2005; 165 in 2006; 199 in 2007 and 259 in 2008.

A mere 321 or less than 50% of the cases, however, were solved.

The killings were repeatedly committed within the areas of jurisdiction of respondents' precincts where they were assigned.

"From the foregoing figures, it is evident that respondents were remiss in their duty to significantly reduce the number of killings," the Anti-Graft Office pointed out in its ruling.

"Also, the same shows that respondents failed to solve a substantial number, if not all, of the killings."

The Decision added: *"Under Executive Order No. 226 dated 17 February 1995, an officer of the Philippine National Police or that of any other law enforcement agency is held accountable for "Neglect of Duty" under the doctrine of "command responsibility" if he has knowledge that a crime or offense shall be committed, is being committed, or has been committed by his subordinates, or by others within his area of responsibility and, despite such knowledge, he did not take preventive or corrective action either before during, or immediately after its commission." ##*