

Real or imagined, all threats vs. Duterte taken seriously: Palace

MANILA -- Malacañang has hailed the decision of the Presidential Security Group (PSG) to place a bulletproof glass in front of President Rodrigo R. Duterte's podium as a security measure during a Partido Demokratiko Pilipino – Lakas ng Bayan (PDP-Laban) campaign rally in Malabon City on Tuesday night.

Presidential Spokesperson Salvador Panelo said whether reported threats are true or not, the President is bound by security protocols even though the President is unfazed by them.

"Whether the threats are real or imagined, we take them seriously and the Palace commends the PSG for doing a good job," Panelo said in a statement on Thursday.

PSG commander, Brig. Gen. Jose Eriel Niembra, earlier said the PSG implemented the security protocol during the Malabon event because "the activity was situated in an open area" and "multi-faceted threats" were possible.

Panelo explained that it is the duty of the PSG to provide the country's leader with the highest level of security protocols, including putting up a bulletproof glass panel "if it deems necessary."

He pointed out that even if the President wanted to have a close encounter with members of the audience, holding the highest position in the country automatically places him in a security bubble.

"There is also no denying that President Rodrigo Roa Duterte is a man of the masses and has made himself accessible to the public, and will do so at every opportunity. The man could not care less about these threats," Panelo said.

"PRRD is, however, bound by security pro-

ocols and, whether he likes it or not, these protocols are mandatorily attached to the position he holds," he added.

Panelo said it is no secret that there have always been threats against national leaders, especially Duterte who "has made enemies in all fronts when he declared a war against drugs, criminality, corruption and all forms of illegality."

"It is public knowledge that the Chief Executive has made many powerful enemies for spearheading this reform agenda in the two-and-a-half

MANILA – The Public Attorney's Office (PAO) on Thursday asked the Supreme Court (SC) to consolidate before one court the criminal and civil cases in connection with the deaths allegedly arising from the Dengvaxia anti-dengue vaccine.

In a 25-page suit, families of victims whose criminal complaints were among the initial batch of criminal cases ordered by the Department Justice (DOJ) filed before various courts with the help of the PAO asked the tribunal that the cases instead be transferred and consolidated before the Family Court of Quezon City.

The cases are now pending before the Quezon City Metropolitan Trial Court (MeTC); San Pedro, Laguna Municipal Trial Court (MTC); Muntinlupa City MeTC; Balanga, Bataan MTC; and Caloocan City MeTC.

The PAO also sought the designation of a special court under the Quezon City Regional Trial Court to hear and decide on Dengvaxia civil cases.

PAO chief Persida Rueda-Acosta said she sees more cases filed in the coming days and

years of his presidency," he said.

Meanwhile, Panelo also expressed gratitude to Filipinos who are able to grasp the idea of prioritizing the President's safety.

"We also thank the overwhelming majority of Filipinos who understand the complexities involved in protecting the President's welfare and show genuine concern on the security of PRRD," he said.

In his two-hour speech in Malabon City, Duterte said he had no control over the decision of the PSG to keep distance between him and the public.

informed the SC that the office has already identified 120 deaths in connection with Dengvaxia.

"Considering the declaration of Sanofi of the adverse effects of the Dengvaxia vaccine, there is a great probability that more deaths will occur in the succeeding days, thus, the filing of more cases involving death of Dengvaxia recipients is not remote," Acosta said.

"Neither undue advantage to nor prejudice to the substantial rights of any of the parties will result from joining the trial of the instant cases. On the contrary, all parties, both the prosecution and the defense, as well as the court, will benefit from conducting a joint trial as it will save them time, expense and hardship entailed in conducting multiple trials in various courts spread in three judicial regions, and in repeatedly presenting/evaluating witnesses and evidences intended to prove one and the same fact," she added.

About 833,000 schoolchildren from in-

"Pagka-Presidente ko, iba ang istilo at gusto nila distansiya at hindi makadikit (My presidency has a different style. They want some distance [between me and the people])," he said.

The 74-year-old, however, said that everyone will die at some point, if it is already their time.

"Pero palagay ko paman ang buhay ay swerte-swerte lang. Kung panahon ko na talaga, wala na akong magawa. (But I think life depends on luck. If it's my time to die, I can't do anything about it)," Duterte said. (PNA)

digent families underwent inoculation even as the vaccine was still under clinical trial phase 2 and without the appropriate screening and blood tests. Around 12,000 police officers were also vaccinated.

As of Wednesday, the PAO forensic team has already examined the cadavers of 129 Dengvaxia recipients who exhibited a common pattern of having had no clinical history of dengue infection except for one victim.

In all the deaths, the victims also had not been hospitalized prior to vaccination and became sick immediately after vaccination anywhere between a day after or up to three or four months and had to be hospitalized after complaining of headache, abdominal pain, fever, loss of appetite, rashes and difficulty of breathing.

The vaccine recipients died as early as seven days and up to 31 months after the vaccination of up to three doses of the Dengvaxia vaccine. (PNA)

CA affirms ex-TLRC exec's dismissal in PDAF scam

MANILA -- The Court of Appeals (CA) affirmed the dismissal from the service of the former deputy director general of the defunct Technology and Livelihood Resource Center (TLRC), for dishonesty and grave misconduct in the disbursement of PHP35 million in Priority Development Assistance Fund (PDAF) 12 years ago.

In a ruling dated March 29, the appellate court said it did not lose its jurisdiction to resolve the petition of Dennis Cunanan challenging his dismissal which was ordered by the Office of the Ombudsman in 2017.

Associate Justice Ruben Reynaldo G. Roxas wrote the ruling which was concurred in by Associate Justices Marlene Gonzales Sison and Victoria Isabel A. Paredes.

Three complaints were filed against Cunanan and other TLRC officials before the Ombudsman in connection with the disbursement of the PHP35 million PDAF of then Rep. Salacnib F. Baterina of Ilocos Sur.

Baterina wrote to then TLRC Director General Antonio Ortiz

and Cunanan designating the Philippine Social Development Foundation, Inc. (PSDFI) and Kaagapay Magpakailanpaman Foundation, Inc. (KMFI) as recipients of his PHP35 million PDAF in 2007.

After the signing of the memoranda for the projects, the former TLRC officers certified and signed the disbursement vouchers and other documents for the release of funds.

The Ombudsman's field investigation office (FIO) found that the TLRC officials participated directly in the projects through submission of requirements like project profile, fund utilization, project implementation and monitoring.

A Commission on Audit (COA) investigation bared showed that there were no documents submitted to substantiate the actual utilization and liquidation of the allocated funds, and the selected non-government organizations (NGOs) as recipients of the PDAF funds were not accredited by the TLRC before release of said funds.

The FIO also found that no training or livelihood projects were im-

plemented in the towns identified as recipients of the funds, and no farm inputs or livelihood materials were distributed to target beneficiaries.

"Being the Deputy Director General of TLRC, he ought to know that the mere endorsement of Congressman Baterina is insufficient to determine the implementing non-governmental organization. The lapses in his responsibilities also manifested when the COA discovered that the addresses provided by PSDFI and KMFI were dubious which he could have known had he conducted a verification of the documents submitted by the NGOs," the CA noted.

"These... failures on his part facilitated the release of public funds which caused serious damage and grave prejudice to the government. Furthermore, even if petitioner's acts were to be separated from the acts of the other officers of TLRC, he should be held liable for the offenses charged against him," it added.

Cunanan resigned from the TLRC in 2014. (PNA)

cially now that he is fighting drug syndicates, communist terrorists, and criminals.

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On Tuesday night, the PSG placed a bulletproof glass in front of Duterte's podium as a security measure during a Partido Demokratiko Pilipino – Lakas ng Bayan (PDP-Laban) campaign rally in Malabon City.

PSG commander, Brig. Gen. Jose Eriel Niembra,

No validated info on threats vs. PRRD: PNP

MANILA -- The Philippine National Police (PNP) said it has yet to receive any validated information on threats to the life of President Rodrigo R. Duterte.

"There is no validated death threat upon the life of PRRD. However, the PNP will always be vigilant and not let its guard down in providing area and perimeter security whenever he is out for speaking engagements, visitations or inspections," PNP spokesperson, Col. Bernard Banac, told reporters on Thursday.

Banac said the threats against the safety and security of the President is inherent to his job, espe-

cially now that he is fighting drug syndicates, communist terrorists, and criminals.

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