

Marcos camp asks for copy of PET report on poll protest

MANILA -- The lawyer of former Senator Ferdinand "Bongbong" R. Marcos Jr. is asking the Presidential Electoral Tribunal (PET) for copies of the reports on the three pilot provinces enumerated in his electoral protest against Vice President Maria Leonor "Leni" G. Robredo.

In an omnibus motion dated October 23, Marcos' counsel George Erwin M. Garcia moved for them to be allowed to photocopy the relevant reports on the revision and appreciation of votes relating to the three pilot protested provinces of Camarines Sur, Iloilo and Negros Oriental.

The motion also sought permission from the PET to be al-

lowed to defer the submission of the required comment on the report.

The Supreme Court, sitting as the PET, earlier directed the parties to submit a memorandum within 20 days starting from receipt containing, among others, their comments on the report on the revision and appreciation of the votes in the three pilot provinces.

The PET also required that the parties, in their comment, should indicate their position on whether or not the results in the revision and appreciation of votes rendered moot the other cause of action for an annulment of elections

Among the questions raised in the so-

called third cause of action which the tribunal wants the parties to answer is whether "will it be necessary to call for special elections for the position of vice president and if so, who has the competence to call for such elections".

"Considering that the photocopying of the reports has yet to commence, protestant Marcos is likewise constrained to move for the deferment of his deadline to submit his comments on the said reports on the revision and the appreciation of votes until the requested photocopying of the documents reports is granted and completed," Marcos' camp said in their pleading. (PNA)

Arayat slay suspects charged; PTFoMS shrugs off PH's 5th rank

MANILA -- Murder charges have been filed against three suspects in connection with the killing of journalist Jupiter Gonzales and his friend, Christopher Tiongson, the Presidential Task Force on Media Security (PTFoMS) reported on Tuesday.

PTFoMS Executive Director, Undersecretary Joel Sy Egco announced this latest development during the 67th anniversary of the National Press Club (NPC). Gonzales was a longtime member of the club, the largest group of working journalists in the country.

Citing a report from Police Lt. Col Dale Soliba, Chief of Police of Arayat, Pampanga, Egco said double murder charges have been filed before the Pampanga Prosecutors Office in San Fernando City on Oct. 28, docketed as Case No. III-12-INV-19J 01409, against primary suspect Armando Velasco, and his two accomplices -- Edgardo Cabrera and a 'John Doe'.

Presidential Communications Operations Office (PCOO) Secretary Martin Andanar, who is also PTFoMS co-chair, once again

lauded the PTFoMS staff, its agents and the local Philippine National Police for the quick resolution of the twin slays.

"I congratulate the PTFoMS, the PNP, and everyone who worked hard in accomplishing the mission this early. We are indeed very grateful for your work," said Andanar, who was NPC anniversary guest of honor and main speaker.

The announcement coincided with the release of the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) Global Impunity Index (GII) for 2019 report, which ranked the Philippines, again, as the 5th most dangerous for journalists, owing largely to the still unresolved Ampatuan Massacre case where 58 civilians, including 32 journalists, were killed in what would be known as the single deadliest attack on members of the media.

Expected CPJ report

Egco said the latest CPJ report was "expected", stressing that the massacre case, which is now nearing promulgation,

has been keeping the country on the list since 2009.

He, however, expressed strong confidence that by 2020, the country would be given a much-improved ranking.

"The CPJ report is not surprising and was actually expected. In fact, we have been anticipating that because for as long as the massacre case remains in the equation, following the methodology used by CPJ, we shall remain on that list," he said.

He added that the report covered a 10-year period from August 2009 to August this year.

"The massacre happened in November 2009. With great confidence, I could say that either way, once promulgated and the suspects convicted, come the next report period covering August 2010 up to August 2020, the massacre case will be out of the equation," Egco said. "Thus, we are looking at a much better and improved ranking for the Philippines."

At this time, he said, they are clarifying with CPJ some gray areas in their methodology, such as the

inclusion on their list of cases that were deemed not related to media work.

The recent CPJ report said: "The Philippines has been among the worst five countries nearly every year since the index was first published in 2008. The country's fifth-worst ranking is due in part to the deadly ambush of 58 individuals, including 32 journalists and media workers, in Ampatuan, Maguindanao, on November 23, 2009."

It added that while "the trial of over 100 suspects behind the massacre is due to conclude this year, as of August 31, 2019 — the final date CPJ counted convictions for this year's index — no verdict had been announced."

Egco said while it was unfortunate that one case, probably that of Kidapawan broadcaster Eduardo Dizon, was added to the 2018 list of unresolved cases in the country, the PTFoMS finds it "appalling" that the CPJ formula does not factor on sincere government efforts in holding perpetrators to account by running after and eventually filing charges against them.

"I have already established contact with CPJ Southeast Asia representative, Shawn Crispin, and raised our concern. There is something amiss in their

methodology such as that if state action would not be considered, and that's for all countries they cover, then they are not helping at all. Impunity, or even complete impunity, means there was no action taken at all in any particular state. And that is definitely not the case in the Philippines," he added.

As expected, the CPJ list remained on its 2018 level with Somalia, Syria, Iraq, South Sudan, and the Philippines still comprising the top five positions.

Meanwhile, Egco said the PTFoMS shall relentlessly act on all cases of violence, threats or murders of media workers.

The agency, he said, has effectively investigated, monitored and acted on every incident brought to it, including the filing of charges against suspects in both work-related and non-work-related deaths of journalists.

Come January 2020, the Task Force will embark on yearlong, countrywide safety seminars for media workers by competent security experts and professionals.

PTFoMS has also strengthened its engagements with both local and international stakeholders to include projects with UNESCO and the International Media Support (IMS), among others. (PNA)



GOV. JONVIC REACHED OUT TO CONSTITUENTS IN BACOR: About 289 families who lost their homes due to fire outbreak were gathered at Brgy. Talaba VII Covered Court for the distribution of calamity assistance while 3000 residents flocked at Brgy. Panapaan V Covered Court to participate in another session of Ugnayan sa Barangay on October 29, 2019 in the City of Bacoor. The program aims to hear out concerns of constituents in order to address their basic needs and assess their situations. The events were spearheaded by Governor Jonvic Remulla together with Mayor Lani Revilla and other local officials who delivered words of inspiration assuring them of the provincial government's support and offering solutions that might ease their burden. Partakers also received pack of rice in exchange of plastic bottles as part of the environmental and ecological projects being implemented by the local and the provincial government. --(PICAD)

2 senators want GMRC restored in basic educ curriculum

MANILA -- Two senators on Tuesday pushed for the inclusion of the teaching of Good Manners and Right Conduct (GMRC) and other character-building activities in the curriculum of the K to 12 program.

During a hearing of the Senate Committee on Basic Education, Arts and Culture, Senator Joel Villanueva said there is a clamor for the revival of the GMRC in the curriculum, considering the present realities "that we observe in our manner of conducting the affairs of the various aspects of our daily lives as Filipinos."

Villanueva said Senate Bill 860, also known as the Comprehensive Values Education Act, aims to educate the whole person as it seeks to teach students the practical and acceptable manners of conducting daily affairs according to universal norms of ethics and morality.

"This representation believes that Values Education is more comprehensive and more foundational than mere teaching of GMRC," Villanueva said in his sponsorship speech.

"Mr. Chairman, Values Education embraces the whole person. That's why our version of the bill recognizes that the present Values Education curriculum is incomplete; and it is for this reason that we propose the inclusion of the teaching of Good Manners and Right Conduct and of Character-Building Activities in Values Education curriculum," he added.

He said character-building activities are also necessary to provide students with actual opportunities "to practice, experience, test, and deepen whatever is taught and caught in the other aspects of learning".

"This may include immersions, exposures, outreach activities, and community service," he added.

Senator Sherwin Gatchalian, panel chair, also saw the need to restore the GMRC subject in the basic education curriculum, noting that it should also be given emphasis, just like the traditional subjects such as Math, Science, and English.