PNP NABS 132 FOREIGNERS IN GAMBLING DEBT-LINKED KIDNAP CASES

MANILA -- The Philippine National Police-Anti Kidnapping Group (PNP-AKG) has arrested 132 foreigners, mostly Chinese, in connection with gambling-related kidnapping cases in the country.

AKG spokesperson, Lt. Col. Elmer Cereno said that since 2017, 61 cases of casino-related kidnappings have been recorded. Arrested were 119 Chinese, two Malaysians, four Koreans and seven Filipinos.

Cereno said in the 61 cases they recorded, 57 Chinese nationals were rescued along with four Malaysians, three Koreans, one Vietnamese, Australian, Singaporean and an American.

He said there were 17 cases recorded in 2017, 16 in 2018 and 28 as of September 21, 2019.

Cereno attributed these to the rise in the number of hotel and casino leisure facilities in the Philippines, which eventually attracted many foreigners to the country.

"This invites syndicates with criminal mind, to involve in a wicked business of loan sharking inside the casino premises. Thus, incidents of kidnapping related to gambling debt, arises from 2017 to date," Cereno said.

He said casino junket operators, mostly Chinese nationals through their agents, would also look for their compatriots abroad, as part of their efforts to target them for their illegal schemes.

Earlier, AKG Director, Col. Jonnel Estomo said they are closely coordinating and liaising with their foreign counterparts, the Department of Justice, National Capital Regional Police Office, the Bureau of Immigration, NAIA management and other PNP territorial units regarding the incidents.

He said the AKG has partnered with the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation for the procurement of mobile communication/investigation van and also set a summit on casino debt-related kidnappings, aimed at forming an action plan to combat these crimes. (PNA)

'Ninja cop' syndicate 'a thing of the past': Palace

MANILA -- The "ninja cop" syndicate, or those involved in the recycling of seized illegal drugs, have been dismantled according to the Philippine National Police (PNP), Malacañang said on Thursday.

Presidential Spokesperson Salvador Panelo said PNP chief, Gen. Oscar Albayalde bared this after briefing President Rodrigo Duterte on the status of the campaign against illegal drugs.

"He (Albayalde) told me that he updated the President on the status of the drug war; he told him about the so-called ninja cops syndicate and revealed to the President that that ninja cops syndicate is a thing of the past – that happened during the previous years of the previous administration," Panelo said in a Palace briefing.

"That has been dismantled during the term of former PNP Chief General, now Senator Ronald dela Rosa and during his term," he added.

Panelo said while the ninja cop syndicate has been wiped out, police scalawags remain.

"If you are referring to the ninja cops that was a syndicate during the previous administration, yes. But we have police scalawags still involved in the drug thing," Panelo said.

He, meanwhile, maintained the difference between ninja cops and police scalawags with the former being part of a syndicate and the latter operating individually.

"Ang difference daw is iyong ninja cop is it was a syndicate; sindikato, kumbaga talagang may conspiracy, may mga link ang bawat isa (The difference is that ninja cops are part of a syndicate, in other words, they're part of a conspiracy, they have links against themselves)," Panelo said.

"Pero itong mga (But these) police scalawags, kaniya-kaniya...kumbaga mga individual cases, walang (operate individually, have individual cases, they don't have) conspiracy among themselves," he added.

The Palace official said Albayalde has assured Duterte that his agency has undertaken operations against these ninja cops which yielded 124 policemen killed during entrapments and a hundred others arrested.

Earlier, Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) director general Aaron Aquino said a total of 53 active police officers have been named ninja cops.

Aquino said the list of ninja cops came from Baguio City Mayor Benjamin Magalong, former chief of the PNP's Criminal Investigation Detection Group (CIDG).

Asked to comment on the difference between Albayalde and Aquino's conflicting statements, Panelo refused to take sides.

"I'm a messenger. That's the message," Panelo said, stressing that he was not dismissing Aquino's statement but merely relaying what Albayalde said.

Panelo said he personally believed Albayade for having "developed a reputation for a man of integrity." However, he also acknowledged that there were still some ninja cops left to wipe out.

He said the list of ninja cops has to be validated by the President himself.

"Hindi pa lahat validated iyon (They're not all validated yet). That's precisely why na kay Presidente eh (the list is with the President) so, the President will validate that on his own resources," Panelo said.

The Palace official vowed to make public a list of names of the police scalawags.

"I will provide you with the names because the PNP Chief committed to me that he will submit the names including those arrested," Panelo said.

Panelo said Albayalde did not mention whether Duterte had asked him about speculations on his involvement in the ninja cop syndicate but assured that the PNP chief still has Duterte's trust and confidence.

Should Albayalde be on the list of police scalawags, Panelo said there will be no sacred cows.

"Kahit na sinong kasama, kapag involved, tatanggalin ni Presidente iyon. Hindi lang tatanggalin – may (Anyone on the list, if involved, the President will dismiss him. Not just dismiss-there will be) criminal prosecution," Panelo said.

Anti-drugs drive succeeding

Panelo reiterated that despite police scalawags, Duterte's campaign against illegal drugs is "succeeding."

"We are succeeding in the war on drugs. The fact alone that can you imagine na (that there were) 124 policemen killed in entrapment operations – successful ka (that means you're successful)," Panelo said.

He said the PNP chief disclosed that his agency has dismantled PHP132-billion worth of shabu.

Asked to measure the extent of the police scalawag problem, Panelo said: "When even one policeman involved, it's serious."

Panelo, meanwhile, warned police officers from participating in illegal drug activities.

"If all members of the policemen are listening, huwag na kayong sumali doon sa 124 na napatay (don't be one of the 124 who has been killed). Sooner or later, you will be entrapped and you might end up dead if you fight and resist arrest," Panelo said.

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Prayer for Healing

JESUS, may Your pure and healthy blood circulate in my ailing organism, and may Your pure and healthy body transform my weak body, and may a healthy and vigorous life throb within me, if it is truly Your holy will. Amen.

O BLOOD AND WATER WHICH FLOWED OUT FROM THE HEART OF JESUS AS A FOUNTAIN OF MERCY FOR US, I TRUST IN YOU!

Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal One, Have Mercy on us and on the whole world. Amen.

3 O'CLOCK PRAYER

"You died Jesus, but the source of life flowed out for souls and the ocean of mercy opened up for the whole world. O Fountain of Life immeasurable Divine Mercy, cover the whole world and empty Yourself out upon us."

"O Blood and Water which flowed out from the heart of Jesus as a Fountain of Mercy for us, I trust in you!"

"Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal One have mercy on us and on the whole world." (3x) Amen.

Jesus, King of Mercy, I trust in you!

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