

Intel units to assist in re-arrest of freed convicts: Esperon

MANILA -- National Security Adviser Hermodenes C. Esperon Jr. on Thursday said the government's intelligence units will be working closely with law enforcers in going after the nearly 2,000 prisoners erroneously released through the misapplication of Republic Act 10592 or the Good Conduct Time Allowance (GCTA) law by

officials of the Bureau of Corrections (BuCor).

"Ang Pangulo, nag-utos sa Philippine National Police (PNP) na tumulong in 15 days kung gusto nila bumalik ay hahanapin na sila at ibabalik ng pilitan dun sa Bureau of Corrections. Tutulong diyan ang NBI (National Bureau of Investigation), tutulong dyan ang ating intelligence units at ang

tulong ng (Armed Forces of the Philippines) kung kailangan. (The President has ordered the PNP to take action and return the fugitives to the Bureau of Corrections in 15 days. The NBI will help along with intelligence units and the Armed Forces of the Philippines)," Esperon told reporters in an interview at the Quezon City Prosecutor's Office.

Esperon said these heinous crime convicts pose a threat to national security.

"So may impact sa national security dahil 'yung mga heinous crimes offenders na iyon maaari silang makasalanta sa publiko (It has national security implications because these heinous crime convicts may cause harm to the public).

Esperon added that the President's order only seeks to recover all these prisoners and scrutinize their records to determine who among them are actually qualified to an earlier release under the law.

Meanwhile, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) assured its readiness to assist other law enforcement agencies in carrying out the President's order.

were brought to the RSOU office for documentation and proper disposition.

Criminal complaints against the suspects, for violation of Republic Act 9208 or the

"We are here, ready to render assistance and give support to the DOJ, the PNP, and other relevant agencies of government when so requested. We are committed to ensuring that our communities are safe and that justice is served as this is in pursuit of our constitutional mandate of protecting the people and securing the state," AFP spokesperson Marine Brig. Gen. Edgard Arevalo said in a statement.

Justice Secretary Menardo Guevarra said he will designate an officer in charge to take over the Bureau of Corrections (BuCor) after the President fired its Director General Nicanor Faeldon over the controversy.

Guevarra added that the NBI and the police will take the lead in facilitating the orderly recovery of the released persons deprived of liberty. (with reports from Priam Nepomuceno/PNA)

Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003, as amended by RA 10364 also known as the Expanded Anti-Trafficking Act of 2012, were being prepared for filing in court. (PNA)

whoever is designated as officer-in-charge (OIC) should be able to handle the present crisis at the New Bilibid Prison (NBP).

Guevarra added that the OIC might come from within the BuCor but said a more permanent appointee might be an outsider.

"I hope when the President makes his permanent appointment, he will choose someone from the outside. Fresh blood will be infused to the BuCor. But for purposes of designating an OIC, it's got to be competent from the inside para alam na niya (so that he

DOJ to issue lookout order vs. heinous crime convicts

MANILA -- The Department of Justice (DOJ) is set to issue an Immigration Lookout Bulletin Order (ILBO) against nearly 2,000 heinous crime convicts who were freed early due to the Good Conduct Time Allowance (GCTA) law.

During the continuation of a Senate inquiry on the controversial implementation of the GCTA law on Thursday, Senator Panfilo Lacson asked Justice Secretary Menardo Guevarra if the department has already issued an ILBO against these former prisoners following President Rodrigo Duterte's order for them to surrender to authorities within 15 days.

Guevarra said the DOJ will forward the list of high-profile convicts to the Bureau of Immigration (BI) so it can be alerted against these individuals in any of the country's airports and seaports.

"We got the list of those PDLs (persons deprived of liberty) who were convicted of heinous crimes but were prematurely released on account of GCTA this morning," Guevarra said.

"We have forwarded it to the Bureau of Immigration for appropriate action. It is actu-

ally already knows) what's going on. Mahirap 'yung OIC mangangapa (It would be difficult if the OIC is not privy to the matter) at this very critical stage. We need somebody who is very knowledgeable," he said.

In a Senate hearing late Thursday, Yolanda Camelon, common-law wife of an inmate at the NBP, disclosed the "GCTA for sale" scheme allegedly being run by some prison officials. (PNA)

ally the Department of Justice that will issue the ILBO and that will be addressed to the Bureau of Immigration. We will look into that immediately this morning," he added.

A person subject to an ILBO can still leave the country subject to conditions and requirements, including clearance from the Justice department.

An ILBO is different from a court-issued hold departure order (HDO), since the former only directs the BI to be on the lookout for the subject and to verify the status of a case against the subject person and not to restrict an individual from leaving the country.

Duterte encouraged the 1,700 heinous crime convicts to surrender to the nearest police or military stations within 15 days after firing Bureau of Corrections (BuCor) chief Nicanor Faeldon for "disobeying" his order to prohibit their release.

"Lahat (nang) nakulong at na-release sa batas na ito (All those jailed and released under this law), 1,900 of you, you surrender and have yourself registered with the BuCor," Duterte said.

"I will give you 15 days liberty provided you make yourself available anytime that you will be called for investigation to have a recomputation or if there's an investigation of corruption that you cooperate fully," he added.

He said heinous crime convicts who have been released but refuse to surrender will be treated as fugitives.

According to BuCor data, a total of 1,914 heinous crime convicts were released over the years since the GCTA law was implemented in 2014. (PNA)

2 Chinese nabbed for trafficking; 6 Vietnamese women rescued

MANILA -- Two Chinese nationals were arrested while six Vietnamese women were rescued in an operation in Makati City, the National Capital Region Police Office (NCR-PO) said on Thursday.

NCRPO head Maj. Gen. Guillermo Eleazar identified the suspects as Kuang Meiting and Li Xuemei, both Chinese nationals, who were arrested by the NCR-PO's Regional Special Operations Unit (RSOU), together with the Women and Children Protection Division- Regional Investigation and Detective Management Division and Makati Police Station, in an anti-trafficking entrapment and rescue operations at Avida Asten Tower 2 in Barangay San Antonio around 10 p.m. Wednesday.

The victims were identified as Nguyen Thi Thuy Trang, Nguyen Thi Truc Ly, Vo Thi Ngoc Tu, Nguyen Thi Diem Phuong, Nguyen Thi Trang, and Nguyen Thi Tham.

Eleazar said the operation stemmed from the information of a tipster regarding the rampant proliferation of prostitution activities involving foreign nationals in the said address.

"Itong pagdami ng mga foreigners ay dapat na natse-check natin upang hindi magkaroon ng mga iba pang krimen na nangyayari lalo na kung ito ay involving the victimization of women, not necessarily na mga Pilipina pero gayon din naman ng mga foreigners na dinadala dito para maging (We must check the influx of foreigners here so we can avoid other crimes, especially where women fall as victims, not necessarily Filipinos but as well as foreigners who were lured here to become sex slaves," the Metro Manila top cop said.

Case records showed that the suspects' operation is based on Internet application, wherein clients are being lured to avail of sexual services. Based on their promotion, there are Vietnamese, Chinese, and Malaysian ladies being trafficked.

Further investigation revealed that there was a room in the condominium called as "show-up room", where clients can choose among the ladies.

They also have an option to use the three available rooms in the condominium or bring the ladies somewhere else.

Eleazar said the Vietnamese women

are using tourist visas and they will be turned over to the social workers of Makati Police Station or the local government unit for appropriate disposition.

"Our coordinators will be coordinating with Vietnamese Embassy para maibalik sila sa kanilang bansa (so they can return to their country), according to the existing laws in the country," said Eleazar.

The arrested suspects and confiscated pieces of evidence

DOJ to probe 'GCTA for sale' in Bilibid

MANILA -- Justice Secretary Menardo Guevarra on Friday confirmed that an investigation would be undertaken on possible irregularities in the computation of good conduct time allowance (GCTA) on the prisoners' remaining sentences.

In a chance interview, Guevarra said he believes such anomalies happen inside the Bureau of Corrections (BuCor) but noted that an investigation will come only after the Senate has concluded its own legislative inquiry.

"It's still in the Sen-

ate. So, further investigation is being done to validate the existence of the so-called GCTA for sale. I do not have the facts before me but I tend to believe that is a very real possibility," he said.

"(D)efinitely. That (GCTA irregularities) will be part of the investigation because after we have completed the guidelines or even before that, I intend to conduct an inquiry into what's going on at the BuCor in connection with the GCTA allowances," Guevarra said.

The DOJ, he said, will screen names and