

Palace won't meddle in internal affairs of Senate—Golez

MALACANANG said last April 23 that it respects the calls made by Sen. Miriam Defensor Santiago for her colleagues running for the presidency in the 2010 election to take a leave of absence from the Senate ethics committee.

But Deputy Presidential Spokesman Anthony Golez said the Palace does not and will not "meddle in the internal affairs of the Senate."

Asked whether the Palace welcomes a new ally in the House of Representatives in the person of Ms. Maria Lourdes Arroyo, a sister of First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo, Golez said he checked the name of the nominee of the party-list Ang Kasangga which turned out to be Gaspar Gamban, not Ms. Arroyo.

On whether Ms. Arroyo was already sworn in as member of the House by the Commission on Election (Comelec), Golez said he has no information on the matter.

He said the leadership of the House was asking for more time to coordinate with the Supreme Court on the implementation of the court's ruling on the additional members of the House from the ranks of the party-list.

"Nevertheless, if somebody wins an election in a party-list system or as an individual, then that person would have all the rights based on our Constitution to function as what the position would dictate her to do," Golez said.

Reacting to the claim that retired Gen. Jovito Palparan and Ms. Arroyo are not qualified as sectoral representatives because they do not come from the marginalized sectors, Golez said the "reason the two ran for the position was that they felt they were representing a certain sector of society or a certain segment of the population and it is not in our mandate to judge if they represent a certain organization or not." (PND)

Failon opens house to NBI probers only

Condition: Ocular inspection off-limits to media

by JEANNETTE ANDRADE & NANCY C. CARVAJAL
Inquirer.net

ABS-CBN news anchor Ted Failon Thursday, April 23, opened his Quezon City home to agents of the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) looking into last week's mysterious shooting of his wife—on the condition that their ocular inspection be off-limits to the press.

This was according to an NBI official who on Thursday, April 23, also disclosed that Failon had denied the agency's request for a third autopsy to be performed on his late spouse Trinidad Etong.

"He (Failon) only requested that our agents go there minus the media," lawyer Ric Diaz, NBI spokesperson in connection with the probe, told reporters.

An NBI team went to Failon's home in Tierra Pura subdivision and the widower was "very cooperative" during the inspection,

Diaz said.

No to 3rd autopsy

"For the record, we requested for another autopsy but we were denied," he added. An NBI team went to the Arlington Funeral Homes to seek Failon's permission to examine the body a day before Etong's remains were cremated.

In turning down the request, Failon maintained that the earlier autopsies conducted by the Philippine National Police and Dr. Rachel Fortun, a private forensics

expert, were "already sufficient," according to Diaz.

The NBI took over the investigation on Monday, April 22, after members of the Quezon City Police District drew criticism for applying excessive force when they arrested Failon's sister-in-law and other members of his household last week on charges of obstruction of justice.

The QCPD has so far sent its case reports and other documents to the bureau, but has yet to turn over the handgun, the slug, and the clothes Etong was wearing when she was rushed to the New Era General Hospital, Diaz said.

Also Thursday, April 23, the QCPD said it would appeal the suspension of the six officials who carried out the arrests and who were later cited by the National Police Commission for grave misconduct.

Just doing job

"We believe the police officials just did their job, but in the mean-

time, orders had to be obeyed," QCPD spokesperson Chief Insp. Dorothy Du told reporters.

Slapped with a 30-day preventive suspension were Criminal Investigation and Detection Unit (CIDU) head Supt. Franklin Moises Mabanag, his deputy Supt. Gerardo Ratuita, Station 3 commander Supt. Marcelino Pedrozo, Chief Insp. Roberto Razon, Senior Police Officer 2 Jerry Abad and PO2 Joy Marcelo.

Du said the QCPD found it surprising that Abad and Marcelo were included in the suspension order even though the two investigators were not present during the arrests.

"They were officers (investigating) the case, not arresting officers," she explained.

The district headquarters has yet to receive Napolcom's suspension order in writing, but the officers have begun serving their suspension on April 20, the day it was announced by the commission, Du said. ■

Pilipino po tayo!

LAW OFFICES OF KENNETH U. REYES, P.C.

ATTORNEY-AT-LAW



Kenneth U. Reyes, Esq.

Law Offices of
Kenneth U. Reyes, P.C.
3699 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 700
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