

PDEA chief backs daytime

'Oplan Tokhang'

Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) director

general Aaron Aquino is supporting the move for an "Oplan Tokhang" held only during daytime to avoid "misencounters."

"It's good that they are reviewing the program. Hopefully we can have better coordination in the conduct of drug operations. I think it's better to do it in the daytime because we are preventing misencounters and armed encounters during implementation," he said of the new guidelines.

Aquino led yesterday the incineration of 119.51 kilos of methamphetamine, cocaine, marijuana and other illegal drugs – worth P563.46 million – at the Clean Leaf International Corp. in Barangay Maysilo, Malabon.

He said in an interview that the conduct of daytime operations would eliminate possible cases of "misconduct"

by policemen amid allegations of abuses during the previous *Tokhang*, where thousands were reportedly killed after allegedly choosing to fight it out with authorities.

For the Commission on Human Rights (CHR), it would be a lot better if police operatives would be required, and not just encouraged, to use body cameras during anti-illegal drug operations.

CHR spokesperson Jacqueline de Guia said that the Philippine National Police (PNP) should provide the funds needed for the proposal.

"We hope that the use of bodycams will not be merely encouraged but required and budgetary support for this is amply provided since it allows for transparency and openness in police operations," she said in a statement

"With the revised guidelines, strict and

actual adherence to the provisions providing for observance of human rights and the rule of law must be ensured whether it is done at daytime or nighttime," De Guia added.

PNP chief Director General Ronald dela Rosa recently issued a memorandum prescribing the supplemental guidelines in the implementation of the war on drugs, which includes the ban on the conduct of operations during nighttime and weekends, as well as the recommendation on the use of body cameras when available.

In her statement, De Guia also raised concern over the provision that allows on-the-spot inquest proceedings during operations that result in death of drug personalities.

"The provision relating to inquest is vague and unclear because, if it pertains to the drug suspect, by virtue of his death, criminal liability is extinguished," she said.

The CHR earlier said that cases should be filed in courts against police officers who kill suspects during operations, saying the determination of self-defense should be made by the judge and not the prosecutors.

Meanwhile, the PDEA also reported seizing 6.89 kilos of shabu in Trece Martires City in Cavite on Wednesday after receiving a tip from the US embassy.

Aquino said recipients Mauricia de Padua and Suriong Taib were both charged for violating Republic Act 9165 or the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act although both denied knowing the contents of the packages, claiming that they were merely instructed to receive it.

He added that the drugs were shipped from the US by a certain Christian Lozano and Robert Gutierrez, both of California, to Philippine recipients Leonel Adriano and Romero Cruz of Trece Martires.

The Bureau of Customs turned over the boxes to PDEA agents for a "controlled delivery operation."

Aquino said they believed the drugs came from the Sinaloa Cartel, an international drug trafficking syndicate based in Mexico. – With Janvic Mateo, Emmanuel Tupas

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