

17,000 file COCs for barangay, SK polls

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More than 17,000 aspirants have filed their certificates of candidacy (COC) for the coming barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) elections, the Commission on Elections (Comelec) reported yesterday.

Comelec spokesman James Jimenez said on just the first day of filing, a total of 13,982 candidates listed up for the barangay elections while 3,499 filed their COCs for the SK polls.

Of the total barangay candidates, 1,986 are running for chief while 11,996 are seeking kagawad seats. A majority of 9,856 out of the total number of barangay candidates are males while 4,126 are females.

For the SK elections, 845 are running for chief while 2,654 are aspiring to become kagawad. More than half or 2,046 candidates are males as females accounted only for 1,453 of the aspirants.

Jimenez said they never expected a high turnout of candidates on the first day due to the common practice in previous years of aspirants listing up on the last day.

For his part, Interior and Local Government officer-in-charge Eduardo Año urged barangay officials dealing in drugs to do the county a favor and desist from running.

Año underscored the importance of electing barangay officials who have no involvement in illegal drugs because they will head the Barangay Anti-Drug Abuse Councils in their respective localities.

“Don’t use public office to cover up your involvement in the narco trade. Don’t corrupt public funds for your crimes, not under the watch of President Duterte, not under my watch in the DILG,” he added.

“How can one have the moral authority to spearhead the drive against illegal drugs in their barangays if they themselves are tagged as protectors, financiers or users?” Año added.

As this developed, the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) reported that election-related violence was on a downtrend since 2010, indicating the May 14 elections would be relatively peaceful.

Meanwhile, the Philippine National Police (PNP) is now monitoring areas where conflict may arise, assuring residents that more police officers would be deployed to thwart an outbreak of violence during the election period.

DILG assistant secretary and spokesman Jonathan Malaya expected greater military and police presence in Mindanao, which is under martial law.

The PNP has released guidelines and procedures for a secure and fair synchronized elections, which seek to provide a comprehensive security coverage in partnership with the Comelec, Armed Forces of the Philippines and other government agencies. —