

Court sends 10 frat men to Manila jail

Victim's family 'very pleased' with Manila court's transfer order

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The accused in the September 2017 fatal hazing of University of Santo Tomas law freshman Horacio "Atio" Castillo III "cried" on Tuesday night after being informed of their transfer from the National Bureau of Investigation headquarters to the Manila City Jail. A Manila court judge ordered their transfer on Tuesday afternoon, hours after they appeared at her sala for arraignment.



The 10 members of Aegis Juris charged over the hazing death of University of Sto. Tomas (UST) law freshman Horacio "Atio" Castillo III broke down in tears upon learning they would be transferred to Manila City Jail from the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI). And hours before they left the bureau's headquarters on Wednesday afternoon, the group spent a few moments in silence and prayed.

"They all cried last night (Tuesday). They were surprised," a source privy to the transfer told Inquirer, adding that the detained fraternity brothers looked "restless and stressed." The group was informed by NBI agents shortly before 2 p.m. Tuesday about the court's commitment order moving them to the city jail.

Deferred arraignment

This was a few hours after their arraignment was deferred in the sala of Judge Marivic Balisi-Umali of Manila Regional Trial Court Branch 20.

Ordered transferred to the city jail were Arvin Balag, Ralph Trangia, Oliver John Audrey Onofre, Mhin Wei Chan, Danielle Hans Matthew Rodrigo, Joshua Joriel Macabali, Axel

Munro Hipe, Marcelino Bagtang, Robin Ramos and Jose Salamat.

They stand accused of violating the antihazing law in connection with the death of Castillo, 22.

The law student died after undergoing initiation rites in the wee hours of Sept. 17, 2017, at the Aegis Juris fraternity library in Sampaloc, Manila.

Instead of informing his family, members of the fraternity who were present at the hazing left his body on the street near a hospital and had another member—pretending to be a Good Samaritan—bring the victim to the emergency room.

Sparking public outrage, the death prompted a Senate investigation while the police investigation was still in progress.

Parents' request

The Department of Justice filed charges against 10 fraternity members in the Manila RTC, which ordered their arrest on March 22. The suspects surrendered to the NBI the next day, their parents asking the bureau to keep their sons in its custody pending a commitment order from the court.

In an interview on Tuesday, Castillo's mother Carmina welcomed the court order.

"We're very pleased with Manila court's decision. To start with, the NBI is not the place for them. The NBI is not their legal custodian. Their legal custodian is the BJMP (Bureau of Jail Management and Penology)," Carmina said, referring to the agency that oversees local jails that hold criminal suspects whose trials are still ongoing.

Pending motion

"We're happy that the case is moving," added Lorna Kapunan, the lawyer for the Castillo family.

Carmina noted that they have a pending motion in the Department of Justice seeking the inclusion of more Aegis Juris members in the charge sheet.

The family is also preparing another complaint to be filed in the Vatican against officials of UST, a Catholic university directly under the authority of the Holy See, for their "inaction" against the suspects during the police investigation, she added.