

PNP: Antirape campaign should be gender-blind

Cops to update anticriminality guidelines after 'victim-blaming' tips drew flak

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A day after the Angono police apologized for posting antirape tips that were regarded as putting the blame on victims, the Philippine National Police said it would be "updating" its anticriminality guidelines.

In a statement on Friday, Senior Supt. Benigno Durana, PNP spokesperson, said that while the Angono police had "good initiative" and "meant well," he cited the need for "gender-blind self-education" to become part of rape prevention campaigns.

"Both men and women ought to know that no means no, that rape is a serious crime, and that they can go to jail if they violate another person's human rights," he added.

According to Durana, "the updated rape prevention guidelines should include early education of male and female teenagers on rape as a crime, and raising awareness of newer and more dangerous date-rape drugs such as GHB, MDMA and ecstasy."

From July 2017 to June this year, the PNP recorded a total of 6,999 rape cases, although this was lower by 23.96 percent compared to the 9,204 cases recorded from July 2016 to June 2017.

Earlier, the Angono police took down the rape prevention tips posted on its official Facebook page following widespread criticism from netizens, women's groups and public officials at what they viewed as "victim-blaming."

Controversial tips

Among the tips perceived as laying the blame squarely on victims were the following: •

Don't wear short dresses. •

Don't walk by yourself in a dark place. •

If you're going on a date, don't drink alcohol.

Earlier this week, Sen. Risa Hontiveros pointed out that "clothes don't cause rape, rapists do."

"While the intention of the information material may be good, it promotes victim-blaming by asking women to conform to a particular way of dressing in order to be respected and avoid being raped," she said in a statement.

Educate the public

"Instead of 'teaching' women how to dress 'appropriately' and limit our choices, our police force should help in educating the public, especially men, that forcing themselves upon women is unacceptable and constitutes rape," she added.

Gabriela party-list Rep. Arlene Brosas also called the post a “classic case of victimblaming and gross misinformation on rape.”

In a statement, the Angono police said it only wanted women to avoid becoming victims of sexual assault.

“As they say, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure,” it added.

Supt. Ruben Piquero, Angono police chief, said the antirape post was lifted from leaflets being distributed by his men as part of their anticrime awareness program.