

## QC vice mayor bucks holding of SK election in October

Quezon City Vice Mayor Joy Belmonte has expressed her opposition to the scheduled October Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) polls, saying youth representation should not be subjected to the electoral process "in order to prevent young leaders from the temptations of traditional politics."

Interviewed by *The Tribune*, Belmonte clarified she has always been in favor of mandatory representation for the youth in policy making and governance in general, explaining the right to participation, along with the right to survival, development and protection, is among the rights of children they are pursuing in the QC Children's Code of 2012.

"However, the SK as it is currently structured is far from the ideal way through which we can properly represent our children and youth. These 15- to 17-year-olds who are still in school and with little or no experience in even managing their allowances simply do not have the psychological and emotional maturity to be held accountable for the SK budget of hundreds of thousands,

**By Arlie O. Calalo**

sometimes millions of pesos representing 10 percent of the barangay budget as mandated by the Local Government Code," she said.

In addition, the local SK Federation receives 2 percent of the 10 percent SK barangay budget. In a local government unit like Quezon City, this amount runs in the millions, the daughter of former mayor and now House Speaker Feliciano "Sonny" Belmonte said.

She added: "Many of the SKs seek guidance from their elders, many of whom fail to guide them properly; often they are used as pawns by those around them whom they look for advice to access the huge amounts of public funds representing the SK budget for personal gain."

The younger Belmonte believed the youth can still actively participate in governance and policy making through the mandatory involvement of youth-oriented non-government organizations in Barangay Development Councils or City Development Councils and Local Special Bodies in which their voices can be heard and their agenda can be pursued

without huge amounts of funds being involved.

We have managed to empower senior citizens, women's groups, LGBTs (lesbians, gays, bisexual and transgender) and PWDs (persons with disabilities) and other sectors in this way so why not the youth? In this case we can build on their idealism, promote volunteerism and mould genuine public servants and transformative leaders, according to the low-profile vice mayor.

Congress can have two options if it decides to deal with the issue. First, it can postpone the October SK polls but it would mean that the current SK would continue on a hold-over capacity until such time an election is held.

"However, Congress can also declare the office of the incumbent SK officials upon expiration of their terms," she explained.

The second option the Congress can do is to amend the LCG and abolish it, according to vice mayor who was gratified when she was allowed to air her view on the issue being the presiding officer of the city council wherein SK is a member.

SK - Sangguniang Kabataan

SK election

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SK election

# Suits simmer over QC youth council funds

BY JING VILLAMENTE REPORTER

**QUEZON CITY** Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) Federation Chairman John Ansell de Guzman of Barangay Socorro appears to be headed for trouble, as his colleagues accuse him of enriching himself with perks and remittances from every barangay youth council in the city.

De Guzman's co-officials at the city SK Federation on Monday said that they are about to file criminal and administrative charges before the Office of the Ombudsman and the Department of Interior

and Local Government for not disclosing the federation's financial status and book of accounts. They suspect the coffers are likely nearly empty because no proper disbursement procedures are in place.

Reniel John Perdido, SK chair of Barangay Krus na Ligas, who led the complaint said de Guzman and Dyke Bennica Pangan, the federation treasurer, who are mandated to call a general assembly once a year to report what had happened to every SK council's contribution to the federation since 2010, after assuming their office, only called a general assembly once that cost them over P700,000.

"That assembly was held even without a quorum, only about 60 youth council chairmen were able to attend out of the 142 barangays. All we want is for them to explain where are our funds went," Perdido said.

He disclosed that every youth council is mandated to remit an annual dues of 2 percent of their budget to the SK Federation led by de Guzman who in turn will also remit some percentage to the national federation.

Joederey Reyes, SK chairman of Barangay Commonwealth said his council's 2 percent annual dues amount to P142,000 but he has never remitted.

"Why should I remit when they don't remit to the remit to the national federation. So we use our funds for the young people in our barangay," Reyes said.

He added that De Guzman might also be slapped with 'double compensation' for still receiving his P16,000 salary as

SK chairman of his barangay and P50,000 wages for being an honorary member of the City Council as the SK Federation president.

Florence Ranario, who worked as district coordinator for District 1 at the office of de Guzman also revealed that she only received a monthly salary of P5,000 and learned later that her job order for that position pays a P13,000 monthly.

"We already have evidence that our signatures on the payroll were forged [*May mga ebidensiya na po kami forged ang aming mga signature sa payroll*]," Ranario revealed.

A resolution calling for an immediate general assembly ma<sup>2</sup>

by the SK Federation officials on June 23 was also ignored by de Guzman—prompting the group to request the LandBank branch at the city hall to release the group's statement of account to show transparency and accountability.

"As SK chair of our respective barangays who pay the annual dues, we believe that it is our right to know all the transactions involving the said budget. We also believe that we have the right to know when, how much and for what matters do the budget of SK Annual Dues Collection went to," the group told de Guzman in one of their letter calling the attention of their federation president.

SK Funds (Sangguniang Kabataan)

# TODAY METRO TODAY

2 SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 1999

## QC SK chairman murdered

A CHAIRMAN of the Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) was gunned down by two unidentified men riding tandem on a motorcycle while the victim was on his way home from a council meeting on Friday night in Quezon City.

Jonathan Dantes, 22, SK chairman of barangay Nagkaisang Nayon in Novaliches, Quezon City, suffered seven gunshot wounds and died on the way to the Novaliches General Hospital.

Police investigators said that Dantes, who was on board his Ford Pinto car with license plates CJJ 909, was already near his house at 22 Damong Maliit, barangay Nagkaisang Nayon, when two unidentified men who were wearing black jackets and ski masks and riding a motorcycle pulled beside the car and shot the victim several times.

A tricycle driver who witnessed the shooting said the suspects immediately fled the scene, leaving Dantes slumped and bloodied inside his car.

Police probers have recovered from the area two deformed slugs of a .45-caliber pistol.

Dantes's sister Vivian, 26, said the family is not sure who has a motive for killing the victim, but she hinted that local politics may be involved.

"He is a good man and we don't really know if he has any enemies," she told TODAY in a telephone interview.

She, however, pointed out that Jonathan had a "gap" with barangay chairman Angelito Mendoza in the past, adding she only learned recently that her brother had been receiving death threats from anonymous persons.

"*Pero masyadong malihim siya . Ayaw niyang paalam kahit nakaka-receive na siya ng death threats. Ang sasabihan niya sa amin, e huwag na lang ninyong pansinin iyan* [The victim is very secretive and don't want to tell them if he's in trouble]," she said.

She also cited an incident on Easter Sunday when unidentified men shot the SK hall located at the back of the barangay hall.

The SK leader reported the incident to the Department of the Interior and Local Government, but until now no suspect has been arrested, she added.

Jerry Peñaranda, executive officer of the Barangay Security Development Officer, said that minutes before the shooting, Dantes attended a session at the barangay hall regarding the cash gifts to be distributed to barangay officials.

Peñaranda said that Dantes even went to the office of barangay chairman Mendoza to bid him good-bye.

Minutes after leaving the hall, Peñaranda said a tricycle driver informed them of what happened to Dantes.

TODAY tried to get the comment of Mendoza but he was unavailable for interview.

D. Carcamo

\* QC - SK (Sangguniang Kabataan)

## Novaliches SK chair shot dead

RESIDENTS of Barangay Nagkaisang Nayon in Novaliches, Quezon City, lost their Sangguniang Kabataan chairperson Friday night.

Jonathan Dantes, 22, was reportedly gunned down at around 7:15 last Thursday a few blocks away from his place. He was onboard his Ford vehicle, with plate number CJJ-909 along Damong Maliit St., Barangay Nagkaisang Nayon, when two unidentified suspects on a motorcycle fired seven shots at him and immediately fled.

Dantes, who sustained seven gunshot wounds in his head and chest, was rushed to the Novaliches General Hospital but died before arrival.

Recovered in his car are two deformed slugs of .45 caliber pistol. Central Police District Officers are yet to determine the motives for the killing.

The Criminal Investigation Unit of the CPD is presently conducting a thorough investigation on the matter.

—*Iris Cecilia Gonzales*