

NCRPO declares Pasay, QC 'areas of concern'

THE National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO) declared the cities of Pasay and Quezon as election "areas of concern" following several incidents of gun violence directed at politicians.

NCRPO chief Guillermo Eleazar said on Tuesday that the death of *Barangay* (village) Chairman Crisell "Beng" Beltran prompted the agency to declare Quezon City as an area of concern.

The Metro police chief also cited recurring gun violence and politically motivated attacks on village officials in Pasay City.

"Five cities were [originally] declared areas of concern, but, eventually, they were reduced to two: Pasay and Quezon, because of the recent violence, the death of barangay chairman running for congressman; and then in Pasay," he said.

Eleazar explained that the Philippine National Police (PNP) found no reason to declare Pasay and Quezon

cities as "poll hotspots," which in turn would prompt the Commission on Elections (Comelec) to place the city or municipality under its jurisdiction.

An area may be considered as an "election hotspot" if there is history of intense partisan political rivalry and presence of politically motivated and election-related violence or threats from communist groups and private armed groups.

"Unlike other regions, the presence of local communist and terrorist groups and intense political rivalry are not endemic here in Metro Manila. That's why we don't have those kinds of problems," Eleazar said.

The NCRPO will deploy around 15,000 police personnel in different polling precincts in the metropolis during the elections on May 13.

The PNP and Armed Forces of the Philippines met with Comelec officials on Tuesday to finalize security measures for the May midterm elections.

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