

BELMONTE SEEKS PROBE OF MALL SUICIDE

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Quezon City Mayor **Josefina Belmonte** directed the city council to conduct an inquiry in aid of legislation on the suicide incident at a mall last January 25. Belmonte said **Councilors Irene Belmonte, Diorella Maria Sotto and Patrick Michael Vargas**, chairmen of the Committees on Education, Science and Technology; Health; and Infrastructure respectively, would lead the investigation into the second recorded case of adolescent suicide involving a 15-year-old student who jumped from the seventh floor of the mall. She said the investigation would focus on mental health issues among the youth and find means on how to address these.

The hearing is intended to craft policy and guidelines to prevent the occurrence of similar incidents, Belmonte said. “This includes the creation of crisis intervention units on-site to assist establishments in dealing with these types of situations,” she said. (We will look at the setup of the mall and building and on how we are going to enforce tight security so this incident would not happen again),” she said.

Aside from mall officials, to be invited to the inquiry are school officials and experts to get in sights on how to address adolescent mental health issues. Belmonte instructed the **City Health Department** to ensure that the necessary steps would be under taken to fully implement Ordinance SP-2456 S-2015, which provides for a community-based mental health program and delivery system.

She called on the public not to share the supposed video of the incident, saying they should be sensitive to the plight of the family of the victim. The victim, a Grade 9 student, entered the mall at 1:27 p.m. with friends last January 25. He last talked to his mother at 5:45 p.m.

According to his friends, they were separated from the victim, who went to the seventh floor of the mall’s parking building and took his life at 5:55 p.m. The victim was described by his class adviser as a responsible student, who wanted to make his parents proud.