

2 QC cops demoted over illegal arrest

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Two Quezon City policemen were demoted after they were found guilty of grave misconduct for unlawfully arresting a woman and searching her house without proper warrants last year.

Quezon City Mayor Joy Belmonte said the Quezon City People's Law Enforcement Board (PLEB) meted a one-rank demotion on Patrolmen Zaldy Mejos Jr. and Julie Boison.

The case stemmed from a complaint filed by a certain Marissa Torres who claimed that Mejos and Boison illegally searched her house and arrested her without proper warrants on Jan. 19, 2019. The two cops alleged they found in her possession a firearm and illegal drugs. Although Mejos and Boison denied the charges and argued that they received a report from a concerned citizen and used the plain view doctrine to enter Torres' house after noticing a nozzle of a supposed gun inside her store, the QC PLEB said warrantless arrest and search and seizure done by the respondent policemen "cannot be justified under the plain view doctrine."

In its decision, the PLEB said the "plain view doctrine applies when the discovery of evidence is inadvertent."

The PLEB ruled that Torres was "actually illegally and unlawfully arrested and her residence searched without a warrant."

"We have no agenda but to dispense justice. Constitutional rights are there to be upheld," PLEB Executive Officer lawyer Rafael Calinisan said.

He also called on lawmakers to pass a measure prohibiting the promotion of police officers with pending administrative cases.