



**CHILDREN'S REHABILITATION CENTER
NATIONAL OFFICE**

90 J. Bugallon St., Brgy. Bagumbuhay, Project 4, Quezon City 1109 Philippines

Telephone: (632) 913-9244/4391053

Email address: childrehabphilippines@yahoo.com.ph

Website: www.childrehabcenter.org

Fact Finding Mission Report

Children's Rehabilitation Center

February 19 - 20, 2020

The Children's Rehabilitation Center participated in a two-day fact finding mission along with Tanggol Magsasaka in response with the worsening cases of red-tagging, harassment and forcible surrender among members of PAMALAKAYA Paly Chapter and Pinagkaisang Lakas ng mga Okupante, Residente, Manggagawa, Magsasaka at Mangingisda (PLORMMM) in the Municipality of Taytay, Palawan. CRC specifically delegated on the mission with the objective to document cases of human rights violation among children.

The island Barangay of Paly is seemingly under a de facto martial law with the obvious presence of the military under the 3rd marine brigade. As per accounts of the residents, the military personnel has been present in the area before but has intensified last August 2019. The presence of the marine forces added with the strategical terrain of the island was further used as an instrument by the local government to further the red tagging and forcible surrender of locals who are members of the PAMALAKAYA.

Based on the narratives of the locals and youth, issues such as 1. Military presence inside the school premises, and 2. Arbitrary identification of people associated with the New People's Army, floated as their primary concerns that affects children in the community.

As per the reports of the locals, the marines freely enters and exits the school premises of the Paly National High School to perform civic military operations (ie.provide services among the students such as free haircuts, taekwondo trainings and film showings of videos vilifying legitimate organizations). This directly disregards and violates the national and international policies and agreements. Those policies and agreements includes RA 7610 Art. 10 Sec. 22 declaring Children as Schools of Peace and the Philippine being a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child (UNCRC) Art. 32.

Such gesture is putting the children in utmost danger as military personnel are subjected to attack anytime. On the other hand, children involved in any organization are also very vulnerable with the army's presence as red-tagging is eminent in the area.

Additionally, 18 individuals were accounted as victims of arbitrary identification for being associated with the New People's Army and children were not exempted from this. One victim of this was a high school student who was about to get a haircut and the military implied that he was part of the NPA because of the red scarf tied on his wrist. Apparently, the shallow basis on the red tagging of children



CHILDREN'S REHABILITATION CENTER
NATIONAL OFFICE

90 J. Bugallon St., Brgy. Bagumbuhay, Project 4, Quezon City 1109 Philippines

Telephone: (632) 913-9244/4391053

E-mail address: childrensphilippines@unicef.org

Website: www.childrenscenter.org

includes wearing of red scarf, on the wrist and holding of red flaglets. This has instigated fear on children especially those whose parents are continuously tagged for being a member of the said rebel group.

According to the 12 year old child of one of the PAMALAKAYA officials, she fears for her father's safety and security, and the thought of him being arrested anytime. The continuous red tagging to her parents affects the child's situation at school. She has experienced bullying from her peers which affects her self-esteem. The resurging thought of her father being arrested amplifies the fear of the child for the safety and security of her father.

Similar cases were also observed from the members of PLORMMM at Barangay Monte Vista. Members of the said organizations was visited in their abode by the members if the marines forcing them to clear their names through signing the affidavit the marines has drafted waiving their rights to associate with the organization after the organization's chair was arrested due to trump-up charges. This was mostly done to officers of the organization.

One highlighted case of this forcible surrender was inflicted to the PLORMMM's secretary's family last February 2019. The family was visited seven times by the marines at their house but was usually faced by their children for the couple usually works in the day. On the sixth visit, the family was threatened by the marines saying "*diba mahal ang ang mga anak mo?*", "*diba mahal mo ang asawa mo?*" as the father refuses to sign the affidavit. This was done in the presence of their children ages 15, 12, 10 and 3. Based on the narrative of the father, his child was shocked by the incident and has observed on the first week that their child seems frightened and frequently checks the outside of their house fearing of the return of the armed men in their house.

Recommendation:

- Create a resolution to be filed in the congress aiming to conduct an inquiry on the of civic military operations in the above-stated schools. (CRC)
- Provide the copy of the report to the UNICEF's and CTFMR to further verify and probe the militarization of the schools and community. (CRC)
- Explore possible partnership with the local government unit of Brgy. Paly, Taytay Palawan through extension of services or the like to serve as entry point in consolidating the area