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## UN 'expert' detached from reality: Medialdea

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Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea on Saturday rejected claims made by United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (IDPs) Victoria Tauli-Corpuz that the government has become “authoritarian” under the Duterte administration.

“The remarks of UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of the Indigenous Peoples Victoria Tauli-Corpuz show how detached she is with the realities happening in the Philippines,” Medialdea said in a statement.

He said democracy is “vibrant” in the country since all government branches continue to function.

“Democracy in the Philippines is vibrant and strong. All the branches of the government are functioning and the rule of law thrives,” Medialdea said.

He noted that the executive branch does not meddle with the affairs of the legislative and judicial branches, and that it “respects the separation of powers and the independence of the other co-equal branches.”

Speaking at the Human Rights Festival in Milan on March 25, Tauli-Corpuz claimed that the Duterte administration “has become very authoritarian” by filing an impeachment case against Supreme Court Chief Justice Maria Lourdes Sereno and having imprisoned one of its staunchest critics, Senator Leila de Lima.

The special rapporteur also appealed to Italian human rights groups to help “stop the fascism” in the Philippines.

Tauli-Corpuz was earlier tagged by the government as “terrorist” for being a member of the Communist Party of the Philippines’ (CPP) Ilocos-Cordillera Regional Committee (ICRC).

She is on the list of 600 members of the CPP-New People’s Army (NPA) that the Department of Justice wanted the court to declare as terrorists.

Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque earlier assured that the tag was not a witch hunt. (*PNA*)