

Media mileage replaces justice

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DU30'S CRITICS ASSAULT RIFLE

It's awkward, if not rude, hearing a Filipino lashing out at the government before a foreign audience that has little knowledge of the real deal in the country under the Duterte presidency. Such coarse manners have become too common amid the unrelenting attack on Rody whom the hypocritical mob of his critics wants to oust and lately these have been coming from Filipino nominees of the United Nations (UN) whom the government tagged

among those who have strong links to the communist movement.

The government has named 600 individuals whom it wants tagged as terrorists and covered by the Human Security Act to strip away their legal covers while promoting their radical causes.

Reminiscent of similar anti-Duterte presentations in a rights forum outside of the country that gives the critics instant recognition for talking against the current government leadership, United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (IDPs) Victoria Tauli-Corpuz said the administration of Rody has become "authoritarian" and repressive.

Corpuz spoke before the Human Rights Festival in Milan last March 25 where she claimed that the Duterte administration "has become very authoritarian" citing the filing of an impeachment case against Supreme Court Chief Justice Maria Lourdes Sereno and the detention of Sen. Leila de Lima, this statement, in itself, is biased, as Corpuz is mouthing the same communist line.

Corpuz also sent out a plea for rights groups worldwide to help "stop the fascism" in the Philippines.

"(The Duterte administration) controls the parliament. It filed an impeachment case against the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. It has imprisoned another woman who is a senator. So it's going against the different institutions, government branches that should balance the executive," Corpuz said.

Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea branded as unfair the comment of Corpuz saying she is "detached from the realities happening in the Philippines."

Medialdea added the executive branch respects the separation of powers and the independence of the other co-equal branches and doesn't meddle in the affairs of the other institutions.

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).

In an earlier interview, she said that her life was in danger as a result of the terrorist tag on her.

The basis of the inclusion of Corpuz in the list, however, was conveniently lost in the condemnation of the terrorist tag on the 600 names that Justice Secretary Vitaliano Aguirre submitted to the court. Aguirre said those in the list should just challenge the Department of Justice (DoJ)'s move before

the court.

He said the list was a product of research and evidence supplied by police authorities and intelligence agencies.

If Corpuz and others in the list want to challenge the DoJ's action then they should answer the petition before the court instead of through the media," Aguirre told reporters.

Corpuz founded the indigenous peoples advocacy and research group, Tebtebba Inc. and helped draft the Declaration on the Rights of the Indigenous Peoples which was adopted by the United Nations in 2007.

The DoJ has asked the Manila regional trial court (RTC) to issue an order declaring CPP and the NPA also known as the Bagong Hukbong Bayan, as terrorist and outlawed organizations, associations or group of persons pursuant to the Human Security Act of 2007.

The DoJ's argument is that the CPP-New People's Army (NPA) groups are buying time by deceiving the government in entering into peace talks while consolidating forces to pursue what the communist movement terms as "people's war" to overthrow the government.

President Duterte earlier signed a proclamation formally designating the CPP-NPA as a terrorist organization.

The government needs the court to declare the communist movement as part of terrorist groups in the country for the CPP-NPA to be covered by the Human Security Act and thus cut the financing flowing to the armed movement.

Such a court action will also enable law enforcement agencies to run after individuals who will provide financial support to the NPA.

Corpuz may or may not have reason for contesting the DoJ inclusion of her name in the terror list which she should be capable of disputing considering the media mileage that she has thus far attained.

Critics of Rody, however, seem to prefer to reply to the allegations against them through media and forums and hope at the same time to stir up emotions in the process.