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Malacañang rejects 'authoritarian' tag: Rule of law 'thrives' in PH

Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea says UN Special Rapporteur Victoria Tauli-Corpuz is 'detached with the realities happening in the Philippines'

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AUTHORITARIAN? After the government sought to declare her a terrorist, the UN Special Rapporteur Victoria Tauli-Corpuz calls the Duterte administration authoritarian. File photo by Orlando Sierra/AFP

MANILA, Philippines – Malacañang said on Saturday, March 31, that rule of law "thrives" in the country, as it rejected a comment from a United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur that the Philippine government, under President Rodrigo Duterte, has become authoritarian.

"Democracy in the Philippines is vibrant and strong. All the branches of the government are functioning and the rule of law thrives," Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea said in a statement on Saturday.

Malacañang was responding to the statement of [Victoria Tauli-Corpuz](#), United Nations or UN's Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples, who is among the hundreds of people the Duterte administration wants officially tagged as terrorists under the Human Security Act.

Corpuz said at a human rights event in Milan, Italy, that "the new government has become very authoritarian."

"It 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, according to [an ABS-CBN report](#).

Medialdea said the comment shows Corpuz is "detached with the realities happening in the Philippines."

"The executive branch respects the separation of powers and the independence of the other co-equal branches and doesn't meddle with their affairs," Medialdea said.

Corpuz is among the [649 people](#) that the Philippine government wants to declare as terrorists in a petition now pending before the Manila Regional Trial Court (RTC). (READ: [Malacañang on Corpuz' terrorist tag: UN must carefully select rapporteurs](#))

The Department of Justice filed the petition against communists after the Duterte administration terminated [what was once a promising peace process](#) with Asia's longest-running insurgents.

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Human rights groups have slammed the petition as a "virtual hit list." – **Rappler.com**