

2 CHINESE NABBED FOR KIDNAPPING OVER GAMBLING DEBTS

MANILA -- Anti-kidnapping operatives of the Philippine National Police (PNP) have arrested two Chinese na

Lt. Col. Villaflor Banawagan, Luzon field unit commander of Anti-Kidnapping Group (AKG), on Thursday identified the suspects as Wan Renhong and Wan Liang, who were members of a loan shark syndicate.

Citing the affidavit of

the victim named Wang Hong, Banawagan said the victim lost in a gambling spree on December 4 and got a loan worth PHP1 million with 15-percent interest.

While the victim checked in a hotel at Parañaque City on December 8, the kidnapers warned that he would be killed if he could not pay his loan.

The victim, who

was detained, managed to report the incident to his friend who later reported to the police which led to his rescue and the arrest of the suspects on Tuesday night.

The suspects are facing kidnapping for ransom with serious illegal detention after undergoing inquest proceedings before the Department of Justice (DOJ) on Wednesday. (PNA)

Campaign to end violence against women pushed

MANILA -- Hundreds of government employees and law enforcement officers convened on Thursday for a three-kilometer solidarity walk culminating an 18-day campaign to end violence against women (VAW).

The event, which started on November 25, was organized by the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW) and the Department of National De-

fense (DND).

"Everyone of us who walked today have a mission: to advocate respect, love, and peace. You may not be in the frontline fighting a war but there might be a woman or a child being bullied, being catcalled, an officemate being sexually harassed..." DND Undersecretary Cardozo Luna said in his speech during the event at the Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon City.

"Be an advocate. If a person you know is a victim, encourage them to seek help and give moral support, most of the time violence prospers when people do nothing: the time to end VAW is now," he added.

Luna also cited that women law enforcers are also assigned to facilitate concerns on VAW in every police station so complainants can be comfortable in sharing their stories.

PCW chairperson Rhodora Bucoy, in a media interview, urged all Filipinos to understand that VAW is a serious human rights violation.

She said if there is no respect for women's rights "we cannot have a truly sustainable de-

velopment, inclusive development which is the very essence of Philippine Development Plan".

The campaign

The 18-Day Campaign to End VAW is anchored on the Philippine government's goal of protecting the human rights of women and girls by upholding its commitment to address all forms of gender-based violence as enshrined in the 1987 Constitution.

Under the Republic Act 10398 or the act dedicating November 25 of every year as the National Consciousness Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and Children, government agencies are directed to raise awareness on the issue of violence and to free women and girls from its different forms.

In 2002, the Philippine Government through the PCW and other key stakeholders joined the global campaign.

Former President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, in 2006, signed Proclamation 1172 extending the national campaign to 18 days, thereby including December 12, a historic

date that marked the signing in the year 2000 of the UN protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children, to supplement the UN convention against transnational organized crimes.

From 2016 to 2021, the campaign carries the theme "VAW-free community starts With Me". This year's campaign underscores the valuable role of individuals, especially the youth, in fighting violence against women and girls within various institutions.

The campaign is necessary because global estimates by the World Health Organization indicate that about 1 in 3 women (35%) worldwide have experienced either physical and/or sexual violence from intimate partner or non-partner in her lifetime.

In the Philippines, the National Demographic Health Survey 2017 released by the Philippine Statistics Authority revealed that 1 in 4 Filipino women, aged 15-49 have experienced physical, emotional or sexual violence from their husband or partner. (PNA)

Germany to hire 30K foreign medical workers: DOLE

MANILA -- The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) said Germany is looking to employ some 30,000 hospital workers, including nurses in 2020.

"They need 30,000 nurses, hospital workers, medical workers. That's a big number," Labor Secretary Silvestre Bello III in an interview Wednesday.

He, however, clarified that the 30,000 job offers are not solely for Filipino health workers.

"They want us Filipinos. In their order of preference, number one is the Philippines," the DOLE chief said.

Last month, DOLE reported that the European nation is projecting to hire at least 1,000 Filipino nurses next year under the Triple Win Project.

"They want to hire as many as they can, and we have many nurses that are well qualified," Bello added.

Data from the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) showed a total of 903 Pinoys were hired under the Triple Win Project since 2013.

Administered by the POEA, the Triple Win Project is a government-to-government hiring program between Berlin and Manila. (PNA)

US senators' 'intrusive' act won't affect US-PH ties: Palace

MANILA -- The Philippines' relations with the United States (US) would remain "untarnished" despite the "misguided and intrusive act" by some American senators considered as an insult to Manila's dignity and sovereignty, Malacañang said Saturday.

The assurance was made by Presidential Spokesperson Salvador Panelo as he said the Duterte government viewed with "grave concern" the US Senate foreign relations panel's call for the immediate release of detained Senator Leila de Lima and the dropping of charges against Rappler chief Maria Ressa.

"While we continue

to respect the US Senate as an institution, we, however, will not allow our sovereignty trampled upon by a few of their members," Panelo said in a statement. "We hope that probing and educated minds will ultimately prevail and that such misguided and intrusive act shall not tarnish nor diminish the warm relations between our two countries."

The US Senate foreign relations committee approved on December 11 Resolution 142, which urges the Philippine government to immediately release de Lima and withdraw charges against Ressa.

De Lima is detained at the Philippine Cus-

tomial Center in Quezon City because of her supposed involvement in unlawful drug trade during her stint as justice secretary under the Aquino government.

Ressa, on the other hand, is accused of evading the payment of PHP150 million in tax dues on Rappler's 2015 bond sales to two foreign parties. She was ordered arrested in November 2018 but was freed after posting bail.

Panelo said de Lima and Ressa, who are facing criminal prosecution for "transgression of Philippine laws," are accorded procedural due process "in all stages of their criminal prosecution."

"In every stage of the proceeding, both exercised their constitutional right to due process and to competent counsel of their choice. They continue to avail of all available legal remedies for their defense," he said. "Ressa was given provisional liberty by the hearing court while de Lima's continued detention remains on account of the nature of the crime she is charged with and the court's finding that the evidence against her is strong."

Panelo also noted that the investigating public prosecutors found probable cause to file criminal charges against them and issue warrants for their arrest.

text of Resolution No. 142 reveals the prejudice upon which the good US senators based their conclusion on the situation in our country, which have absolutely no basis in fact nor in law."

Thus, the US Senate panel's interference is a "brazen and heedless" affront to the Philippines' the dignity and sovereignty, Panelo said, adding that the "undisguised and outrageous" intrusion of American lawmakers was unacceptable, considering that the Philippines "has long ceased to be a colony"

of the US.

"We call on these US senators to remove the blinders in their eyes and look at the de Lima and Ressa cases not with jaundiced eyes but with studied objectivity and cautious discernment. They should respect the judicial processes of our country, in the same manner, we respect theirs," he said. "Among sovereign states, there must be equal and mutual respect. Intrusion on the sovereign rights of independent countries is abhorrent in civilized societies and anathema to international order." (PNA)