



# PRESS RELEASE

Department of National Defense – Republic of the Philippines

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## Statement of Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana on the recent NPA atrocities and the President's cancellation of back-channel talks with the CPP-NPA

As our security forces continue to fight terrorists in Mindanao and as the government gets ready to start the recovery, reconstruction, and rehabilitation of Marawi City, the treacherous communist terrorists NPA has once again shown their utter lack of empathy towards our suffering countrymen.

The latest atrocities perpetrated by the NPA in places like Gumaca, Quezon where they burned equipment of DPWH contractors working on vital infrastructure to improve the lives of our countrymen, in Bukidnon where they attacked and killed a police officer, in Quirino where they blasted landmines that hurt six soldiers, in Surigao del Sur where they destroyed plantations which are sources of people's livelihood, in Palawan where they assassinated soldiers who were buying food in a market, and in North Cotabato where they blatantly attacked the officers of the Presidential Security Group who were in the area to secure the President, show why they are rightfully labeled as **communist terrorists**.

We are all for peace. *Sino ba ang ayaw maging mapayapa ang ating bansa?* But we can only talk about peace when both sides mean what they say. *Tiwala ako sa integridad at katapatan ng ating Government Peace Panel. Alam kong ginagawa nila ang sa tingin nila ay nararapat para sa bayan, alinsunod sa batas at adhikain ng ating Pangulo.* I, however, question the sincerity, integrity, and motives of the other side.

That is why I fully support the President's decision not to resume the formal peace talks unless the CPP-NPA stop their attacks and extortion activities, and reign in the warmongers among them.

*Nakakalungkot na itigil ang usapang pangkapayapaan dahil hangarin nating lahat na matigil na itong apatnapu't walong taon na labanan na pawang pahirap sa mamamayan ang idinudulot, lalong-lalo na ang gawaing pangongotong at paghahasik ng mga NPA.*

The government has proven its sincerity in dealing with the communist movement. This, in turn, is reciprocated by double talk and treachery. *Hindi naman puwedeng ganito na lang palagi ang nangyayari. Kailangan na nating magkalinawan.* That is why I ask the leaders and members of the CPP-NPA: do you really want peace or do you want to continue down the bloody path of war?

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