



PRESS RELEASE

Department of National Defense – Republic of the Philippines

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SND's reaction to HRW's assessment that PRRD's reward offer encourages war crimes

We disagree with the assessment of Human Rights Watch (HRW) that President Rodrigo Duterte's reward offer of Php 20,000.00 for every NPA member killed "encourages war crimes".

Neutralizing rebels and terrorists is a legitimate law enforcement function, and the government is not precluded from offering rewards under Philippine laws.

Furthermore, our Defenders are under strict orders to adhere to the principles of human rights and international humanitarian law when they operate in the field. They know only too well that anyone of them who is found guilty of abuse will be sanctioned accordingly.

The HRW has always been unreasonably critical of and biased against the AFP and PNP. It stays silent even when the NPA goes on a killing rampage while quick to accuse Philippine law enforcement agencies of trumped up or unconfirmed violations. When Jose Maria Sison ordered the CPP-NPA to kill one soldier per region every day, not a pip was heard from the HRW. When the NPA beheaded a former comrade of theirs who had just returned to the fold of the law, the HRW was silent. Why did the HRW not say anything when the NPA killed a father and his son—Lumad leaders who attended a Lumad Summit with the President? Where was the HRW when the NPA was burning left and right the equipment of public companies for not acceding to their extortion demands? It is obvious that the HRW is acting as the spokesperson of the CPP-NPA.

It was after these killings of Lumads and the announcement of Mr Sison's directive to kill one soldier or policeman per region a day that the President announced that he will pay anyone who kills an NPA terrorist ₱20,000 pesos, which he later upped to ₱25,000.

In the interest of neutrality, objectivity, and the truth, we strongly urge the HRW to stop its hypocrisy and, instead, do the right thing by acknowledging and investigating these glaring atrocities being committed by the NPA including the murder of innocent civilians, who resist their aggressive exploitation, and the deceptive recruitment of our indigenous population.

The government will do everything in its power to protect our communities and uphold the rule of law.

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