

PRESS RELEASE**Statement on the shooting incident of a school teacher in Valencia City**

PASIG CITY, October 17, 2019 - The Department of Education (DepEd) strongly condemns the shooting of Ms. Zhydee Bitago Cabañez, an elementary teacher at Dalit Elementary School in Valencia City, Bukidnon on October 15, 2019.

Four (4) unidentified gunmen onboard motorcycles went inside the victim's classroom and shot the victim and her husband, Mr. Ramil Cabañez, also teacher in the same school. The husband managed to escape while the victim sustained serious physical injuries.

Initial police reports forwarded by PNP Chief Zurki Serenas showed that the victim sustained multiple gunshot wounds but is now on stable condition at the hospital and will be provided with psychological first aid as soon as possible.

Schools Division Superintendent of Valencia City Dr. Victoria Gazo confirmed that the local DepEd office has conducted stress debriefing to pupils, parents, and teachers in Dalit ES yesterday, a day after the incident. The Division Office also postponed the conduct of the 2nd Periodical Test scheduled on October 17 and 18, in that school.

During coordination meeting, the Barangay and Sitio leaders committed to assign CVO and purok leaders to serve as security officers during school hours. They will also accompany teachers in coming to school and going home at least until the Pulangi River.

Likewise, RD Arturo Bayocot confirmed that the DepEd Central and local offices have collected financial contributions to augment funds for the hospitalization of the victim.

Education Secretary Leonor Magtolis Briones instructed DepEd Regional Office X and the Schools Division Office of Valencia City to submit complete incident reports and to obtain investigation reports from the authorities.

DepEd calls on the authorities to conduct an exhaustive investigation of the gruesome incident and expects results that will bring the perpetrators to justice. DepEd sternly enjoins the community, local officials, and law enforcement agencies to work closely in ensuring the safety of schools, learners, and teachers.

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