



# **PAMBANSANG SAMAHAN NG MGA NARS NG PILIPINAS, INC.**

(PHILIPPINE NURSES ASSOCIATION, INC.)  
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## ***Press Statement***

### **JUSTICE FOR THE NURSE RAPE-VICTIM, JUSTICE FOR THE NURSING PROFESSION!**

The Philippine Nurses' Association condemns in the strongest term the "gang-rape" of a young nurse on Saturday, September 25, in South Upi, Maguindanao. We are outraged that this has been done to a 22-year old nurse who at the time of crime was serving in a remote, underserved and unfamiliar place under a temporary employment cum health government program named Nurses Assigned in Rural Service (N.A.R.S.).

The heinous crime defies all human respect considering the use of brute force under treacherous circumstance inflicted by 6 men on a young woman who was in that remote area not for some vacation but for the noble purpose of delivering vital health service to its poor constituents.

The incident also impacts the rights of the community as it had effectively deprived them of the services rendered by the nurse-victim. The already scarce health service that they had been getting and which the young nurse victim tried to augment has effectively been stopped.

The incident must have also alarmed other community nurse-practitioners and those considering this career option since, truth is, community health nursing demands much personal sacrifices but offers meager remuneration.

While this crime highlights the extreme perils and dangers that nurses are exposed to in the field especially in far-flung areas, there are also other forms of injustices that nurses in all health settings are subjected to. These are the perennial problems of nurses and other health workers namely: low wages and poor work conditions, unemployment, limited or unfilled government plantillas, below ideal nurse:patient ratio, non-implementation of Nursing Law and Magna Carta of Health Workers – all these unmet conditions that should make for a "Positive Practice Environment" contribute to a seeming low regard for nursing service profession.

#### **THE N.A.R.S. PROGRAM.**

The N.A.R.S. program (under which the nurse-victim worked) is a government initiative that enjoined young nurses to serve in poor communities for a period of 6 months with a stipend of P8,000 which is a little more than what many public health nurses receive served as an incentive for new registered nurses to go to "difficult" posts even for a limited period of time. The program has been in effect for one year now and has so far deployed 10,000 nurses in 1,000 municipalities. The program has received a generally positive response from community recipients and local government units for the services they have rendered.

#### **URGENT CALLS.**

The Philippine Nurses Association calls for the following:

- Immediate resolution of the case with the prosecution of the perpetrators whom the victim has already identified, as per reports. That those involved allegedly belong to "prominent families" should be no consideration if they are proven guilty of the crime.

- Immediate resolution by the local authorities of the case to restore a sense of safety and security for nurses and other health workers doing community service.
- Stricter safety measures for our nurses serving in rural areas.
- Recognition of the contributions of nurses to our health system in the countryside.
- For all peace-loving citizens to please offer prayers for the fast recovery of the nurse-victim and swift justice to be granted to her.



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