



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

PRESS RELEASE

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PUNO: RUBY ROSE COULD STILL BE ALIVE NOW IF FAMILY HAD REPORTED ABUSE TO AUTHORITIES

PROSPERIDAD, Agusan del Sur--Secretary Ronnie Puno of the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) has said that Ruby Rose Barrameda-Jimenez could still be alive now had she or her family reported the alleged wife battering she had received to any of the Women and Child Protection Desks (WCPDs) of the Philippine National Police.

In a press conference here, Puno said he was somewhat personally involved in the case because her sister, the former beauty queen Rochelle Barrameda, had approached him about a year and a half ago through a mutual friend to seek help after becoming desperate over the lack of progress in the case of the missing Barrameda-Jimenez.

The DILG secretary went here to lead the flag-raising rites marking Philippine Independence Day together with Gov. Maria Valentina Plaza and former Governors Valentina Plaza and Eddie Bong Plaza, and to take part in the opening ceremonies for the weeklong Naliyagan Festival.

Puno said he has directed the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) to take over the case. The CIDG, he said, had looked for witnesses to shed light on Barrameda-Jimenez's whereabouts, searching as far as Bicol until one of those involved in the killing came forward to confess and narrate the gruesome fate that had befallen her.

"It's so sad that Rochelle came to us when her sister was missing already," he said. "And you know it took one year-and-a-half years before this case was solved. But we chased people all the way, all the way to Bicol, all the way to Samar. We went all over the country looking for witnesses until finally somebody came up and told us exactly where to find the corpse."

"You know I think this could have been prevented if during the time that she was being beaten up, sinumbong na sana sa (it should have been reported to the) police that this was happening," he said. "This is a very tragic thing that would probably not have happened if sinumbong na (if it was reported at once)," Puno added.

Puno said these WCPDs, which are being established or expanded nationwide in partnership with nongovernment organizations, are the police centers where children and women who have been neglected or physically and mentally abused can turn to for help in bringing to justice the perpetrators of these crimes against them.

The PNP's goal, he said, is to ensure that these WCPDs are functioning in every municipality as "one-stop shops" for the investigation and treatment of victims of child abuse, violence against women and other similar crimes.

Barrameda-Jimenez disappeared on March 14, 2007 after a bitter custody dispute with her estranged husband, Manuel Jimenez III, for their two children.

Her body was found off Navotas City on June 10, more than two years after she went missing.

On June 11, the PNP-National Capital Region Office formally filed murder charges against Barrameda-Jimenez's father-in-law, lawyer Manuel Jimenez II, his brother, Lope Jimenez, owner of the Buena Suerte Jimenez Fishing and Trading Company, and five others.

The police were able to identify the suspects after one of them, Manuel Montero, approached authorities and confessed to the crime.

Rochelle was reported in the media as saying that her sister, in full view of their children, suffered physical abuse inflicted by her husband.

Reports also said that Rochelle had filed a case against her brother-in-law for assault before her sister disappeared two years ago.

Rochelle Barrameda was further reported as saying that Barrameda-Jimenez had also sought a temporary protection order from a Las Pinas court against her husband.