

PRESS RELEASE

## DepEd reports zero election-related violence against teachers

With the close of voting hours, the Department of Education has reported that there has been no confirmed report of election-related violence against the 229,020 teachers who served in the 76,340 clustered precincts of the 2010 national elections.

Secretary Mona Valisno expressed elation at this development saying that this is a good omen for the teaching sector. "We are pleased that our teachers serving in the frontlines of the election were spared from whatever form of violence."

The PNP has reported 82 incidents of election-related violence in the country since January 10, 2010 but none of these involved teachers. As of May 9, there are still 207 incidents that remain unconfirmed and potentially election-related, according to the PNP National Operations Center.

Assistant Secretary Jonathan Malaya, DepEd Spokesperson, said that their Regional Task Forces reported that no teacher or member of the BEI so far has been affected by any of the bombings that took place in La Union, Lanao del Sur or Masbate.

He expressed hope that the trend will continue because this will encourage more teachers to serve during elections. "Election time shows a teacher's professionalism and patriotism," he said.

Valisno attributed this development to the fact that it is now the machines that read or appreciate the ballots and all the teacher has to do is to operate the counting machines. "There is no more any discretion on the part of the teacher to appreciate the ballots, thus there is no reason to intimidate or harass our BEIs," she said.

"I think we can say that automation has made it safer for the teacher," she said.

Malaya noted that the 2007 elections had some shocking cases of election-related violence against teachers particularly the burning of the school house in Taysan, Batangas that led to the death of Nellie Banaag, a public school teacher serving in the BEI.

Moreover, four teachers in Maguindanao were kidnapped in 2007 so that they could not perform their duties. While two teachers in Abra were wounded after they were shot while transporting ballots to the canvassing center.

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