



Another complaint filed vs Taytay priest in trafficking case

By Christopher Lloyd Caliwan

 September 5, 2017, 6:19 am

Share

Share 0



MANILA -- Monsignor Arnel Lagarejos, 55, who was caught in the company of a 13-year-old girl whom he allegedly booked from a pimp in Marikina City, is now facing a criminal complaint before the Department of Justice (DOJ), Justice Secretary Vitaliano Aguirre said Monday.

Lagarejos has been charged with violation of Section 6 for qualified trafficking under Republic Act 9208 or the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003, which is a non-bailable offense, before the DOJ through the Public Attorney's Office (PAO) headed by lawyer Persida Acosta.

The complaint has been filed by the victim's mother on behalf of her daughter. Both the mother and the victim personally went to the DOJ and met with Aguirre.

"They filed this morning a case of qualified trafficking in persons against Monsignor Arnel Lagarejos. So this is different from the case previously filed wherein the accused was able to post bail," Aguirre told reporters during a press conference.

Aguirre said Lagarejos managed to post bail only on the first anti-trafficking complaint.

"He managed to post bail on the first complaint [but] there is a pending trafficking case and then this one. Magiging tatlo na ang kaso nya," Aguirre said.

Aguirre said the family of the girl is seeking to be placed under the Witness Protection Program (WPP) due to previous threats to their lives.

Aguirre said the DOJ has committed to provide them provisional coverage pending processes for their application.

"They are asking and they wanted to be placed under the WPP. So I told them after this we will be processing at least the grant of provisional coverage. So they will be likely be placed under the WPP," Aguirre said.

Acosta said that aside from Lagarejos, the four other individuals who acted as pimps for the priest were also named as respondents in the complaint.

Acosta said the filing of the charges was based on the month-long investigation conducted by PAO Marikina and on testimonies provided by the victim.

"It was established that there are two other incidents involving said priest. So applying Republic Act 9208 or the Anti-Human Trafficking Act, the incident falls under qualified human trafficking because there was a procurement of the child and also considering the age of the victim which is 13 years old, a minor," Acosta said.

"So on the basis of those incidents and revelations of the child through the care of Marikina Social Welfare Office, it was established that this special law on trafficking of children was violated," she added.

The qualified trafficking in person charges is on top of the human trafficking charges earlier filed against him before the Regional Trial Court of Marikina City where he was able to post a PHP120,000 bail for his temporary freedom.

Last July, Lagarejos was arrested by the Marikina police in an entrapment operation as he was allegedly taking a 13-year-old girl to a motel in Marikina City.

Lagarejos managed to post bail on August 1, three days after he was arrested at a motel along Sumulong Highway in Marikina.

Acosta said the complaint was not only based on the victim's testimony but also on text messages, social media posts of the victim.
(PNA)

Related Articles



BRP Cabra continues monitoring of CCG incursion in Zambales

January 23, 2025 8:41 pm



DSWD to launch 15 mobile kitchens to boost disaster response

January 23, 2025 7:56 pm



Comelec pushes back ballot reprinting anew to Jan. 27

January 23, 2025 7:30 pm



Francis Marcos withdraws from Senate race

January 23, 2025 5:16 pm

Comments