

**HONORABLE SONNY ANGARA**  
Chairperson  
Committee on Justice and Human Rights  
Senate of the Philippines  
Pasay City

**Attention: ATTY. ANDRÉ B. MORTEL, MPM**  
Committee Secretary

Dear **Senator Angara**,

This refers to Senate Bill No. 2486 entitled “An Act Establishing National Preventive Mechanism in Compliance with the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT) and for Other Purposes” filed by Senator Manuel “Lito” M. Lapid.

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) supports the proposed legislation establishing an independent National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) for torture prevention. The NPM will be a critical body in safeguarding human rights and ensuring accountability from agencies and parties involved.

Once enacted into law, the DSWD fully commits to work closely with the NPM in intensifying public education, information, and awareness campaign, and enabling meaningful dialogues towards torture prevention. The DSWD will also cooperate with the NPM in reviewing policies and procedures regarding the treatment and well-being of victims of torture and enforced disappearances who surfaced alive together with their families.

For the enhancement of the proposed legislations, the Department recommends the following:

1. To look into appropriate interventions that will prevent any acts of torture against vulnerable persons particularly children, women, and persons with disabilities as these sectors are highly at-risk and susceptible to many forms of abuse; and
2. To include the National Commission for Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) in the agencies that will be consulted by the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) in formulating the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) to ensure that Indigenous Peoples (IPs) and vulnerable groups in conflict-affected areas are represented.

Finally, for the information of the Committee, under Republic Act No. 9745 or the Anti-Torture Act of 2009 and Republic Act No. 10353 or the Anti-Enforced or Involuntary Disappearance Act of 2012, the DSWD is one of the agencies mandated to formulate a comprehensive rehabilitation program for victims of torture and their families. This is being operated through the Healing Intervention Leading To Optimum Management or the PagHILOM Program of the DSWD which generally aims to restore the emotional, mental, and economic well-being of victims of torture and enforced or involuntary disappearance who surfaced alive together with their families. The PagHILOM program is a model of intervention envisioned to contribute to the rebuilding of lives, reparation, access to justice, and holistic healing of victim-survivors of torture and enforced disappearances by engaging a committed and functional rehabilitation team of service providers and support groups at the local and national level. This intervention may be taken into consideration as a potential resource for victim rehabilitation.

For the Chairperson's consideration.

Thank you.

Very truly yours,

  
**REX GATCHALIAN**

Secretary

Date: 30 MAY 2024