

Senator Pimentel Says “No Need to Investigate Sulu Vice Gov Sahidulla” - MabuhayRadio

Written by Bobby M. Reyes

Sunday, 19 July 2009 12:07 - Last Updated Sunday, 19 July 2009 12:12

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enate Minority Leader Aquilino Q. Pimentel Jr.(PDP-Laban) today said he finds no ground for the authorities to investigate Sulu Vice Gov. Lady Anne Sahidulla despite her questionable giving of P50,000 to the Abu Sayyaf to secure the release of International Committee of the Red Cross worker Eugenio Vagni.

Mr. Pimentel said Sahidulla exposed herself to extreme risk by undertaking such extraordinary mission and it would be unfair to insinuate that she was in connivance with the Abu Sayyaf just because she had access to the extremists in their jungle lair.

“If Vice Governor Sahidulla indeed helped in the release of Red Cross worker Eugenio Vagni and gave her own funds of P50,000 as ‘goodwill’ money to the Abu Sayyaf, there may be no basis to investigate her,” the senator from Mindanao said.

“She should only be investigated if there is any evidence that she was in cahoots with the Abu Sayyaf kidnapers in the abduction of Mr. Vagni. The fact that she had announced that she was helping in the negotiations with the kidnapers for the release of Mr. Vagni and that she had given the P50,000 would indicate to me that she was not hiding anything.”

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Senator Pimentel expressed apprehension that an investigation of the Sulu vice governor would have the adverse effect of dissuading people from assisting the government whenever somebody is kidnapped by the bandits.

“If the vice governor is prosecuted for what she did in the Vagni case, who will help the government next time there is an abduction in Sulu or elsewhere in Muslim Mindanao?” he said.

“My suggestion is that the authorities had better leave things alone insofar as the vice governor is concerned. What they should concentrate on is to pursue the bandits, arrest them, shoot it out with them if they resist, and restore law and order in the province.”

For starters, Senator Pimentel said the Supreme Court under the leadership of the Chief Justice, along with President Arroyo, should conduct a drive to fill up the vacancies in the 18 municipal courts of Sulu so that at the first level of the judicial system, the people of Sulu can have a resort to justice for the redress of their grievances.

To attract qualified applicants for the municipal courts, he suggested that the pay of the judges there be doubled the amount being paid to their counterparts elsewhere in the country and that they be provided a security detail at no cost to them for their personal safety.

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“If a law is needed, the Senate and the House of Representatives should be prepared to pass an emergency legislation to cover the contingency.” # # #

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