



Lookout order issued vs Taytay priest nabbed with minor

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MANILA -- The Department of Justice (DOJ) issued an immigration lookout bulletin order (ILBO) against Monsignor Arnel Lagarejos, who was caught with a 13-year-old girl whom he allegedly booked from a pimp in Marikina City.

In an urgent memorandum released late Wednesday night, Justice Secretary Vitaliano Aguirre II directed Immigration Commissioner Jaime Morente to alert all immigration officers in the country's airports and seaports to prevent any attempts of Monsignor Lagarejos, 55, to leave the country.

"Considering the gravity of the offense allegedly committed, there is a strong possibility that he may attempt to place himself beyond the reach of the legal processes by leaving the country," read the order.

A lookout bulletin order does not automatically prevent the subject from leaving the country - unlike a hold departure order issued by court - but it requires the person to seek permission from the DOJ.

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 on Monday.

Also named respondents in the charge sheet were the four other persons who allegedly acted as pimps of the victim.

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

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

Lagarejos was already indicted before the Marikina City regional trial court for qualified trafficking under Section 6 of Republic Act 9208 (Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003) but was able to post bail amounting to PHP120,000.

Last July, Lagarejos was arrested in an entrapment operation while allegedly taking the victim to a motel. **(PNA)**