

# Prosecutors told: Respect GMA move

By MARVIN SY

President Arroyo is standing pat on her decision to order the filing of charges against the so-called "Alabang Boys" and some prosecutors of the Department of Justice despite the latter's denial of allegations that they mishandled the case or had been bribed to clear the suspects.

"We respect their feelings but they should respect the decision of President Arroyo," Press Secretary Cerge Remonde said in an interview over radio *dzRB*.

The President issued the order upon recommendation of an independent fact-finding

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# Prosecutors

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committee.

Senior state prosecutor John Resado, who came out with a resolution recommending the release of the Alabang Boys, would be sued for allegedly receiving bribes.

Chief state prosecutor Jovencito Zuño and senior state prosecutor Philip Kimpo would be charged with negligence in the review of Resado's resolution.

Zuño and Kimpo have denied the allegations and stood by their decision to uphold Resado's resolution.

The President, who has designated herself anti-illegal drugs czar, has taken a hands-on approach to the case, which has sparked conflict between the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA).

Remonde defended the President's approach to the issue.

"We have a saying that when it comes to the country's problems, the buck stops at the Office of the President," he said.

Remonde said the President is determined to address the problem of illegal drugs because of her "genuine love and dedication for the country and concern for the country's youth."

The PDEA said it felt "vindicated" by Mrs.

Arroyo's order.

"We're now concentrating on the case. The case (against the three suspects) should be filed soon so they could be transferred to the city jails," PDEA spokesman Derrick Arnold Carreon said.

"But the best vindication would be if the suspects will be convicted," he added.

The three suspects - Jorge Joseph, Joseph Tecson and Richard Brodett - were arrested by PDEA agents during a buy-bust operation in September 2008 at the Ayala Alabang Village in Muntinlupa City and in Cubao, Quezon City.

Alvaro Lazaro, chief of PDEA's Legal and Prosecution Service, told **The STAR** that since Joseph and Brodett were arrested in Muntinlupa, they should be transferred to the Muntinlupa City jail. As for Tecson, Lazaro said the suspect should be moved to the Quezon City jail.

Aside from ordering the filing of charges against the drug suspects and the prosecutors, Malacañang also ordered the PDEA to conduct an administrative probe on Maj. Ferdinand Marcelino for releasing the driver of the vehicle where the sale of illegal drugs took place.

Meanwhile, a magistrate who was in the independent fact-finding body maintained that their report to the President containing their recommendation was confidential.

- With Reinir Padua and Evelyn Macairan