

Manila, 30 May 2011 - Marikina Rep. Marcelino Teodoro, author of Bill 4480, said the recruitment and use of children in armed conflicts would be prohibited under the measure.

“The bill seeks the prosecution of those responsible for child rights violations in these conflicts. Children have to be provided relief, protection and rehabilitation in such situations,” he said.

He said prohibited acts include killing, torture, intentional or casual maiming, rape, abduction, using children as human shield, and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment of children.

Also prohibited is the recruitment of children by the military, the police and other armed groups.

Teodoro said the bill bans military operations near schools, hospitals, places of worship, and other public areas where children can usually be found.

It also prohibits hamleting, food blockade, intentional delayed reporting of a child in custody, false reporting of a child in custody, and false branding of children.

The measure imposes the penalties of imprisonment of six years to life and a fine of P500,000 to P2 million on violators.

Teodoro said protecting children from hostilities should be an important aspect of any comprehensive strategy to resolve conflict.

Deputy Speaker Maria Isabelle Climaco, a co-author of Bill 4480, said the Philippines has a long history of armed conflicts and “Filipino children are the most affected sector, with the consequences of these conflicts impacting severely on their lives.”

“Their rights are flagrantly violated and disregarded. Many of them continue to become victims of killing, maiming, rape, and other forms of violence,” she said.

The other co-authors of the measure include Representatives Josephine Veronique Lacson-Noel of Malabon, Lani Mercado-Revilla of Cavite and Leopoldo Bataoil of Pangasinan.

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