



PHILIPPINE  
RURAL  
ELECTRIC  
COOPERATIVES  
ASSOCIATION, INC.

# PRESS RELEASE

#PHILRECAnews

*United We Stand. We Stand United.*



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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

18 October 2021

### **PHILRECA condemns to the highest level the cruelty, harassment, and oppression by NEA and the PNP against BENECA**

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At around 2:40 o'clock in the morning, armed personnel from the Philippine National Police forced their way in full battle gear inside the premises of Benguet Electric Cooperative, Inc. (BENECA) in Baguio City.

Without showing any court order, the armed policemen forced open locked doors and allegedly started confiscating computers without permission from the management. Legitimate BENECA employees who wanted to clarify what was happening were barred from entering the premises for no reason. The police even prevented employees from documenting what was happening in the building.

And as if such cruelty and harassments are not enough, this takeover happened just when the workers and employees of BENECA are risking their lives rehabilitating the damaged infrastructure caused by the recent destructive typhoon, *Maring*. What they are doing to BENECA is bordering between the spectrum of inhumanity and atrocity.

With everything that is happening in BENECA right now, the employees are already traumatized but stayed composed and focused especially the Engineers

in charged with the SCADA to ensure that power in critical establishments like hospitals would remain unhampered and uninterrupted.

This is the current scenario in a model electric cooperative which has shown exemplary performance from good men and women who dedicated their own blood and sweat to serve the member-consumer-owners and the community.

**We condemn the unlawful acts and anti-MCO intentions of Marie Banaag-Rafael, Project Supervisor (PS) Omar Mayo, and NEA-BOA Alternate Chair and now NEA Administrator Emmanuel Juaneza!**

This is not the first time that NEA and its agents/representatives have tried to force their way inside the offices of BENECA, a well performing electric cooperative. Since last month, Marie Banaag-Rafael, PS Omar Mayo and Emmanuel Juaneza have been using their influence and position to try to circumvent the decision of the legitimate representatives of the member-consumer-owners, the ones who are ultimately empowered and authorized to manage the affairs of the cooperative.

Despite the result of the investigation of the Committee on Energy as adapted by the entire Members of the House of Representatives, despite the resistance of the stakeholders from local government units in Baguio City and Benguet and the member-consumer-owners themselves, and despite the opposition of its own Legal Department, the Board of Administrators of NEA headed by Juaneza still tried to impose to BENECA its endorsement of Rafael as General Manager who has been found unqualified for the position in the first place.

**We condemn the Philippine National Police for allowing the agency to be used in an illegal act and protecting only the one-sided interest of Rafael, PS Mayo and NEA-BOA by blindly following the orders from its chain of command instead of protecting the interest of the member-consumer-owners and maintaining neutrality.**

At this point, the police has no personality in what is happening in BENECA, a private company. They do not have any authority to be in the premises. If any, they are supposed to be there only to maintain neutrality and ensure peace and

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order. NEA may have the power to deputize law enforcement to enforce a decision in the exercise of its adjudicating powers, but this is not a case of adjudication.

What NEA is “trying to enforce” – no matter how unjust, illegal, and illegitimate it is -- is an administrative order. They should know that such orders are not executable or enforceable through law enforcement agencies.

We urge PNP Chief Guillermo Lorenzo T. Eleazar and the entire leadership of the Philippine National Police from the National Head Quarters down to the Police District offices to abstain from taking sides on this issue. We urge you to refrain from being used by illegitimate interests. We urge you to stand by the people and by the member-consumer-owners who have decided to reject the cruelty, harassment, and oppression of the NEA Board of Administrators.

NEA has no power to take-over the management of BENECA, unless they consider and can prove that BENECA is an ailing cooperative. On the contrary, BENECA has been a model of excellent operation and brilliant service to its member-consumer-owners.

We urge stakeholders to protect BENECA! We urge all electric cooperatives to protest this injustice! Individually, we cannot do anything. But UNITED, we will prevail! ###

***“United We Stand, We Stand United!”***