



CATHOLIC EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF THE PHILIPPINES NATIONAL OFFICE

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CEAP Statement on Lt. Gen. Parlade Jr's and NTF-ELCAC's Recent Pronouncements

*Do not be a witness against your neighbor for no reason,
And do not deceive with your lips.*
Proverbs 24:28, NASB

The Catholic Educational Association of the Philippines (CEAP) opposes the recent statements made by Lt. Gen. Antonio Parlade Jr. and the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC) implicating CEAP and a number of Catholic Higher Educational Institutions in unsubstantiated claims related to the movements of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), and the New People's Army (NPA). We would like to make some clarifications.

In response to the statements made by Lt. Gen Parlade Jr. in a Facebook post¹ last January 25:

- CEAP held a meeting with members of the AFP and PNP in October 2018, not 2019, when 18 universities, including Catholic Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) were implicated in an alleged Red October Ouster plot. Lt. Gen Parlade Jr. referred to “talks between NTF-ELCAC and the Catholic Educational Association of the Philippines (CEAP).” This implies that there were *multiple conversations* that happened between our groups. We categorically deny this. There was only *one* dialogue that was organized, and that was in October 24, 2018.
- He also mentioned that “the same universities have failed to disclose such information to their constituents or address the problem despite giving their word.” We would like to assert that *no concrete proposals nor agreements* were made, and no follow-ups were done. The statement implies that CEAP and its member HEIs have “failed” to “address the problem.” This is misleading. The CEAP and its member schools are committed to Catholic teachings of forming engaged citizens committed to common good and the pursuit of social change through peaceful and non-violent means.

In response to the recent Statement of the NTF-ELCAC made last January 26, 2021² supporting Lt. Gen. Parlade Jr.'s initial statements, and implicating 38 HEIs as recruitment grounds of the CPP-NPA:

- Our Catholic identity – enshrined in our values, vision, mission, goals, policy, and practice – is directly in opposition to the beliefs of the CPP and NPA. It has been said before, and we affirm it once more: we do not support the CPP and NPA.
- Our schools are compliant with the government regulations of the Commission in Higher Education and the Department of Education. We have strict protocols in accrediting student organizations and activities, ensuring that they are compliant with government regulations and school policies.

¹ <https://www.facebook.com/ntfelcac/posts/425771322194591>

² <https://www.facebook.com/ntfelcac/posts/426335958804794>

Lastly, we support the statements released by Ateneo de Manila University, De La Salle University, University of Santo Tomas, the Far Eastern University, Ateneo de Naga University and Holy Angel University, as well as the statement of the Coordinating Council of Private Education Associations (COCOPEA).

In solidarity with them, we re-affirm the following:

- We remain committed to live out our Catholic principles of respect for human life and liberties, and promotion of social justice and peaceful social transformation. We continue to promote our Constitutionally-guaranteed basic human rights of free speech, expression, and association.
- We uphold the academic freedom given to higher education institutions by the 1987 Constitution and affirmed by the Supreme Court. This freedom provides our society a space, free from external constraints, where truth can be sifted from untruth, and right from wrong. We believe this is essential and necessary for the benefit of society and the common good.

Instead of red-tagging educational institutions, which endangers the security and welfare of teachers and students, we encourage the government to address the roots of the problem of insurgency, like poverty and marginalization. The challenges of nation building toward fuller democracy, progress and peace are complex. We, in the Catholic Educational Association of the Philippines, shall continue to engage with government on these, in a spirit of partnership and dialogue.