

Secretary Gatchalian to go after text scammers targeting senior citizens

Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Secretary Rex Gatchalian gave a stern warning against scammers who spread text messages about 'unclaimed' cash aid to target vulnerable sectors such as senior citizens.

"We will make sure to prosecute you to the fullest extent *ng batas kaya 'wag na kayong magkakamali na mahuli namin kayo* (of the law so don't make the mistake of getting caught)," Secretary Gatchalian said in an interview.

This warning was made after the Department received from a concerned citizen a report that there is a text message circulating over mobile phone users regarding the alleged 'unclaimed' relief allowances for senior citizens and retired business owners.

Secretary Gatchalian mentioned that the Department has mechanisms in place to detect scammers and to prevent any incident of scamming and deception among its clients.

"*Para naman sa mga patuloy na gumagawa nyan sisiguraduhin namin dito sa DSWD na mahuhuli at mahuhuli namin kayo* (For those scammers, we will make sure that we are able to catch you)," the Secretary added.

He also appealed to the public to not use the name of the Department for deceiving senior citizens, pointing out that such act "*is even worst na nananamantala kayo ng mga taong walang kalaban-laban* (that you are taking advantage of the vulnerability of individuals)."

Moreover, Secretary Gatchalian reminded the public to be more

vigilant and responsible in engaging with unknown individuals over the phone.

“Ito ang babala namin sa publiko na huwag kayong maniniwala sa mga naglalako ng kung ano-anong mga serbisyo na kunwari ay galing sa DSWD (This is our reminder to the public not to believe those who offer services pretending to be from the DSWD),” he said.

The Secretary likewise advised the public to report any suspicious messages they receive to the nearest DSWD office or to any concerned government agencies. He said it is also the obligation of all citizens to verify information from the authorities.

Meanwhile, Secretary Gatchalian reiterated that the Department has no such relief allowance that is being provided to the seniors. However, he said that DSWD implements social pension program for indigent senior citizens and that other financial assistance for individuals in crisis situation, including the said sector, is extended through the Department’s Crisis Intervention Unit (CIU) located at the Central Office and in all Field Offices nationwide. ###