

# **DSWD chief reiterates warning against tampering of family food packs**

Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Secretary Rex Gatchalian on Monday (August 19) reiterated that tampering or repacking of the agency's family food packs (FFPs) is illegal and constitute a criminal act.

Secretary Gatchalian reiterated the warning following reports of repacking incidents that have been circulating in the social media and the actual filing of cases before the Office of the Ombudsman.

"The DSWD stands firm that we do not allow repacking. We are looking at the veracity of the complaints received through email, and other complaints that may arise," Secretary Gatchalian told reporters during a press conference at the Central Office's New Press Center

Secretary Gatchalian said that following the DSWD's receipt of complaints through email, an internal investigation committee has been commissioned to look into the matter.

"We would like to remind all recipients of family food packs or FFPs that tampering of relief goods distributed by the DSWD is a criminal act. This includes opening the contents to redistribute them in smaller quantities to affected families, or replacing the DSWD goods with inferior or lesser quality items," Secretary Gatchalian said.

One box of FFP contains 6 kilograms of rice, 4 pieces of canned tuna, 2 canned sardines, 4 corned beef, 5 sachets of 3-in-1 coffee and 5 sachets of cereal drink.

Under Republic Act No. 10121 or the Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) Act of 2010, Section 19, certain acts are prohibited and those who commit them will be held liable and be subjected to the penalties as prescribed in Section 20 of the same law.

"We hope that through this warning, we will be able to ensure that all the eligible beneficiaries will receive the correct quality and quantity of goods that are rightfully theirs," Secretary Gatchalian said.

The prohibited acts, under RA 10121, include diverting or misdelivering of relief goods, equipment or other aid commodities to persons other than the rightful recipient or consignee; accepting, possessing, using or disposing relief goods, equipment or other aid commodities not intended for nor consigned to him/her.

Another prohibited act is misrepresenting the source of relief goods, equipment or other aid commodities by either covering, replacing or defacing the labels of the containers to make it appear that the goods, equipment or other aid commodities came from another agency or persons; repacking the goods, equipment or other aid commodities into containers with different markings to make it appear that the goods came from another agency or persons or was released upon the instance of a particular agency or persons.

Violators of the law may face a fine ranging from Php50,000 to Php500,000 or imprisonment of six years up to 12 years, or both at the discretion of the court, including perpetual disqualification from public office if the offender is a public officer, and confiscation or forfeiture in favor of the government of the objects and the instrumentalities used in committing any of the prohibited acts.#