

CFO PRESS RELEASE

**CFO, IACAT, FDCP Celebrates World Day Against Trafficking**



The Commission on Filipinos Overseas, Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking (chaired by Department of Justice) and the Film Development Council of the Philippines celebrated World Day Against Trafficking in Persons by hosting a Cineforum featuring the film “Across the Crescent Moon” at Cinematheque Manila on July 31, 2018. The advocacy film stars Matteo Guidicelli, Dina Bonnevie, Christopher de Leon and Gabby Concepcion, and tackles sex trafficking and illegal migration that is endemic in the Southern Philippines.

The event was graced by CFO Usec. Astravel Pimentel-Naik, FDCP Chairperson Liza Dino, DOJ Usec. Emmeline Aglipay-Villar, Police Chief Superintendent William S Macavinta, and film director and producer Baby Nebrida, and was participated by IACAT members and partners, Philippine National Police, academe and student organizations, international organizations and civil society groups.

The Cineforum is one of the main activities lined up for the week-long celebration of the global event in the Philippines, which mainly aims to raise public awareness on human trafficking. In 2013, the United Nations General adopted a resolution designating July 30 as the World Day against Trafficking in Persons. This resolution

declared that such a day was necessary to “raise awareness of the situation of victims of human trafficking and for the promotion and protection of their rights.”

Solidarity Message of Usec. Naik delivered during the Cineforum:



*“Alyana (not her real name), 14 years old, was forced by her mother to marry a 56-year old Middle Eastern foreigner, who also happened to be the mother’s boyfriend. The wedding ceremony took place in a mosque in Manila. Alyana was tricked by her mother into marriage; she thought they would just go shopping. When she was younger, she was already sexually abused by the foreigner many times. What’s worse is that her mother knew about it and consented to it, thinking that their family would be financially better off with such a perverted set-up. In 2014, with the intervention of the Commission on Filipinos Overseas, the DSWD, and the PNP, Alyana was successfully rescued. In February 2018, her mother was convicted for qualified trafficking. The foreigner, however, is still at large.*”

*Abel and Cardo (not their real names), two young boys from Cebu, were recruited as fashion models by an older man named Ramil, who posed as a talent scout. When the victims arrived in Manila, they were shocked to discover that no modelling jobs were waiting for them. They were instead forced to work by selling and delivering beauty products to several salons around Metro Manila. They were not compensated, and worse, were sexually abused by Ramil. In 2015, the CFO and the local police were able to rescue the victims. In 2017, Ramil was convicted for qualified trafficking, the first landmark case for trafficking reported to the 1343 Actionline Against Human Trafficking, a 24/7 hotline established by the CFO and operational since 2011.*”

*Last week, a massage spa in Quezon City was raided by the PNP’s Women and Children Protection Center, thanks to the tip of a confidential informant, thru 1343 Actionline, who said that young boys of the establishment are offering sexual services. Seven pimps were arrested and 22 victims of human trafficking, five of whom are minors, were rescued. Let me acknowledge our partners from the PNP led by Col.*”

*Villamor Tuliao and Col. Shiela Portento who responded to the report, and who are present with us today (ask them to stand).*

*These cases make us unite more in our battle against human trafficking. This battle is the response of the Inter-agency Council Against Trafficking (IACAT) to President Rodrigo Duterte's call during his 2016 State of the Nation Address to "intensify our war against human traffickers and illegal recruiters that prey on our migrants." The impunity of the traffickers and criminals, and the suffering of the victims challenge us to take concerted action and stronger partnership among government, civil society, and other stakeholders, including the media and film industry.*

*Thank you Director Baby Nebrida for lending us for free your award-winning and eye-opening film "Across the Crescent Moon", in celebration of the World Day Against Trafficking in Persons. It is a brave advocacy film that raises public awareness on Christian-Muslim relations, illegal migration, and the problem of sex trafficking that is endemic in Southern Philippines.*

*Thank you Chairperson Liza Diño, the Film Development Council of the Philippines, and Cinematheque Manila team, for being our dependable partners for public screenings of films on migration and for generously hosting this cineforum for free.*

*To all the members of the Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking – chaired by the DOJ and co-chaired by the DSWD – thank you for the hard and sometimes dangerous work that you do in order to save lives, and for the hope that you give to our trafficking victims and survivors. Our relentless efforts and initiatives in combating human trafficking bore fruit when the Philippines was given a Tier 1 ranking by the US Department of State in its Trafficking in Persons Report of 2016 and sustained the same ranking in 2017 and 2018. We should continue to strengthen our collaboration toward eradicating modern slavery, or the exploitation of our fellow human beings, that we may, consequently, continue upholding human dignity.*

*The CFO, as Chair of IACAT's Advocacy and Communications Committee (ADVOCOM), in partnership with our ever-reliable contact center DOS1, has responded to over 35,000 calls that resulted in 555 actual cases of human trafficking, most of them illegal recruitment and mail-order spouse schemes in the Philippines and abroad. We also recently launched a logo design and tagline contest for IACAT. The contest aims to select catchy and remarkable taglines that would convey the Philippine government's message against all types of trafficking. Please visit our website [www.cfo.gov.ph](http://www.cfo.gov.ph) and our official social media pages for the contest mechanics. We will accept entries until August 3, 2018. Financial prizes await three lucky winners.*

*Human trafficking is evil. It strips our men, women, children, and youth of their dreams and dignity. The local government, academe, NGOs including international and migrant organizations, faith-based organizations, private sector, and every one of us can contribute in combatting human trafficking. If we join hands, there is much more that we can accomplish – from the reporting of cases, prevention of incidences, protection of victims, prosecution of perpetrators, to the recovery and reintegration of survivors. Every one of us should not be afraid, step up and take part if we want to succeed in this battle.*

*Let me conclude by sharing this apt Bible verse - Romans 12:21: Do not be overcome by evil; but overcome evil with good.*

*We hope everybody enjoys and gets insights and lessons from the film.”*