

## Oplan Baklas nets 150kg campaign posters, nails

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CEBU, Philippines — A total of 150 kilograms of campaign materials posted on trees were removed during the first day of Oplan Baklas spearhead by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR)-7.

The enforcement teams were distributed in the cities of Mandaue, Cebu and Toledo as well as in Carmen town yesterday.

Each team has five to seven members composed of personnel from Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), Cebu Provincial Government, Philippine National Police (PNP), Commission on Elections (Comelec) and DENR.

The teams have also removed about 10 kilos of nails.

Ariel Riza, Chief of DENR-7 Enforcement Division, said the initiative is not only to protect the trees but also to inform the public, especially candidates and campaign managers, of the existing law that prohibits such acts.

“Kung mapamatud-an nato nga sila gyud. Kung ma-verify nato ang candidate, puwede ma-forfeit ilang pagdagan,” Riza explained.

DENR will continue with their operation in Tagbilaran City, Dumaguete City, Siquijor and the rest of Cebu province in the coming days until May 13.

### Violations

Expecting rampant disregard of campaign rules, the Commission on Elections (Comelec) has turned to the public to go after transgressing candidates and their supporters.

In a report by the Philippine Star, Comelec spokesman James Jimenez said they have received numerous reports of violations of the “common poster area” since the first day of the campaign period that ends on May 12.

“A lot of campaign materials are being installed. I don’t have the numbers but since this morning, I’ve personally seen more than six reports sent directly to me,” he said.

Jimenez noted that the Comelec wants those who do not respect election rules identified and penalized but the agency could not do this alone. He urged the public to do “citizen reporting” by documenting violations.

However, he clarified that the poll body does not encourage “citizen’s arrest” because it “would put people in harm’s way.”

“What we do encourage is citizen reporting. If you can do it without exposing yourself unnecessarily to risk, then please document these violations that you see,” he added. — **Anjel N. Co** **STC Mass Comm Intern/Cris Rheanne S. Sacay** **UV Journalism Intern/Kris Imea C. Ruales** **UV AB English Intern/MBG (FREEMAN)** Read more at <https://www.philstar.com/the-freeman/cebu-news/2018/05/11/1814244/oplan-baklas-nets-150kg-campaign-posters-nails#VCfWaFzPm10G6qAt.99>