

Striving for change and efficiency in the police

PNP Chief shares his vision for a revitalized police force

Solving crimes and building peace and trust within communities is what the police force is here for. “To protect and serve” is the most distinguished tagline of the police force worldwide, encapsulating their commitment in shaping modern societies the way that it is today.

As crimes today evolves and change, from robbery, kidnapping, and snatching, and cybercrime adding to the list, especially in a world of digital revolution, it has put the country more in danger. But, as crimes have evolved, so has our police force, the Philippine National Police (PNP), which is responsible for maintaining peace and order, solve crimes, and more importantly, ensure peace and safety of all Filipinos.

In an exclusive interview with *BusinessWorld*, PNP Chief Rommel Francisco Marbil noted that the Philippine force is skillful and talented; and for a long time, it’s been doing its best protect and serve its people, but more changes are to come.

Under the new leadership of Mr. Marbil, the PNP is striving for change first and foremost. According to him, PNP’s uniqueness lies on the services that they offer; and rather than being profit-oriented, they center their services on the Filipinos, ensuring it will make a positive difference into their lives. Besides, establishing trust and confidence among Filipinos is one of the core operations on why the police force exist.

“There is no easy answer. What we’re selling is our services; we are not profit-oriented, and we want people to feel our service,” Mr. Marbil said.

To empower the institution and become agents of transformation, the police force is improving efficiency among its services. The PNP chief shared that several changes were made, including adjusting the flag raising time to be more efficient, as well as discontinuing the police band (unless when necessary) and holding athletic activities.

PNP is also changing policies within the force. One example is the unit performance,



PNP Chief Rommel Francisco Marbil

wherein Mr. Marbil said the PNP is aiming for zero cases this term.

“Before, unit performance was highly competitive, with success being determined by the number of cases solved, such as drug cases, and illegal gambling among others. Now, we’re changing that. We are aiming for zero or no cases left.”

Also, with the ever-evolving digital world, especially with the rise of cybercrime cases, what the PNP needs is digital adoption. With modern technology, the police force is finding innovative ways to ensure efficiency and public safety.

One way to do this is by digitalizing their services, such as permitting licenses for firearms and gun holders much easier and more digital.

“The process used to be complicated: You had to go to Camp Crame; wait a day for the permit/license; then return the following week for the ID, which took up another entire day. That’s why we’re making changes. We want to computerize the process to make it easier for gun holders and security guards to get their license. We want all services to be computerized and outsourced to make

things easier. This way, trust will develop; and the police force can be more efficient.” Mr. Marbil said.

Another thing about digitalization is that it improves crime prevention. One of the most popular technologies used are surveillance cameras, also known as the closed-circuit television (CCTV), which are widely used in many countries, including the Philippines.

In the Philippines, surveillance cameras are installed in every establishment, along with command centers located in various cities in the metro, and other regions as well. While they have the technology, they also lack connectivity. In response, PNP is helping in drafting further legislation to improve interconnectivity in the country.

“We are helping one of the congressmen to come up with a legislation on improving interconnection among CCTVs, especially when there’s AI technology involved. The police are already using AI, in terms of body cameras and streamlining PNP operations,” Mr. Marbil said.

Mr. Marbil also emphasized the need for medical and legal assistance through outsourcing services. For the PNP chief,

health services for police personnel must be improved by giving health cards available and accessible to all police officers. As for legal services, he pointed out the need for more private lawyers and private firms.

All these changes are aimed at enhancing a police force that is more equipped and empowered protect their fellow Filipinos. At the core of these transformation initiatives, for Mr. Marbil, is restoring the image and dignity of fellow policemen.

Being a police meant a lot of things, mostly it meant honor; but recently, the PNP observes, it is raising doubts, leaving negative perception from the public view.

“In the past, the word ‘police’ was associated with honor, but now it has become questionable because of the recent negative stories and events associated with them recently,” he shared. “The police’s achievements were something good to hear but over time, we are losing trust, our image is being destroyed, which is hard to recover.”

Hence, the national police force is striving for change, both internally and externally, ensuring a better force will serve and protect the Filipino people.

“We are striving for change, we hold our police officers accountable; but we don’t brag about their wrongdoings. Because we don’t want the people’s trust in us to change. There is only one PNP and that will never change,” Mr. Marbil said.

In its commitment with the government towards a “New Philippines” with its own tagline, “In a new Philippines, the police force wants its people to be safe,” the PNP is on the right track in achieving this vision.

For Mr. Marbil, the future for PNP is bright as it continues to strive for change and transformation, shaping the Philippines into a safe, peaceful, and progressive country — one that is livable for all Filipino people.

“Being the PNP chief is destiny. I want to make innovative changes for the betterment of PNP,” Mr. Marbil said. “Let’s take things slowly, focusing on efficiency and the quality of service.”

