

# Philippines: Senate slashes funding of gov't counterinsurgency body

Wednesday 17 November 2021, by [VIVO Sharlyn](#) (Date first published: 10 November 2021).

**MANILA - Progressives welcomed the proposal of the Senate finance committee to reduce the budget of the government's counterinsurgency body.**

The National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC) is slated to receive P4 billion (\$79.9 million) next year from the proposed P28 billion (\$559 million).

Sen. Sonny Angara said on Tuesday that the decision is based on the NTF-ELCAC's failure to fully report how it spent P16 billion (\$318.78 million) to help local villages. The funds, he said, should instead be realigned for the government's health programs.

"This is correct as their funds were only used by the NTF-ELCAC to red-tag and harass progressive groups and individuals. They deserve to be defunded and abolished," said Bayan Muna Rep. Eufemia Cullamat.

There have been repeated calls to defund and abolish the NTF-ELCAC, especially when its spokesperson Gen. Antonio Parlade likened those distributing food and other essentials through community pantries to "Satan".

Recently, the agency has been spending their resources in a series of library raids and book purges in state universities and colleges, and in filing disqualification charges against progressive partylists under the Makabayan bloc.

Cullamat said that "the government should instead fund its vaccine program, aid distribution, and improve public health services especially in areas where there are high COVID-19 cases" rather than allow public funds to be used in attacking communities or be pocketed.

In its recent report, the Commission on Audit flagged a series of questionable spending by agencies who channeled funds to NTF-ELCAC.

Youth group Student Christian Movement of the Philippines (SCMP) meanwhile said in its Facebook post that the funds allocated to the NTF-ELCAC would be of better use if appropriated for the safe return of classes and support for students and teachers.

Yesterday, multi-sectoral groups held a protest outside the Senate as budget deliberation resumed.

The Senate is set to begin its deliberations on the 2022 budget on Nov. 10.

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