

## **DOLE responds to the NAGKAISA Labor Coalition's issues and concerns in virtual dialogue**

In a virtual dialogue held last 1 April 2021, the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) through the Bureau of Labor Relations (BLR) addressed the issues and concerns raised by the NAGKAISA Labor Coalition.

During the meeting, the NAGKAISA registered their concern on the recent arrests, red-tagging, and killing of trade union leaders and members as well as the continuous violations of the workers' rights to freedom of association. In a nutshell, they recommended and urged the DOLE to be at the forefront of these concerns and promptly issue strong statements condemning red-tagging, arrests, or killing of trade unionists.

They also raised the exacerbating situation and conditions of the healthcare workers amid the pandemic, thereby requesting for another dialogue with the Department of Health (DOH) to discuss in particular the removal of red and green zone dichotomy hospitals which leads to the discrimination in the provision of Special Risk Allowance, granting of the hazard pay to all healthcare workers, and the continuation or extension of the compensation benefits to the healthcare workers who contracts COVID-19.

Secretary Silvestre Bello III, together with Undersecretary Benjo Santos M. Benavidez welcomed the recommendations of the group and committed to considering them to address the issues and concerns at hand. The DOLE also pledged to be engaged and convey the group's concerns to the involved government agencies to further protect and promote the rights of the workers, particularly the freedom of association.

The NAGKAISA expressed their appreciation to the Department for accepting their request for dialogue as they received candid and positive responses to the abovementioned issues and concerns.