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Cop chief in hot water for honoring Eddie Villanueva

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PUERTO PRINCESA CITY, Philippines -- For according arrival honors Sunday to evangelist Eddie Villanueva, who has called on President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to resign and hold snap elections, Superintendent Enrique Ancheta, chief of police of this city, has found himself in hot water.

"I have served notice to him (Ancheta) that he will face administrative hearings for ignorance (of protocols), malfeasance and abuse of authority," Palawan provincial police director Dennis Peña told the Philippine Daily Inquirer (parent company of INQUIRER.net).

Villanueva, who ran for president and lost in 2004, was here as guest at the founding anniversary of the local chapter of the Jesus is Lord (JIL) Movement, which he heads.

Upon his arrival here Sunday morning on a regular commercial flight from Manila, Villanueva was accorded what Peña described as "improvised full honors" at the airport's arrival area.

Ancheta had at least 10 policewomen lined up to usher Villanueva into his waiting vehicle, which was escorted by a pair of motorcycle-riding policemen and several other vehicles to clear the traffic.

"Protocol-wise, he [Villanueva] was not entitled to [the] military honors that...Ancheta accorded to him. It also puts us in a bad light because he is a personality who has called upon the President, our commander in chief, to resign," Peña said.

Peña explained that only ranking dignitaries -- including military generals on official visits and top judicial, legislative and foreign personalities -- are entitled to military honors upon arrival at the airport.

"Even military generals waive this [honors] when they have already done a previous visit. Besides, there is a specific memo from PNP Director General Avelino Razon to discourage giving such honors," Peña said.

Interviewed on local radio, Ancheta defended his action, saying he was merely following a request by Villanueva's local followers.

Peña said Ancheta could face sanctions from the police regional office, which will conduct an investigation into the incident.

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