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Cops cry coverup on death in resort

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PUERTO PRINCESA CITY – The provincial prosecutor of Palawan on Thursday asked the Department of Justice to issue a hold departure order against the manager of the exclusive Amanpulo resort after he was implicated in the suspected murder of a construction worker in January this year.

“We have asked Secretary Gonzalez to issue a hold departure order for Miguel Guedes de Sousa because of credible reports that he is leaving the country and because he has been implicated as an accessory to murder,” Provincial Prosecutor Allen Ross Rodriguez told the Inquirer.

De Sousa, a Portuguese national, was named respondent and was ordered arrested in a murder and obstruction of justice case in connection with the death last Jan. 2 of a steel worker, Rodolfo Abamo, 41, at the barracks of Amanpulo resorts in Cuyo, Palawan.

Police suspect that Abamo may have been a victim of foul play and that the management of the resort may have had a hand in covering up the crime by bringing the body to Metro Manila and preempting the local police investigation.

The Cuyo police claimed De Sousa had ordered the transfer of the victim’s body to Manila without coordinating with local police investigators and the municipal health official.

Eastern Police

Also implicated in the case was Eastern Police District Supt. Manuel Aranas, who reportedly intervened in the investigation by facilitating an unauthorized post mortem examination of the victim’s body after it was flown to Metro Manila from Pamilacan Island where Amanpulo is located.

Apart from De Sousa and Aranas, also charged were engineer Santi Geronimo, engineer Simplicio Sambrano, Robert Hauchian, Capt. Mike Syjuco [company pilot], Choi de Leon, Sonny Rodriguez and Cesar Padilla [resort’s chief of security].

The management of Amanpulo has declined to issue an official statement on the case.

A person claiming to represent the resort, however, has sent several text messages to the Inquirer to say that the resort has nothing to do with the death of Abamo.

“Mr. De Sousa had nothing to do with the construction worker of Excel. Amanpulo has a construction contract with Excel. Excel is the employer of the dead construction worker who... had no antemortem injuries noted,” a certain Nancy said in the text message.

The Inquirer has asked Amanpulo management to issue an official statement on the case but received no reply.

Amanpulo, located in Pamalican Island off Cuyo, Palawan, 360 km south of Manila in the Sulu Sea, is one of the country’s most expensive and exclusive island resorts.

Hollywood stars like Michael Jackson, Diana Ross and Robert de Niro had been to the place.

Cuyo police

Senior Insp. Necerato Guardiano Sabando Jr., police chief of Cuyo, said in an interview with the Inquirer that resort officials had deliberately tried to prevent them from investigating the death of Abamo last Jan. 2.

Sabando said the management of the resort sent Abamo’s body to Manila without clearing it with the local police and health authorities.

Scene of the crime operatives were also prevented from conducting an investigation, Sabando said.

Cuyo police investigators Nereo Cablao Gallardo and Pedro Magbanua, who inspected the resort and interviewed personnel, said Abamo might have been a victim of foul play.

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