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AMID DISINFORMATION, STICK TO ETHICS, SAY TOP NETWORK NEWS EXECUTIVES

Ging Reyes and Luchi Cruz Valdes, two of the Philippines' top network news executives, said that journalists should stick to the ethics of their profession amid the widespread disinformation propagated through social media. Reyes heads ABS-CBN's News and Current Affairs while Valdes heads TV5's Network News and Information.

The two expressed their views as panelists during the online learning session organized by the *Kapisanan ng mga Brodkaster ng Pilipinas* (KBP) last September 22. The session is part of the project of the KBP to help members improve their reporting of the 2022 elections.

Reyes and Valdes shared their views while reacting to the presentation of Jason Cabañes, PhD, professor of communications at the De La Salle University in Manila, on the topic *Reporting in the Age of Disinformation*. Cabañes presented a disturbing view of disinformation as an organized enterprise conducted by creative industry professionals in social media for both profit and politics.

Reyes said that she initially thought social media was good for news organizations but realized that it has made their job harder, not only because social media has become a competitor but also because it requires a lot of effort and resources to verify information coming out of it.

Despite the hardship, Reyes still believes in the importance of maintaining professionalism in the news media. "We had to innovate, to adjust to the changing times, but the values do not change," she said. "We all know at heart that reporting the truth is difficult, you can make a lot of enemies." But Reyes said that media must continue to report the truth and "if there's some mistake, some inaccuracy, then admit it and correct it and learn from it, but we cannot turn our backs from the values that shaped who we are."

For her part, Valdes decried journalists who have moved "from factual reporting to a lot of advocacy and even influence reporting." She said that this kind of reporting has found a platform in social media.

Valdes admonished journalists to "forget about speed, forget about scooping others. Let's just stick to being sure [that] what we report is true." She agreed with Reyes: "We don't need to make new rules or a new code of ethics because these do not change, we just have to apply them. Whether you're in social media or in mainstream media, you just have to commit to the ethics of the profession."

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