



'Employers forcing workers to get vaccinated face legal action'

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MANILA, Philippines — Employers requiring their workers to get vaccinated or undergo swab tests face legal action, the country's largest labor coalition warned on Wednesday.

In an interview with "The Chiefs" on Cignal TV's One News channel, Nagkaisa chairman Sonny Matula said there are workers who intend to hale employers to court for forcing them to get inoculated.

"There are workers who came to us," Matula said in Filipino about workers who plan to take legal action over their predicament with their employers. "If they are (gravely) affected, we can take the case to court."

Since the government has made pronouncements in support of certain employers requiring vaccination among their workers, Matula said a class suit may be filed before the Supreme Court (SC).

They can petition the legality of the resolution issued by the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF), which mandates vaccination for employees who perform on-site work, he said.

Even with the IATF resolution, no employer can require an employee to get vaccinated because the existing law only provides for voluntary vaccination, Matula added.

The labor leader said workers also have the option to file a complaint before the Regional Trial Court (RTC) or seek a voluntary arbitration case if they feel discriminated by employers for not meeting the vaccination requirement.

He maintained that the IATF resolution on mandatory vaccination for on-site workers is unreasonable considering that the country's vaccination rate outside Metro Manila remains low at this time.

Even the option to undergo a swab test for those who refuse to get vaccinated is unreasonable as it will push many workers to hunger and debt, he said.

Matula said the government should also consider that there are a number of workers who refuse to get vaccinated because of their religious beliefs. "It is very important that we respect the (religious) beliefs of

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