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oacpa.army2012@gmail.com

OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS NEWS CLIPPINGS

18 April 2016

Monday

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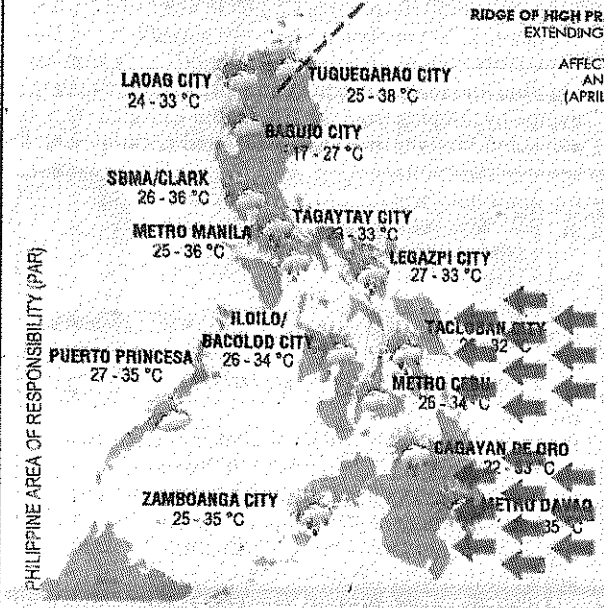
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TODAY'S WEATHER FORECAST | APRIL 18, 2016 | MONDAY



PHILIPPINE AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY (PAR)

RIDGE OF HIGH PRESSURE AREA
EXTENDING OVER LUZON
EASTERLIES
AFFECTING VISAYAS
AND MINDANAO
(APRIL 17, 5:00 AM)




SUNRISE	SUNSET
5:40 AM	6:10 PM
MOONRISE	MOONSET
3:12 PM	3:02 AM
FIRST QUARTER	FULL MOON
APR 14 11:50 AM	APR 22 1:24 PM
LOW TIDE	HIGH TIDE
MANILA SOUTH HARBOR 2:22 AM 0.07 Meter	7:51 PM 0.73 Meter

Partly cloudy skies

Partly cloudy to at times cloudy with
mishshowers and/or thunderstorms

	APR 17	APR 18	APR 19	APR 20	APR 21	APR 22
METRO MANILA	26 - 35 °C	25 - 36 °C	23 - 33 °C	22 - 32 °C	29 - 32 °C	26 - 33 °C
TAGAYTAY			23 - 33 °C	22 - 32 °C		
TACLOBAN					29 - 32 °C	26 - 33 °C
TUQUEGARAO	25 - 39 °C	25 - 39 °C	28 - 33 °C	28 - 33 °C	22 - 33 °C	23 - 33 °C
LEGAZPI			28 - 33 °C	28 - 33 °C		
CAGAYAN DE ORO					22 - 33 °C	23 - 33 °C
LAOAG	24 - 33 °C	24 - 33 °C	26 - 34 °C	26 - 34 °C	25 - 36 °C	25 - 35 °C
PUERTO PRINCESA			26 - 34 °C	26 - 34 °C		
METRO DAVAO					25 - 36 °C	25 - 35 °C
BAGUIO	17 - 28 °C	18 - 28 °C	25 - 33 °C	25 - 33 °C	25 - 34 °C	25 - 35 °C
ILOILO/ BACOLOD			25 - 33 °C	25 - 33 °C		
ZAMBOANGA					25 - 34 °C	25 - 35 °C
SBMA/ CLARK	26 - 36 °C	25 - 35 °C	26 - 34 °C	25 - 33 °C		
METRO CEBU			26 - 34 °C	25 - 33 °C		

Watch PANAHOON.TV everyday at 5:00 AM on PTV (Channel 4).

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Duterte foes pounce on mayor's rape joke

Presidential bet sorry for 'gutter language'

By DJ Yap, Christine O. Avendaño, Niña P. Calleja and Nico Alconaba

A VIDEO CLIP of Davao City Mayor Rodrigo Duterte making a joke about an Australian lay missionary who was raped during a 1989 hostage crisis in his city has stirred outrage among his rivals.

The furor over his remarks prompted Duterte, the front-runner in the presidential race, to say sorry for his gutter language.

"That's gutter language. That is how men speak," he told reporters in Davao City yesterday. "I am sorry that others were offended."

The rape of a woman "is not a joking matter; this is barbarity," said Liberal Party (LP) standard-bearer Mar Roxas, who has frequently tangled with Duterte over the mayor's sexist remarks in the course of the election season.

"Women have rights; they are not playthings," the former

DUTERTE/A22

From page A1

interior secretary said of his rival's remarks in the video, which began circulating online, quickly turning viral, over the weekend.

Two other presidential candidates—Vice President Jejomar Binay and Sen. Grace Poe—also expressed outrage over the "revolting" and "distasteful" joke.

Malacañang joined in the outrage, saying Duterte's statement showed the mayor "has not matured nor evolved, and that his offer to serve as President truly deserves scrutiny."

Duterte's brash and brutally frank speaking style has won him plenty of would-be voters, pushing him to the top of the polls with less than a month to go before the elections.

He was the leader in the latest voter preference polls conducted by Pulse Asia and Social Weather Stations, closely followed by erstwhile front-runner Poe. Trailing behind them were Roxas and Binay.

Hostage drama

In the clip, Duterte, who was onstage during a campaign rally, appeared to be referencing the August 1989 hostage drama at the Davao police detention cell, when one of the hostages, Australian lay missionary Jacqueline Hamill, 36, was raped by the inmates.

The inmates, after grabbing their guards' weapons, seized Hamill and 14 other church workers who were holding a

Bible service in the prison, according to news reports.

The two-day hostage drama ended after government forces stormed the prison cell, killing all 15 hostage-takers. Hamill, whose neck was slashed, and four other hostages died.

Like beautiful actress

"All the women there were raped in the first assault and they retreated, but the bodies the attackers used remained there, one of which was the body of an Australian lay minister. Tsk, this is a problem... The body was brought outside and it was covered. I looked at her face, son of a bitch... she looked like a beautiful actress in the United States," Duterte said.

"Son of a bitch, what a waste. I was thinking that they raped her and lined up. I was angry because she was raped, that's one thing. But she was so beautiful, the mayor should have been first, what a waste," he added, eliciting laughs from the crowd.

'Crazy maniac'

Calling Duterte a "crazy maniac," Binay said rape and murder of a woman were no laughing matters.

"Mr. Duterte, don't you have a mother? Don't you have a daughter?" he asked as he described the rape joke as simply revolting and callous.

"You are a crazy maniac who doesn't respect women and doesn't deserve to be President," said the Vice President who had been urging people

Rape a serious crime, Gabriela points out

By Karlos Manlupig
Mindanao Bureau

DAVAO CITY—The women's group, Gabriela, cried foul over the recent reported rape joke of Davao City Mayor Rodrigo Duterte, a presidential candidate.

"Rape is a serious crime not just against women but against humanity," said Gabriela national vice chair Gert Libang.

A spliced video started circulating online showing Duterte sharing a story about

a hostage-taking incident in a Davao City jail where a female Australian lay worker was raped and killed.

Duterte reportedly joked about someone being first in raping the Australian missionary worker.

"Rape, or any form of sexual abuse is not a joke, or something to be trivialized in a joke, especially by a public official and most especially by those aspiring for the highest post in the land," Libang said.

The Gabriela official urged

Duterte to immediately make a public apology for his statement.

"Mayor Rodrigo Duterte should immediately apologize for his statements making fun of rape," Libang said.

Gabriela challenged Duterte to use the opportunity to discuss and raise issues about the women sector instead of making fun of it.

"We also challenge him to use his campaign to promote issues that will elevate the condition of women and their families," Libang said.

pressed utmost concern about the lack of fitness for the presidency," Coloma said.

'Sorry'

After saying sorry for his language, Duterte repeated to reporters what he told the crowd at the Amoranto Sports Complex in Quezon City on April 12: "Oh, this one is very beautiful, who looked like an actress. Son of a bitch, they did it to her. The mayor should have been first. Kill them all."

He said it was not a joke when he said it. "Do not make me apologize for something which I did. It's a matter of honor. I said it in the heat of anger."

Although he would not apologize to anyone in particular, Duterte said he was sorry to the Filipino people. "It's my style, it's my mouth. I said it in the heat of anger."

But listen to the story behind it, he said.

The story that Duterte was referring to was the hostage-taking of three foreign missionaries inside the jail in Davao Metrodiscom headquarters in 1989.

The main suspect, Federico Pugoy, had earlier held a bus and was convinced by Duterte to release the hostages in exchange for the mayor himself.

Duterte said he was the one who ordered the hostage-takers killed and as a result was investigated by a congressional committee.

With a report from

Nestor Corrales, Inquirer.Net

To view the video clip, go to:

<http://bit.ly/1VaEO8U>

not to vote for Duterte for killing innocent people.

For her part, Poe said she took offense at Duterte's remarks, calling these "distasteful and unacceptable, and reflects his disrespect for women."

"No one, whoever she is and whatever her looks may be, deserves to be raped and abused. Rape is a crime and no laughing matter. We should all be outraged at abuses against women," she said in a statement.

"While some may seem impressed with the mayor's nonchalance and tough-talking stance, he should be reminded that at all times, women, men and the LGBT alike should be treated with dignity and respect," she added.

Unfit for President

Roxas said the joke showed how

unfit the tough-talking mayor was to be the country's President.

LP vice presidential candidate Leni Robredo said she was appalled by Duterte's remarks as a human rights lawyer who had witnessed women's struggles against violence.

"It is not right to make jokes about rape," said Robredo, a mother of three daughters and widow of Interior Secretary Jesse Robredo. "We shall set a bad example to the youth if we poke fun at a crime that's as heinous as rape."

She said someone who was aspiring to be the country's leader had no business making jokes about rape. "Public servants need to set an example to the people."

Poe's running mate, Sen. Francis Escudero, said Duterte's statements should be denounced.

"His frequent use of women,

regardless of their circumstance, as subject or object of his jokes during his presidential sorties is foul and offensive, to say the least. It is a distasteful attempt to woo voters at the expense of women and by demeaning the dignity of women," Escudero said in a statement.

"We should, at all times, protect and respect the dignity of women and other genders. We do not want the Philippines to become a haven for women and sex offenders," he said.

In a statement, Presidential Communications Secretary Herminio Coloma Jr said Duterte had "made fun of and trivialized" the "rape and killing" of Hamill.

"Indeed, he has confirmed by word and deed why those who oppose his candidacy have ex-

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Officer in Basilan clash named Army elite force chief

A military officer who was once relieved from his post over the bloody Al Barka encounter in 2011 has been named commander of an elite Army unit.

Col. Alexander Macario, chief of the Special Operations Task Force Basilan during the Al Barka incident, was ap-

pointed commander of the Army's Light Reaction Regiment.

Army assistant chief of staff for civil-military operations Col. Arnulfo Burgos Jr. said Macario would assume his new post on April 26.

Macario would succeed Brig. Gen. Danilo Pamnag,

who was designated as chief of the Special Operations Command last week.

"Colonel Macario is a well-decorated combat officer whose vast experiences leading people in the field coupled with his effective leadership qualities have further honed

By ALEXIS ROMERO

and prepared him to assume higher command positions," Burgos said.

Nineteen soldiers were killed and 14 others wounded during an encounter with Moro Islamic Liberation Front gunmen at Sitio Baisung, Barangay Cambug in Al Bar-

ka town on Oct. 18, 2011.

Macario was relieved from his post by then Army chief Arturo Ortiz so he could face the investigation on the lapses committed during the encounter.

Macario and three other Special Forces officers were charged with violation of the

Articles of War 96, conduct unbecoming an officer and gentleman; 97, conduct prejudicial to good order and military discipline; and 84, willful or neglect loss, damage or wrongful disposition.

A military court cleared Macario of the charges in 2012 for lack of evidence.

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Military names new LRR commander

By Mario J. Mallari

A military official, who was probed for the 2011 Basilan debacle that resulted in the killing of 19 Special Forces (SF) personnel was named as incoming commander of the elite counter-terrorism Light Reaction Regiment (LRR).

Col. Alexander Macario is set to assume as LRR commander on April 26.

Macario was the commander of the Special Operations Task Force Basilan when 19 SF soldiers, including four junior officers, were killed in a clash with combined Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and Abu Sayyaf terrorists in Al Barka, Basilan.

On Oct. 18, 2011, elements of the 4th SF Battalion were deployed for a law enforcement operation against an Abu Sayyaf leader but were pinned down by combined MILF and Abu Sayyaf fighters.

Macario was probed by a

court martial but was cleared.

Two other officers – Col. Amikandra Undog, then Special Forces commander, and Lt. Col. Leonardo Pena, then 4th SF Battalion commander, faced court martial proceedings for violation of Articles of War 96 or conduct unbecoming a gentleman and officer, and AW 97 or conduct prejudicial good order and military discipline.

Col. Arnulfo Marcelo Burgos, Army assistant chief of staff for Civil Military Operations (G7), described Macario as a well-experienced combat officer and an effective leader.

"Colonel Macario is a well-decorated combat officer whose vast experiences leading people in the field coupled with his effective leadership qualities have further honed and prepared him to assume higher command positions with bigger responsibilities in the military organization," Burgos said.

14 April 2016

Malaya
The National Newspaper

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Colonel tried for Al-Barka deaths is new chief of elite Army unit

BY VICTOR REYES

A SENIOR Army officer who was tried but cleared by a court martial for the bungled operation against the Abu Sayyaf and rogue members of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front rebels in October 2011 in Basilan has been named new commander of the elite Light Reaction Regiment.

The Basilan incident left 19 soldiers dead.

Col. Alexander Macario is set to assume as new commander of the US-trained and equipped LRR tentatively on April 26, said Col. Arnulfo Marcelo Burgos, Army assistant chief of staff for civil military operations and concurrent acting Army spokesman.

Macario is a member of the Philippine Military Academy Class 1985. before his new assignment, he is commander of the Army's 401st Brigade based in Agusan del Sur. He relinquished the post to Col. Cristobal Zaragosa last Friday.

Burgos said Macario's designation was

approved last March 21.

A military source said President Aquino approved the designation of Macario as LRR commander on the recommendation of the military leadership.

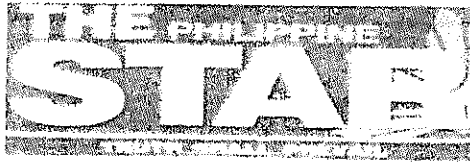
Macario will succeed Brig. Gen. Danilo Gines Pamonag who assumed Monday last week as the new commander of the Army's Special Operations Command. The LRR is among the specialized units under the SOCOM.

Burgos said Macario is a "well-decorated combat officer."

Macario and three other military officers were relieved and subsequently tried by a general court martial in connection with the bungled October 2011 operation against the Abu Sayyaf in Al Barka, Basilan.

The soldiers were out to serve arrest warrants against a small group of Abu Sayyaf and rogue MILF men when fighting erupted. The enemy number later swelled to about 400 men, outnumbering the operating troops.

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Abu suspect nabbed in Zambo

ZAMBOANGA CITY – A suspected Abu Sayyaf bandit wanted for kidnapping was arrested by government security forces at a mall in this city on Saturday.

Johar Jaalam was arrested at around 2 p.m. by military and police intelligence agents of the Task Force Zambasulta.

The military said Jaalam has a standing arrest warrant for kidnapping with serious illegal detention issued by the Regional Trial Court Branch 16 in this city.

The suspect was brought to the office of the city police Criminal Investigation and Detection Group for documentation.

– Roel Pareño

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5 troopers hurt in Samar ambush

By RICKY BAUTISTA

BASEY, Samar – Five Army troopers were wounded in an ambush by suspected New People's Army (NPA) guerrillas in this town yesterday morning.

The troopers were traveling along the highway in Barangay New San Agustin when their vehicle hit an improvised explosive device (IED) believed planted by the rebels, according to S/Sgt. John Siervo, one of the soldiers who responded to the scene.

Siervo said the explosion was followed by a burst of gunfire from the rebels who were positioned on both sides of the highway.

The explosion left the five troopers wounded, but two of them managed to return fire as they rushed to take cover.

The firefight lasted 30 minutes.

Siervo said the rebels raided the military vehicle and took the firearms and personal belongings left behind by the troopers.

The five were identified as S/Sgt. Luisito Abelido and Privates First Class Danilo Silagan, Domie Sanchez, Renato Padernal and a certain Baldonado. They were rushed to a hospital in Tacloban City for treatment.

Responding soldiers and police officers recovered bullets and shells for different rifles, IED fragments and bomb-making paraphernalia.

Also found at the scene were water bottles, left-over food, improvised bedsheets, white headbands and pieces of clothing.

"These showed that the rebels, around 50 of them, had camped out here overnight," said

The military said the rebels were led by a certain Kumander Dulay of the NPA's Regional Guerrilla Unit operating in the towns of Paranas, Sta. Rita, Basey and Marabut.

Rizza Macalalad, of the Basey Tourism Office, said the incident might compel them to cancel tourist arrivals today.

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NPA rebels overrun military camp in Davao City; 19 firearms seized

By Mario J. Mallari

Communist New People's Army (NPA) rebels overran a military detachment in Davao City on Saturday, carting away 19 high-powered firearms.

Capt. Roda Leoncito, public affairs officer of the military's Eastern Mindanao Command (Eastmincom), said that more or

less 60 fully-armed NPA rebels initially harassed the Civilian Armed Auxiliary (CAA) Detachment in Sitio Quiman Anao, Barangay Salapawan, Paquibato District at around 7 a.m.

The NPA raiders were reportedly led by a certain "Jinggoy" of the NPA's Southern Mindanao Regional Committee.

The communist rebels were able

to overrun the detachment at around 8 a.m. after the nine militiamen manning the detachment were overwhelmed.

Carted away were an M16 rifle with 13 magazines and 357 rounds of ammunition; nine M14 rifles with 45 magazines and 1,000 ammo; nine Garand rifles with 110 clips and 715 ammo and four hand grenades.

Leoncito said that two Huey

attack helicopters were dispatched to conduct persuasion flights and insertion of troops from the Army's 84th Infantry Battalion.

However, there was no reported encounter.

At around 11 a.m. Saturday, the nine personnel manning the detachment, led by a certain Corporal Sabareza managed to regroup in nearby Barangay Tapak, one of them

CAA Mario Mariaman was wounded.

Leoncito said that a board of inquiry was activated to investigate the incident.

The raid is the biggest so far this year for the NPAs who have been conducting atrocities in various parts of the country, particularly in Mindanao, after their anniversary celebration last March 29.

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Malaya
The National Newspaper

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NPA seizes high-powered arms from Army detachment in Davao

BY VICTOR REYES

NEW People's Army rebels overran an Army detachment in Davao City on Saturday morning, wounding a government militiaman and carting away a large cache of high-powered firearms.

The government troops were outnumbered, said Capt. Roda Leoncito, public affairs officer of the AFP's Eastern Mindanao Command.

Leoncito said the 60-man NPA group from the Pulang Bagani

Command 1 of the Southern Mindanao Regional Party Committee swooped down on the detachment in Sitio Quiman Anao in Barangay Salapawan, Paquibato district around 7 a.m.

The detachment was manned by 11 militiamen and a Corporal Sabareza of the Army's 72nd Infantry Battalion.

Leoncito said the rebels carted away nine M14 rifles with 45 magazines and 1,000 rounds of ammunition, nine Garand rifles with 110 clips and 715 rounds of ammunition, an M16

rifle with 13 magazines and 375 rounds of ammunition, and four grenades.

Leoncito said the Army's 10th Infantry Division has formed a Board of Inquiry to look into the circumstances of the debacle. "There will be an investigation on the said incident," she said.

"It is not normal for our detachments to be overrun, so we have to see the possible lapses or what really transpired for us to also arrive at an action needed to prevent similar incidents," she said.

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POLICE FILES

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PNP official, 3 tauhan dinukot ng NPA sa Davao

DAVAO CITY - Patuloy ang rescue operation ng 84th Infantry Battalion Philippine Army at Davao City Police Office matapos ang umano'y pagdukot sa station commander ng Paquibato-Philippine National Police (PNP) sa nasabing lungsod.

Ang biktima ay si Pol. C/Insp. Leonardo Tarungoy kabilang ang apat pang tauhan nito na kagagawan umano ng mga rebelde sa pangunguna ni Komander Jinggoy.

Kinumpirma ni Lt. Col. Luoie Villanueva, battalion commander ng 84th IB, na una nang inatake ng New People's Army (NPA) alas-7:00 ng umaga kamakalawa ang detachment ng 72nd IB Kadlit Battalion sa may Guimarao, Paquibato District. Dito ay nakubkob ng rebeldeng NPA ang kampo ng mga sundalo.

Ayon pa sa imbestigasyon, isang CAFGU member at isang sibilyan ang nasugatan sa pangyayari na nasa mabuting kalagayan na ngayon.

Napag-alamang matapos makatanggap ng balita ang Paquibato PNP sa nangyaring engkuwentro sa 84th IB at NPA, agad rumesponde ang station commander kasama ang apat pang pulis na walang koordinasyon sa kasundaluhan.

Pagdating sa Brgy. Mapulam, naharang ng mga rebelde ang sasakyan ng Paquibato PNP at doon na sila dinukot ng mga NPA.

1e

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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Search on for Army diver

DEEP-SEA divers are searching for a military officer declared missing after he failed to surface following a diving exercise Sunday morning in Samal, Davao del Norte.

The military has not named the officer as his family has yet to be informed of the incident.

Maj. Ezra Balagtey, Eastern Mindanao Command (Eastmincom) spokesperson, said the incident happened at Angel's Cove on Talikud Island in Samal.

A joint proficiency diving exercise was being held there by the Eastmincom, Naval Forces Eastern Mindanao and Naval Special Operations Unit.

A group of divers arrived at around 7 a.m. and conducted exercises, but the victim, reportedly an officer of the Philippine Army, failed to surface after the last one.

Balagtey said deep-sea divers and search teams from the Philippine Coast Guard, Naval Special Operations Unit and Naval Forces Eastern Mindanao immediately launched a search.

Julie M. Aurelio

army2012@gmail.com – Tel no. (02) 845-9555 Local: 5285, 5295

OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Army Core Purpose

to protect and serve the people. Securing the land.

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Army officer goes missing in Davao Norte diving exercise

By Mario J. Mallari

A military diver went missing during a diving exercise in Davao del Norte on Saturday, belated report from the Eastern Mindanao Command (Eastmincom) said yesterday.

Maj. Ezra Balagtey, spokesman for Eastmincom, said that the Eastmincom immediately activated an incident management team to oversee the ongoing search and rescue operation.

Balagtey did not identify the missing diver but said the military personnel was a participant in the joint proficiency diving exercises by divers from the Naval Forces

Eastern Mindanao.

The incident happened at Angel's Cove on Talikod Island in Davao del Norte.

Balagtey said the diver was declared missing at around 8:30 a.m. Saturday.

According to Balagtey, elements of the Philippine Coast Guard, Naval Special Operations Unit were dispatched to conduct the search and rescue on the water while

Air Force Search and rescue Group launched aerial search.

Balagtey said that the search and rescue operations are focused along the shorelines of Talikod Island and Davao del Sur area.

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Malaya
The National Newspaper

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Major declared missing during dive exercise

BY VICTOR REYES

AN Army major was declared missing after he failed to surface during a proficiency diving exercise off Talikud island in Samal Island in Davao del Norte last Saturday.

Divers and aircraft are conducting a search for the officer, said Maj. Ezra Balagtey, spokesman of the military's Eastern Mindanao Command, but he declined to name the officer pending the outcome of search efforts.

But multiple military sources named the officer as Maj. Hector Dongail, administrative officer of Lt. Gen. Leonardo Guerrero, chief of the Eastern Mindanao

Command. Dongail is a member of the Philippine Military Academy Class 1999.

Balagtey said the missing officer and other Eastmincom officers went on the proficiency diving exercise, a program initiated by Guerrero, with the Naval Special Operations Unit of the Naval Forces Eastern Mindanao at Angel's Cove at around 7 a.m.

"He was declared missing 8:30 a.m. when he could not be found during accounting," said Balagtey.

Balagtey said teams from the Philippine Coast Guard, Naval Special Operations Unit, and Naval Forces Eastern Mindanao were immediately dispatched "to conduct water

search" after discovering the officer was missing. Civilian divers are also helping in the search.

Balagtey said the proficiency diving exercise was introduced by Guerrero after the latter assumed as Eastmincom in November last year.

"He saw the need to have diving proficiency, so he considered the program... Another objective (of the program) was to test new equipment that were acquired last week," Balagtey said.

Balagtey declined to name the military personnel who were with the victim during the proficiency diving exercise, saying an inquiry is being conducted by the Eastmincom.

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The
Standard
DEFENDING THE NEWS

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Divers search for missing soldier on Samal Island

By Florante S. Solmerin

DEEP-SEA divers continue to search for an Army officer, reportedly a member of the Philippine Military Class of 1999 who was declared missing after he failed to surface during a "proficiency diving exercise" Saturday at a diving site in Island Garden City of Samal.

The Philippine Coast Guard has joined in the search together with the Naval Special Operations Unit.

In a report, Captain Roda Leoncito, public affairs officer of the Eastern Mindanao Com-

mand, confirmed the incident but did not identify the officer pending the search and information to his immediate family.

"At 8:30 a.m., we received report that one of the soldiers went missing during the con-

duct of the training. At the time being, we decided to not divulge yet the identity of the soldier to protect his family," Leoncito was quoted as saying in said report.

But a source from the Philippine Army told **The Standard** that the officer was Lieutenant Colonel Hector Bongcawil, a member of the PMA "Masikhay" Class '99.

Leoncito said a group of officers went diving with their commanding general, Eastmincom chief Lieutenant General Rey Guerrero, and arrived at the Angel's Cove on Talikud Island, part

of IGACOS, at around 7 a.m.

The divers were from Eastmincom and Naval Forces Eastern Mindanao, and NAVSOU.

Leoncito said Guerrero regularly brought divers to the place to train.

The Eastmincom is still investigating the cause of the soldier's failure to surface.

In June 2013, the late Brigadier General Daniel Lucero, then commander of the Army's 1st Infantry Division, drowned in a diving activity at Tabak beach in Tukuran, Zamboanga del Sur. He was a member of PMA "Matikas" Class '83.

18 April 2016



Page. 4

NPA's release of captives' video slammed

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY – The Philippine Army's 4th Infantry Division has slammed the New People's Army (NPA) for using the social media by releasing a video footage of their captives.

Capt. Joe Patrick A. Martinez, spokesperson of the 4th Infantry Division, said: "The NPA, now branded as an organized crime group, utilized the social media to coerce people by releasing video of their kidnapped police and army personnel."

The video of the captive soldiers and police officers, giving their statement, was uploaded on April 12 on YouTube.

He said the 4th Infantry Division condemned the act, calling it as irresponsible for there are content

that are not suitable for general audiences and it is intended to sow fear on the people.

"Definitely, the NPAs do not care for the effect to whoever will see the video. We condemn these extortionists for their grave violation of Human Rights and for creating havoc from among the peace-loving people on this side of the Country," he added.

One of the videos released by the NPA showed PO3 Edwin Castor, and SPO1 Warren Hansol Coñales telling their family members and relatives that they are in "good hands."

Castor and Coñales were held in an NPA roadblock in Impasug-ong town in Bukidnon province while another policeman, SPO4 Rene Rombo, was captured in Kinoguitan,

Misamis Oriental last April 3.

Pfc. Glenn Austria and Pfc. Diven Abion Tawide, all members of the Philippine Army, were also captured in a rebel checkpoint in Buenavista town in Agusan del Norte, also on the same day.

The two captives also asked their superiors in the Philippine National Police (PNP) not hold rescue operations for their own safety and for their immediate release.

Also in the video, Castor greeted his wife an "advance happy birthday."

Earlier, the wives of SPO1 Coñales and SPO4 Rombo appeared before a local radio station here to ask the NPA rebels to free their husbands for humanitarian reasons. **(Camcer Ordoñez Imam)**

18 April 2016



Page. 3

PAF chopper helps put out Manila fire

By ARGYLL
CYRUS B. GEDUCOS

An Air Force helicopter was deployed for the first time this year to help douse the fire that rendered 120 families homeless on Tambunting St., Sta. Cruz, Manila yesterday.

No one was reported killed or injured in the two-hour fire that destroyed 50 houses in the densely-populated area.

Fire trucks could not get near, forcing firefighters to snake through alleys and openings to fight the fire that started at 11:42 a.m.

The fire reached Task Force Alpha at 12:55 p.m. This means that fire trucks from nearby cities are required to assist.

Senior Supt. Jaime Ramirez of the Bureau of Fire Protection said the fire proved too difficult to contain so they requested support from the Philippine Air Force.

Sgt. Noel Bautista of the PAF 505th Search and Rescue Group said the helicopter made seven passes, each pass delivering 630 liters of water from its Bambi

Buckets. Bautista said the water was fetched from Manila Bay.

He said only one helicopter is available in Metro Manila, although two more are expected to be delivered for use.

The BFP Manila said the fire started in the house of Rafrad Rodae, a suspected drug addict. Rodae was arrested after witnesses alleged that he burned his own house.

A resident, who requested anonymity, said he had just came home from work when the fire started. He overheard someone seeing Rodae burn his own house.

Because most of the houses were made of combustible materials, the fire spread quickly, reaching the fifth alarm in a matter of minutes. The fire was placed under control at 1:46 p.m.

Requesting a helicopter for assistance had not been this easy before, according to Ramirez. "We have to seek approval from their heads first before we can request a helicopter. Now the fire marshal can directly contact the PAF if he thinks a chopper is needed," said

Ramirez.

The BFP Manila estimated that ₱3 million worth of properties were destroyed. Most of the victims sought temporary refuge in a nearby covered court.

Meanwhile, about 1,000 families lost their homes in a fire that hit Barangay Tanza, Navotas City yesterday.

FO3 Junibert Mendoza, fire investigator, said the fire that destroyed 500 houses started at around 11 a.m. It quickly spread as houses made of combustible materials.

Mendoza said the fire reached Task Force Alpha which requires fire trucks from nearby cities to respond, at around 11:50 a.m.

He said that firemen had a hard time getting to the area because of the narrow streets. The fire was put out at about 1:55 p.m. Nobody was killed or injured in the fire.

Affected residents are currently staying in a public school in Navotas. Mendoza said they are determining the cause of the fire. **(With a report from Jel Santos)**

18 April 2016



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China launches upgraded drills for South China Sea fleets

BEIJING – China's South China Sea fleets have conducted training drills with upgraded methods that resemble actual combat conditions to increase the fleets' combat effectiveness, according to an article published by the *PLA Daily* yesterday.

Begun on April 7, the drills include new methods such as training within an electromagnetic environment. Previously, the fleets have also conducted all-weather drills, beyond visibility range training and low-altitude, high-speed exercises to hammer their pilots into shape, the article said.

"To think about special situations in an even more complex way, to make the enemy situation even more dangerous, to make the battlefield environment even more lifelike, is an important path in order for the navy and air force to stick close to the demands of real combat and accelerate its transformative production model for fighting strength," division commander Tian Junqing was quoted as saying.

The article did not specifically say where the actual drills took place in the South China Sea.

The fleets will further explore 24-hour mari-

time attack drills, minimum altitude defensive dashes and other military tactics, the article added.

They also will work in coordination with early aerial warnings, surface ships and ground anti-aircraft defense, among other branches of the military.

China claims most of the South China Sea, through which more than \$5 trillion in global trade passes every

year. Its Southeast Asian neighbors including Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines and Vietnam, also claim part of the sea, as does Taiwan.

– Reuters

18 April 2016

MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

Page: 2

PH, US vow to uphold international law

By GENALYN D. KABILING

The Philippines is working closely with the United States to preserve international law, freedom of navigation and overflight in the West

Philippine Sea, Malacañang said on Sunday.

After the two nations agreed to conduct joint maritime patrols in the disputed territory, Presidential Communications Operations Secretary Herminio Coloma Jr. said the increased defense cooperation aims to address "common security concerns" and ensure the rule of law prevails in the region.

"The freedom of navigation and freedom of overflight in the West Philippine Sea are important basic principles being upheld by the Philippines and the United States. Any occurrence that violates or obstructs these principles create tension and concerns. And the response to this concern is strengthening security infrastructure in the region," Coloma said in Filipino over government radio.

"We are upholding the international rule of law while we continue to strengthen the strategic relations between the two countries," he added.

Coloma made the remarks after US Defense Secretary Ash Carter affirmed his country's readiness to support the Philippines against coercion and intimidation in the region. Carter, at the closing rites of the annual Balikatan exercises, also said the United States will continue to stand up for the safety and freedoms of its friends and allies.

The Philippines and United States earlier agreed to conduct more joint maritime patrols in the West Philippine Sea amid the aggressive territorial claims by China in the area. The United States also intends to regularly deploy troops and aircraft to the Philippines to prepare the groundwork for future air patrol and increased military training.

Carter already made clear that the US strategy was aimed at promoting a peaceful and lawful resolution of the territorial dispute, not provoking any conflict with China.

Coloma, meantime, acknowledged the US commitment to the Philippines as an important ally in strengthening maritime security and maritime domain awareness capabilities. He said such a commitment includes increased cooperation in the aspect of humanitarian assistance and disaster response under the existing military agreements.

"Like what Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin said, the two countries will continue to enhance cooperation to address common security concerns," Coloma added.

18 April 2016

The Manila Times

Page: A7

Two notorious militants captured in Zamboanga

BY AL JACINTO
REPORTER

ZAMBOANGA CITY: Security forces captured two radical militants in separate operations in Zamboanga City in southern Philippines, just several nautical miles south of Basilan province where military forces are battling the Abu Sayyaf, police said on Sunday.

Police said an Abu Sayyaf member, Johan Jaalam, was nabbed on Saturday near KCC Mall, but details of the operation was not made public, although officials said the militant is facing a string of criminal charges.

A leader of the militant group Rajah Solaiman Movement – Melquias Abrera II – was also captured on Friday and that an automatic pistol and two grenades were seized from

him by policemen and soldiers who tracked him down in the village of Santa Barbara.

Chief Inspector Rogelio Alabata, regional police spokesman, confirmed the arrest of Abrera, a native of Antipolo City, Rizal province in Luzon. He said Abrera, also known as Mikhail Abdulasis Abrera, was one of the planners of the Rajah Solaiman Movement, blamed for terrorism in the Philippines.

It was not immediately known whether Abrera was planning to attack in Zamboanga or not, but Alabata said police launched a follow up operation here. Abrera is currently being interrogated by the police.

The Rajah Solaiman Movement, founded by Ahmed Santos, a Christian who converted to Islam, seeks to establish an Islamic state in the Philippines and is working with the Abu Sayyaf group.

In June 2008, Washington designated Santos and seven other senior members of the Rajah Solaiman Movement -- Angelo Trinidad, Pio de Vera, Redendo Dellosa, Feliciano de los Reyes, Dino Amor Pareja, Ricardo Ayeras and Reuben Lavilla -- as Specially Designated Global Terrorists.

They were all captured separately in the Philippines and have been implicated in ransom kidnappings

and many bombings and deadly attacks on civilian targets, including the February 2005 Valentine's Day bombings that left dozens of civilians dead and injured, the August 2005 twin bombings in Zamboanga City, which wounded 26 people; the Super Ferry bombing in February 2004 that killed over 100 people, and the February 2003 bombing of the Awang airport in Maguindanao.

Its members were involved in several plots to bomb high-profile targets, as well, including Manila public utilities, tourist areas, and the US Embassy in Manila. It received training, funds, and operational assistance from the Abu Sayyaf and Jemaah Islamiyah, and received funding from private Saudi sources that channelled funds through charitable nongovernmental organizations in the Philippines.

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April 2016

INQUIRER

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Duterte: I'm a socialist, not a communist; last card

By Maricar Cinco

Inquirer Southern Luzon

SAN PEDRO CITY—Presidential candidate and Davao City Mayor Rodrigo Duterte, who has been criticized for “coddling and supporting” the New People’s Army (NPA), said he was not a communist but a “socialist.”

“Ako, sosyalista. Hindi ako komunista. Kaming mga sosyalista, para kami sa tao (I am a socialist, not a communist. We socialists are for the people),” Duterte said at a campaign rally here on Friday night.

Promising to end corruption, and

the problems of illegal drugs, criminality and poverty, he also described himself as the country’s “last card.”

“At the end of the day, *makita ninyo, ako ang huling baraha ng Pilipino* (You’ll see, I am the Filipinos’ last card),” he said.

Duterte was apparently responding to criticism by rival candidate Mar Roxas of the Liberal Party who assailed the Davao mayor for “coddling and supporting” NPA rebels, who forms the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines, by giving in to the insurgents’ demand for “revolutionary taxes” in Mindanao.

Duterte was also scored for his alleged involvement in the Davao Death Squad, a shadowy gang of assassins said to be responsible for the killing of small-time criminals, including minors and journalists, in his city.

No explanation

Duterte did not explain the difference between a communist and a socialist. Political texts commonly describe socialism as a lower stage of communism, which envisions an egalitarian or classless society and communal ownership of the means of production. Inasmuch as a division of classes may still exist, socialists propose state-owned production enterprises.

In his speech, however, Duterte said his economic program would be to take steps to

expand the middle class by expanding credit for small businesses.

He said he would not focus on big infrastructure projects but begin with basic social services.

“Wala muna akong bridge (We won’t have bridges in the meantime),” Duterte said, adding that government infrastructure projects were a source of corruption.

People first

“Tao muna ha (Let’s prioritize people first, OK)?” he said, drawing cheers from a crowd of around 30,000.

Should he be elected, Duterte said his administration would give each region P1 billion to be used “not for consumption” but as start-up money for small businesses. He reiterated his plan to end contractualization of the working class.

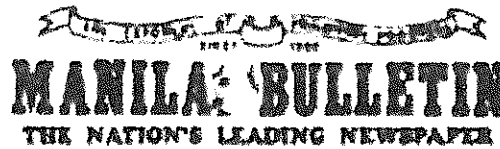
Duterte also vowed to double the salaries of rank-and-file police personnel, which is currently around P14,000, and expand the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program, the government’s conditional cash transfer program for the poor, by giving each family on the list a sack of rice.

“Ang pag-asa natin (our hope) is to raise the middle class,” Duterte said.

Duterte, who served as Davao City mayor for 22 years, said his programs would not be “grandiose, (but) I will try to build a strong middle class if you want a nation that is progressive.”

“At the end of the day, *makita ninyo, ako ang huling baraha ng Pilipino* (You’ll see, I am the Filipinos’ last card),” he said.

K April 2016



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Westmincom tracking down abductors of Indonesian crew

ZAMBOANGA CITY (PNA) — The Western Mindanao Command (Westmincom) has put its troops on high alert, on the look out for four Indonesians who were abducted from their tugboat by heavily-armed men on board a speed boat off Tawi-Tawi Friday night.

This was disclosed by Westmincom spokesperson Maj. Filemon Tan Jr who also told reporters that the military was

still trying to ascertain the identities of the abductors who attacked Tugboat Henry at around 6:30 p.m. Friday in the seawaters near Pondo Sibugal, Sitangkai, Tawi-Tawi.

He said the attackers might just be claiming to be members of the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) to throw off military pursuers.

Tugboat Henry had a crew of 10 when it was assaulted by the pirates.

The identities of the victims were likewise not immediately available, according to Tan.

Tan said the victims were passing the area when around seven unidentified gunmen aboard a gray and blue speed boat attacked them.

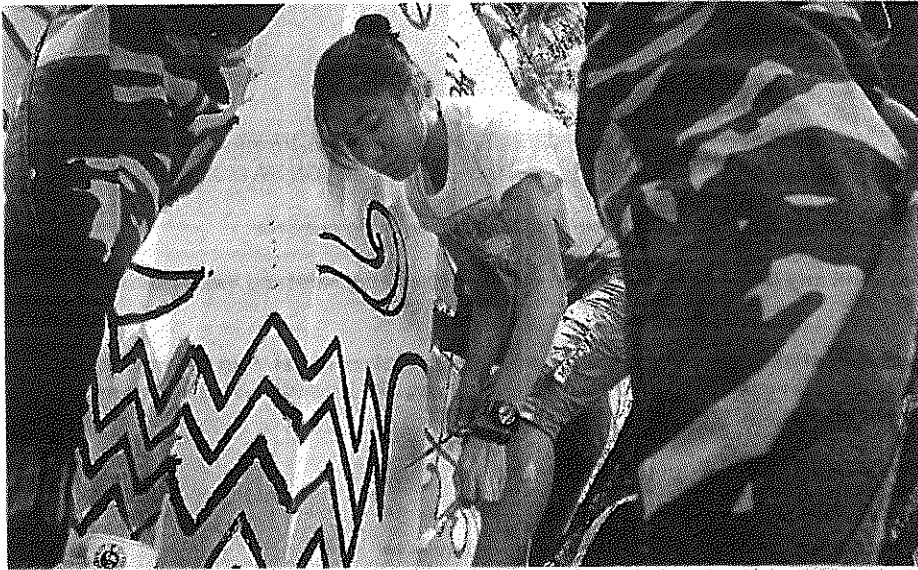
Tan said the gunmen seized the four Indonesians and sped off to unknown direction leaving behind the remaining six, including a wounded crew.

14 April 2016

The Standard

DEFINING THE NEWS

Page: AG



Sprucing up. Soldiers and students render their services to repaint the concrete wall surrounding the AFP Medical Center along V. Luna St. in Quezon City as part of a beautification campaign. **MANNY PALMERO**

18 April 2016

THE PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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The girls of Chibok; Abu Sayyaf hostages

ON THE night of April 14, 2014, hundreds of Boko Haram fighters entered the town of Chibok in northeast Nigeria and abducted 276 schoolgirls who were staying at the Government Girls Secondary School compound. They were herded together and loaded in trucks and lorries. Some managed to escape by jumping from the trucks, but 219 girls were taken away and brought to a heavily-forested encampment. They serve as slaves either for household work, or for sex, or as brides for the men of Boko Haram.

Boko Haram (literal translation is "Western Education is Forbidden") is a militant Islamic

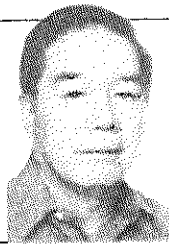
movement in Nigeria. Led by Abubakar Shekau, it has vowed to destroy every Christian school in the country and to carry out terror attacks aimed at overthrowing the government. The establishment of an Islamic state is the long-term goal of the movement. Last year, Shekau formally pledged allegiance to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria.

So far, the government of Nigeria's President Muhammadu Buhari has failed in attempts to recover the girls. An international campaign to bring attention to the kidnappings has had limited success even with the participation of US First Lady Michelle Obama, using the slogan "Bring Back Our Girls." The latest reports indicate that about 50 of the girls were able to escape from captivity.

Last week marked the second year of the girls' abduction, with parents and families staging protest marches to put pressure on government authorities to continue efforts to recover the girls.

REVEILLE

Ramon J. Farolan



Here in the Philippines, the Abu Sayyaf continues to hold anywhere from 20-30 hostages of various nationalities. Last month, 10 Indonesian seamen were pulled off their fishing boat and taken by Abu Sayyaf elements for ransom purposes. This was followed by the abduction of four Malaysian sailors who were taken off their boat, the MV Mas Five, while sailing along the Sabah coastline. The most recent incident involved four Indonesian seamen who were also kidnapped from their boat off Tawi-Tawi. That makes a total of 18 foreigners kidnapped in less than a month. Perhaps, the Abu Sayyaf outlaws feel they can get more by kidnapping foreigners rather than Filipinos.

We have not heard much from the Philippine Navy or the Philippine Coast Guard on what measures are being taken to stop these activities.

The Abu Sayyaf are still holding two Canadians, one Norwegian, and a Filipino woman whom they seized from a resort on Samal Island, Davao del Sur, in September last year. There are other unidentified hostages being held for ransom by the Abu Sayyaf bandits.

In the case of Nigeria, the abducted girls are being utilized for household work, for sex purposes, or as brides. There is no ransom being demanded. In the case of the Abu Sayyaf, it is simply a monetary transaction. Freedom results from the right price being paid.

Considering how long this problem has been with us, it appears that the government—not just under this administration but under past administrations as well—has failed miserably to put an end to the kidnapping for ransom operations of the Abu Sayyaf. The only instances of hostages being released by the Abu Sayyaf have been when a payment of ransom was made. Last October, two Germans were freed upon payment of P250 million. The AFP denies the so-called "payoff" and claims that pressure from AFP units led to the release. Payment of ransom, although for a smaller amount, led to freedom for the Germans.

Unfortunately, we also have paid a steep and bloody price each time the AFP mounted an operation to rescue hostages or to capture Abu Sayyaf leaders.

Let us look at the period covering 10 years from 2007 to 2016.

- In July 2007, 14 Marines were ambushed and killed in Al-Barka, Basilan, while returning from a search and rescue mission aimed at recovering Italian Catholic missionary Fr. Giancarlo Bossi. Some of the victims were beheaded, while others showed signs of mutilation.

Offensive operations were launched, with even presidential security units thrown into battle. The Army headquarters was temporarily moved to Zamboanga City for better coordination and supervision. Nothing much happened after this show of force.

- A few months later, five officers and 10 enlisted men belonging to Force Recon Class 13 of the Philippine Marines died on a test mission against an Abu Sayyaf base camp in Tipo-Tipo, Basilan.

Remember the places—Al-Barka and Tipo-Tipo—both in Basilan.

- In October 2011, 19 Special Forces troopers were massacred in Al-Barka by Abu Sayyaf/MILF elements. They suffered the same fate as the Marines in 2007.

- Last week, 18 soldiers were killed in an "ambush" or an "encounter" (depending on who is being interviewed) with Abu Sayyaf elements in the town of Tipo-Tipo.

Al-Barka and Tipo-Tipo! These places have been drenched with the blood of our soldiers. Are we ever going to learn from the mistakes of the past?

Is there something wrong with our training programs?
Is there something wrong with our intelligence methods?
Is there something lacking in the discipline of our soldiers?

Are we deficient in our small unit troop leadership skills?
I am no jungle warfare expert. But these apparent shortcomings have to be recognized and addressed. We must also realize that no substantial transformation will take place if we keep installing new commanders and keeping them on a short-term basis. By the way, for some reason not fully explained, just before the recent offensive was launched, two key ground commanders were relieved and replaced.

I have always wanted to pose these questions to our presidential candidates during their public debates:

- Are you in favor of a fixed term of office for the AFP chief of staff and the major service commanders?
- How do you intend to solve the Abu Sayyaf problem?

It is time for the incoming political leadership to correct an anomalous situation. What is needed in the AFP, among other things, is some degree of stability and continuity, particularly in critical command positions. This month, if President Aquino holds true to form, we shall have another AFP chief of staff, the commander in chief's sixth in his six years in office.

18 April 2016

NGAYON

Pahina. 4



Editorial

Nakapasok na nga ba teroristang ISIS?

SA sa mga napatay sa enkuwentro sa Tipo-Tipo, Basilan noong nakaraang linggo ay ang Moroccan bomb maker na si Mohammad Khattab. Si Khattab, ayon sa Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) ay narito sa bansa para mag-organisa ng kidnap-for-ransom groups na naka-affiliate sa isang malaking teroristang grupo. Hindi naman pinangalanan ng AFP ang teroristang grupo na kinabibilangan ni Khattab.

Hindi kaya si Khattab ay miyembro ng international terrorist na Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS)? Noon pang nakaraang taon napabalita na nasa bansa na ang ISIS at kinakalong ng Abu Sayyaf. May mga naglabasang photo na kasama ng Sayyaf ang ISIS members at ipinakita pa ang black flag ng nasabing terrorist group. Ang ISIS ang responsible sa paghahasik ng lagim sa Paris noong Nobyembre 2015. Itinanggi naman ng AFP na nakapasok na sa bansa ang ISIS. Ilang beses na itong pinabulaanan ng military.

Mapupuri ang AFP sa pagkakapatay kay Khattab at Ubalda Hapilon, anak ng Sayyaf leader na si Isnilon Hapilon, subalit 18 sundalo naman ang nalagas sa mahabang oras na labanan. Nagpatuloy ang operasyon ng military sa Sayyaf at sa pinakalatest na update, nasa mahigit 30 Sayyaf na ang napapatay. Hindi na raw tatantanan ng military ang pagsalakay sa mga bandido. Pero habang nagsasagawa ng operasyon, muli na namang nangidnap ng dayuhan ang Abu Sayyaf noong Biyernes. Apat na Indonesian ang kinidnap.

Siguruhin ng AFP na hindi pa nakakapasok sa bansa ang ISIS at nakikihalubilo sa Sayyaf. Baka nagkukulang ang kanilang intelligence at masyadong nagtitiwala. Baka wala silang kamalay-malay na nakapasok na sa bansa ang ISIS ay wala pang naaamoy.

Paigtingin naman ang pamamaraan kung paano mapupulbos ang Abu Sayyaf para wala nang kumalong sa ISIS. Huwag ihihinto ang operasyon sapagkat maaaring mabuo at magpalakas muli ang Sayyaf. Ito ang naging kamalian sa nakaraang administrasyon na hindi naging tuluy-tuloy ang pagbuwag sa mga salot na Sayyaf.

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18

April 2016



Pahina. 5



Sayyaf na naman

APAT na Indonesians pa ang nabihag ng mga Abu Sayyaf sa karagatan sa pagitan ng Tawi-Tawi at Sabah noong Sabado. Ilang dayuhan na ang bihag ng Sayyaf? Bago nitong insidente, sampung taga Indonesia at apat na taga Malaysia ang bihag ng Sayyaf. At hindi sila miasugpo sa kanilang mga krimen. Kaya ngayon, may masama nang epekto sa bansa.

Isinara na ng Malaysia ang Sabah sa pakikipagkalakal sa ARMM, at naglagay ng naval blockade para iprotesta ang pagdakip sa kanilang mga mamamayan. Dahil sa aksyon ng Sayyaf, maraming buhay sa Mindanao ang apektado. Ang inaasahang kalakalan sa pagitan ng Sabah at ARMM ay tumigil na muna. Malaking dagok ito para sa marami na namumuhay ng marangal. Kaya dapat lang durugin na ang Sayyaf. Kung pumasok ang mga terorista sa teritoryo ng Malaysia, dapat durugin na rin nila. Kung kasalukuyang may operasyon pa ang militar laban sa mga kriminal, huwag itong itigil hanggang tuluyan nang mawala ang Sayyaf. Panay kasamaan na lang ang dala ng grupong ito.

Kailangang itukoy ng militar, ng pulis, ng coast guard ang problemang ito. Kung kinakailangan ang tulong ng mga Amerikano na nandito naman para lang mahanap o makita ang mga bangka ng Sayyaf, gawin na. Kung makikita lang sana sila bago sila mabiktima, malaking bagay na iyan. May plano na joint patrols ang Pilipinas at Amerika, partikular sa mga lugar kung saan may mga itinayo nang mga isla ang China. Baka pwede na rin mag-patrol sa karagatan sa pagitan ng Sulu at Sabah, para matigil na ang Sayyaf.

Nagbigay na ng tining ang Sayyaf para sa bihag nilang Norwegian at dalawang Canadian. Abril 25 ang itinakdang deadline, P300 milyon ang dine-demandang pantubos. May banta na kapag hindi ito binigay, pupugutan ang mga bihag. Ganito kaseryoso ang problema sa Sayyaf. Marami ang nagtatanong bakit hindi maubus-ubos ang Sayyaf.

ONLINE NEWS

18 APRIL 2016

www.sunstar.com.ph

5 soldiers wounded in NPA ambush in Samar

By: RICKY J. BAUTISTA

BASEY, Samar – FIVE government soldiers were seriously injured in an ambush staged by suspected communist New People's Army in Barangay New San Agustin, this municipality around 8:30 a.m. today, April 17, 2016.

In an interview, Ssgt. John Siervo, one of the six army responders, said the five soldiers on-board a military vehicle while traversing the New San Agustin highway, which is more or less two kilometers away from the 87th Infantry Battalion army detachment in Sitio Guirang, Barangay Rawis, were hit by a landmine laid by the enemy along the side of the road, followed by a burst.

"After nung apat na malalakas na landmine, ni-rush up ng NPA ang KM450 nila at kinuha ang mga naiwang armas ng mga sundalo," said Siervo.

Siervo added that only two of the five injured soldiers were able to manage to fire back while running to their safety because all of them were hit by the explosive' shrapnel.

Wounded personnel identified as SSgt. Luisito Abelido, Pfc. Danilo Silagan, Pfc. Domie Sanchez, Pfc. Renato Padernal and Pfc. Baldonado who sustained gunshot wounds in various parts of their body were brought to a hospital in Tacloban City for medical treatment.

The exchange of fire lasted for about 30 minutes. No reported casualty on both sides.

The bullet-riddled army vehicle was a total wrecked. Concrete road was also partly destroyed.

Siervo said the rebels carted away the belongings of the troops, including one M16 assault rifle and k3 sub-machine gun.

Responding troopers and policemen found at the encounter site live and empty shells of different high-powered rifles, fragments of landmine, used claymore, blasting cables and wires.

"Base sa mga naiwang mga bakas, mukhang kagabi pa sila nag aabang dito. At kitang-kita naman sa mga naiwan nila sa lugar na mayroon mga 40-50 rebelde ang nagsagawa ng ambush," Private First Class Padios, one the six responders said.

Around 14 rounds of unused M60 ammunitions, water bottles, preserved food, improvised bed sheets, NPA white head band, and other clothing were also recovered near the ambush site.

Army responders said the NPA fighters, numbering to about 40-50, were headed by Kumander Dulay of Section Committee 2 of the Regional Guerilla Unit (RGU) of the CPP-NPA-NDF operating the Paranas-Sta-Rita-Basey-Marabut towns.

Residents in the area, mostly children, were temporarily trapped in the area are said to be traumatized by the close encounter they experienced by the firefight.

A foreign tourist who happened to be on his way to the famous Sohoton Cave was halted and immediately cancelled his trip.

Army Core Purpose: Serving the people. Securing the land.

Army vision: By 2028, a world-class Army that is a source of national pride.

Rizza Macalalad, staff of the Basey Tourism Office, said they might cancel at least 50 bookings for today's visitation to the town various attraction for security and safety reasons.

"Titingnan muna naming ang sitwasyon kung i-cancel or not ang mga naka-booked na guests naming ngayon... for their safety," she said.

Meanwhile, while the firefight is on-going between the AFP and NPA, the policemen in Basey proper put a barricade going in and out of Municipal town hall and police station for possible attack.

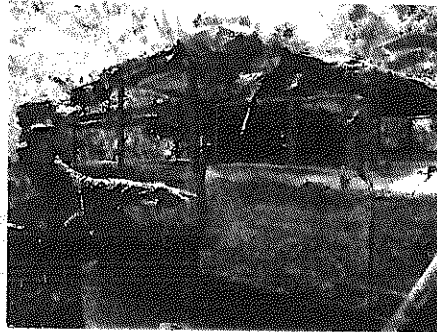
"Due to our limited number of personnel, we have to secure first our station and the government center. We can't back up the troops in the area," a policeman in full battle gear said.

Lt. Col. George Domingo, commander of the 87th IB who immediately condemned the latest atrocities of the rebels deployed hot pursuit operations against the rebels who fled immediately towards Cogon and Bulao villages of Basey Samar.

Last week, CPP-NPA-NDF spokesman Fr. Santiago Salas, said the NPA in Eastern Visayas continued to make strides in intensifying their guerrilla warfare amid being tagged as a priority target under the Oplan Bayanihan of the government.

Salas informed that based on the initial report of the movement's Regional Operations Command, the NPA in the region was able to carry out 35 military actions inflicting 137 casualties versus the government forces and confiscated 24 low and high-powered firearms.

Text, photos and videos taken by Ricky J. Bautista



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Military man missing during proficiency dive in Davao del Norte

By: Karlos Manlupig

DAVAO CITY—A senior military official has gone missing after going on a proficiency dive in a known tourist diving spot in the Island Garden City of Samal in Davao del Norte on Saturday.

Capt. Roda Leoncito, spokesperson of the military's Eastern Mindanao Command, said they learned about the missing officer more than an hour after the command, along with the Naval Special Operations Unit, conducted proficiency diving at the Angel's Cove in Talikod Island.

Search and rescue units were immediately deployed to find the missing official, the military spokesperson said.

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"As of this time, we have a team from the Philippine Coast Guard, Naval Special Operations Unit. We also have a team from the Philippine Air Force search and rescue group doing aerial search along the shorelines of Talikod and Davao del Sur areas," Leoncito said.

An Incident Management Team was also activated to oversee the rescue, Leoncito added.

The military refused to release the name of the missing official as they have are still communicating with his family.

The area between Davao City and Samal is known to have strong currents. RAM

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