



# **TEAM ARMY**

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## **OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS NEWS CLIPPINGS**

**30 August 2016**

**Tuesday**

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# PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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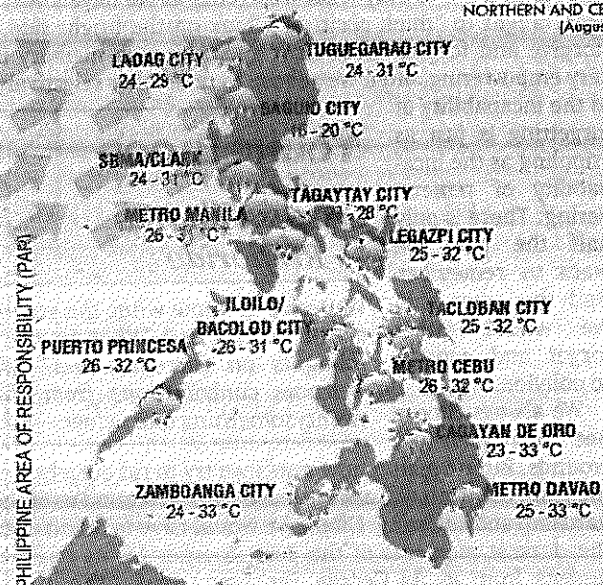
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**PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER**

TODAY'S WEATHER FORECAST | AUGUST 30, 2016 | TUESDAY

**SOUTHWEST MONSOON**  
AFFECTING THE WESTERN SECTION OF  
NORTHERN AND CENTRAL LUZON  
(August 29, 5:00 PM)



PHILIPPINE AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY (PAR)

SUNRISE	SUNSET
5:44 AM	6:09 PM
MOONRISE	MOONSET
12:03 AM	11:54 AM
LAST QUARTER	NEW MOON
AUG 25 11:41 AM	SEP 1 5:23 PM
LOW TIDE	HIGH TIDE
4:16 PM 0.05 Meter	7:57 AM 1.23 Meter




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

Cloudy with rainshowers and/or thunderstorms

Monsoon rains/rates

METRO MANILA		TAGAYTAY		TACLOBAN	
26-32 °C	26-32 °C	23-29 °C	23-29 °C	26-32 °C	26-32 °C
TUGUEGARAO		LEGAZPI		CAGAYAN DE ORO	
25-31 °C	25-32 °C	26-33 °C	26-32 °C	23-33 °C	24-33 °C
LAOAG		PUERTO PRINCESA		METRO DAVAO	
24-30 °C	26-30 °C	26-33 °C	25-33 °C	26-33 °C	26-33 °C
BAGUIO		ILOILO/ BACOLOD		ZAMBOANGA	
16-21 °C	16-21 °C	26-32 °C	26-32 °C	24-33 °C	25-33 °C
SBMA/ CLARK		METRO CEBU			
24-31 °C	24-30 °C	26-33 °C	26-33 °C		

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# Alleged drug lord, wife gunned down in Aklan

*Rody: He was  
a drug lord  
whose luck  
ran out*

By JENNIFER RENDON  
and CECILLE SUERTE FELIPE

ILOILO CITY – Three days after turning himself in to authorities to deny his links to illegal drugs, a businessman was mortally wounded by gunmen who also shot dead his wife shortly after the couple disembarked from a vessel at a port in Malay, Aklan before dawn yesterday.

Melvin Odicta Sr. and his wife Meriam had just disembarked from a 2Go roll-on-roll-off vessel at the Caticlan Jetty Port when the attack occurred at around 1:30 a.m.

The vessel came from the Port of Batangas.

Odicta, also known by the moniker "Dragon," was earlier identified by the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency 6 (PDEA-6) as one of two top drug dealers operating mainly in the province of Iloilo.

Reacting to the death of Odicta, President Duterte said

## Alleged From Page 1

the victim was really a drug lord whose luck had run out.

"Odicta was hunted, *inabot talaga siya ng malas. Sino gustong sumunod dito kay Odicta (Who wants to follow Odicta)?"* Duterte said at the wake of a policeman in Samar.

Odicta, accompanied by his wife and their lawyers, showed up at the office of Interior Secretary Ismael Sueño last Thursday to deny accusations he was into illegal drugs.

Malay police said port security guards reported the shooting at 1:23 a.m.

Aklan police chief Senior Supt. John Mitchell Jamili said it was the responding policemen who brought the Odictas to the Malay Municipal Hospital.

Reports said the gunmen first fired on Meriam, who was hit in the back. Her husband sustained bullet wounds in the head, chest and leg.

Odicta family lawyer Gualberto Cataluña said the businessman was still alive as he

was brought to the hospital by the police.

Cataluña and another of their lawyers Raymond Fortun were to fetch the couple from the port.

He said they were waiting at the jetty port's gate when they heard gunshots.

He said he was even talking to Meriam over the phone during the attack. Odicta, Cataluña said, managed to call him to say he had been hit in the leg.

Odicta was reportedly able to walk as he was assisted to the patrol car, and even managed to raise his wounded leg.

Cataluña said he was surprised to learn that Odicta had died of gunshot wounds at the hospital.

He said the jetty port was cordoned off immediately after the shooting.

Cataluña said there was a checkpoint outside the port before the vessel arrived. He said he and his companions even went around to check the faces of people in the vicinity.

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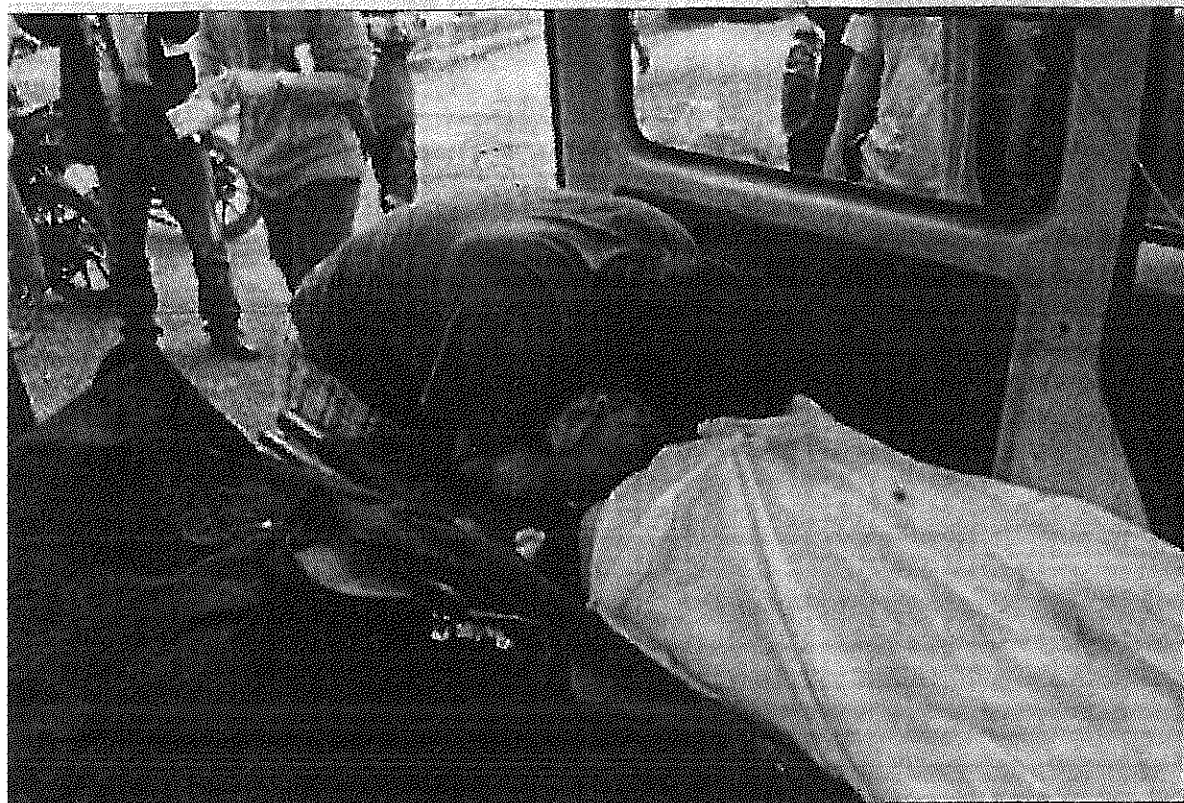


Photo provided by *Aksyon Radyo-Iloilo* shows Eduardo Regalado clutching the face of his slain sister Meriam Odicta whose body is seen next to a bag containing the cadaver of Melvin Odicta Sr. The couple (inset photos) was gunned down yesterday at the Caticlan Jetty Port in Aklan.

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"We wonder why the checkpoint disappeared after the shooting of the Odictas," he said in Filipino.

He added they tried to follow the police car carrying the Odictas to Kalibo Hospital but were surprised to learn the victims were brought to the Malay Hospital instead.

"When we went back to Malay, we were shocked to learn they had died. We asked the doctor – the two were no longer handcuffed – they said they're DOA," he said.

The lawyer said he was with the Odictas during their meeting with Sueño at Camp Crame.

"We were listening when they were talking with Sueño. They were making denial," he said.

He said the couple had been advised by the police director in Iloilo to see PNP chief Director General Ronald dela Rosa after they were linked to drugs by PDEA.

Cataluña said he had advised Odicta against going to Manila. He said he asked Odicta to see Dela Rosa instead in Iloilo City as the latter was

set to visit the city anyway, and request for security from the PNP chief.

He said he would later learn the businessman had gone ahead to Manila.

Cataluña said the couple had no child of their own but they had children from their previous relationships.

Chief Insp. Mark Evan Salvo, Malay police chief, said he immediately ordered the setting up of checkpoint to prevent the attackers from leaving the area.

He said there was only one gunman but Jamili claimed there were two.

Quoting Jamili, Senior Supt. Dionardo Carlos, spokesman for the Philippine National Police (PNP), said the couple had walked some 100 meters from the ferry when they were attacked.

He said doctors tried to revive the victims.

"Aklan and Malay are now working to arrest the gunmen," he added. "Well, let us look for the official statement, *mahirap mag assume*."

Carlos said the PNP is now verifying information the Odictas were initially accosted by police at the Batangas port for illegal possession of firearms.

The PNP spokesman said the victims were not declared dead on arrival since the staff at the Malay Hospital still managed to perform medical procedures on the couple.

Fortun said they are gathering more information about the incident.

"The Odictas are good people," he said, as he urged the media to closely follow the case.

In a text message, the Police Regional Office 6 through spokesman Supt. Gilbert Gorero "expressed deepest sympathy to the bereaved Odicta family and condemns the shooting incident that transpired at Caticlan, Malay, Aklan resulting in the death of the couple."

"We appeal to the public who has direct knowledge of the incident to come out to the open and help in our investigation so that justice will prevail," he added.

Gorero said PRO-6 acting regional director Chief Supt. Jose Gentiles has ordered Jamili to "conduct in-depth investigation to identify the suspects and effect their immediate arrest and to file the necessary case in court."

Dela Rosa also condemned the killings, saying the Odictas should have been tried in court.

In Catbalogan, Samar, Duterte said Odicta met his tragic fate "because it was his choice."

"So, I cannot say anything good or bad because it was his choice," the President said partly in Filipino.

"He was corrupting everybody, including the governor. There is one governor here in the Visayas that – I named him before. If you do not believe me, go to Cebu and try to find time to talk to him. Even his speech – he was already dysfunctional," he added.

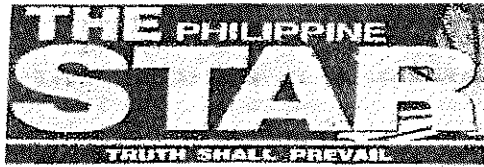
His previous announcement of a list of government officials "involved in illicit drug trade" did not include a governor from the Visayas.

– With Giovanni Nilles

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## Duterte to De Lima: Resign, hang yourself

If I were De Lima, I'd hang myself. As she faces allegations of immorality and protecting drug lords operating from the national penitentiary, President Duterte has advised Sen. Leila de Lima to resign and hang herself.

Duterte yesterday told De Lima to resign, a day after Presidential Com-

munications Secretary Martin Andanar said Malacañang is leaving it up to the Senate to decide on what to do with the senator.

"If I were De Lima, ladies and gentlemen, I'd hang myself," Duterte said during a hospital visit to a wounded policeman yesterday in Tacloban City.

"Your life is, not just your life, your innermost core as a female is being serialized everyday. You should resign," he added.

De Lima, however, said she has no intention of resigning as demanded by the President because doing so would be an admission of guilt.

In a chance interview with reporters at the Senate yesterday, De Lima admitted that the thought of resigning crossed her mind after what she has gone through with the President.

"Now the call for resignation, this has crossed my mind if only to make

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## Duterte From Page 1

them stop and give me some peace... but after much reflection and let me repeat, resignation at this point will be an admission of guilt and a sign of weakness and I'm neither weak nor guilty," she said.

Duterte said De Lima had lost face because of the exposés about her alleged involvement in illegal drugs.

"What face will you show women? Follow me, you will say? This is how to be a woman of the world. That would be hard to do," the President said.

De Lima was included in the matrix of officials with alleged drug links that was

presented by Duterte to the media last week.

Also in the matrix were former Pangasinan governor and now 5th District Rep. Amado Espino Jr., suspended provincial administrator Rafael Baraan, his brother former justice undersecretary Francis Baraan, Urbiztondo, Pangasinan Mayor Raul Sison, former Bureau of Corrections chief Franklin Bucayu and De Lima's former driver and alleged lover Ronnie Dayan.

Duterte claimed that Dayan was De Lima's connection to the drug lords at the New Bilibid Prison (NBP) in Muntin-

lupa City. He also alleged that Dayan had collected drug money to support De Lima's senatorial campaign.

Duterte also accused De Lima of "immorality" for supposedly having an affair with her married driver. He said the senator's "sexual escapades" had compelled her to violate laws and provide special privileges to some inmates.

De Lima was justice secretary during the previous administration. The Bureau of Corrections, which runs the NBP, is under the justice department.

The senator dismissed Duterte's accusations as mere "character assassination," even claiming that the President would lose face for making

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false claims.

De Lima, who has vowed to probe the spate of killings of suspected drug pushers, also described Duterte's drug matrix as "garbage."

Justice Secretary Vitaliano Aguirre II said that at least six witnesses are willing to support Duterte's accusations against De Lima and other officials in the matrix.

Duterte admitted that he was angered by De Lima's attempts to link him to the Davao Death Squad (DDS), a vigilante group tagged in the killing of criminals in the city where he served as mayor for 23 years.

"She said 'I will prove that Duterte is the leader of the

DDS.' I said what is DDS? Davao Development System," the President said.

"Why do you have to interpret it the wrong way? Who wants to kill his fellowman? You think it's very easy to kill a fellow human being? You build a nation over the bones of your countrymen?"

Duterte insisted that he is tough on drugs because he has "to save this generation."

"Otherwise, our society would be compromised tomorrow," he said.

The President has accused more than 160 incumbent and former local executives and uniformed personnel of being involved in the narcotics trade.

Ever since she initiated a

probe into the alleged extrajudicial and summary killings of suspected drug pushers, De Lima has been the subject of vicious attacks from the President, who accused her of benefitting from the illegal drug trade.

In his recent pronouncements against De Lima, the President said that she was once again engaged in a romantic relationship with her motorcycle escort, whom he identified only as a certain Warren.

The allies of the President in the House of Representatives have also initiated a probe into the proliferation of illegal drugs inside the NBP during the previous administration.

– With Alexis Romero,  
Marvin Sy

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**Malaya**  
The Nation's Newspaper

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## 12 soldiers dead, 5 hurt in clash with Abu Sayyaf

**BY VICTOR REYES**

TWELVE soldiers, including an officer, were killed while five others were wounded in a firefight with the Abu Sayyaf in Patikul town in Sulu yesterday afternoon.

The military loss came after 21 Abu Sayyaf men were killed by soldiers in skirmishes Thursday and Saturday also in Patikul town. Seventeen soldiers were wounded in the skirmishes.

Maj. Filemon Tan, spokesman of the military's Western Mindanao Command, said the latest fighting broke out at around 4:30 p.m., involving troops from the Army's 35th Infantry Battalion.

Tan said the soldiers from the 35th IB were clashed with the bandits as they were pursuing an undetermined number of Abu Sayyaf men encountered earlier yesterday by soldiers from the 21st infantry Battalion.

The Abu Sayyaf group, known for kidnapping for ransom activities, was led by Radulan Sahiron.

Tan said the fighting lasted until around 6 p.m.

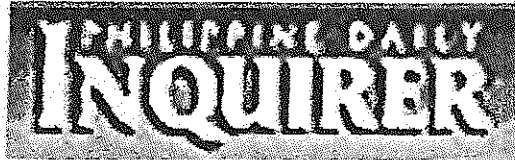
He said the clash left an undetermined number of casualties on the enemy side.

"Ang description that was given to us was it was a fight, laban. Kumbaga positioning siguro, maneuver, nabira....Hindi nao-overwhelm, kasi hindi tayo nakunan ng baril at hindi nalapitan ang tropa (after the firefight)," said Tan.

Asked for a number of the enemy casualties, Tan said: "We still don't know but sa dami ng nakalaban, malamang meron sila."

"During firefight, you cannot avoid casualties...Masakit na namatayan tayo ng labindalawa but in war, in battle you can never predict the result... Malay mo ang patay sa kanila (Abu Sayyaf) is bente or trenta," he said.

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## After raid, ARMM gov seeks transfer of high-risk inmates

By **Julie S. Alipala**  
and **Richel V. Umel**  
*Inquirer Mindanao*

GOV. MUJIV Hataman of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) urged the national government to transfer high-risk inmates like terrorists and drug lords in the region to Camp Bagong Diwa in Taguig City.

Hataman made the appeal af-

ter heavily armed men belonging to the Maute group, which has reportedly pledged allegiance to the Islamic State, sprang on Sunday eight members from the provincial jail of Lanao del Sur in Marawi City.

Fifteen other detainees also escaped during the raid.

Hataman said local government units "can only do so much" with the powers at their disposal.

"Given the high-risk nature of detainees suspected to be members of lawless groups in the region, we would like to request from hereon that detainees of this nature be transferred to Camp Bagong Diwa in Taguig City immediately after their apprehension," he said.

The Maute group is being blamed for many atrocities in Lanao del Sur province, includ-

**GOV SEEKS/A9**



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ing the beheading of two awmill workers in Butig town in April.

Led by Maute family members, the group is also suspected of staging the July 27 attack on the headquarters of the Army's 103rd Infantry Brigade in Marawi City.

Lt. Gen. Mayoralgo dela Cruz, chief of Western Mindanao Command, said he could still not believe that the Maute group had managed to storm a jail facility.

Hataman said he wanted to know if there were enough personnel in the prison facility when the raid happened.

"Support from the national government is needed not only in the pursuit of those who sow error in our land but also in securing them and bringing them to justice, making sure our people live in a society that is safe and secure," he added.

The ARMM governor said he wanted an explanation on the raid. "I am calling for a Regional Peace and Order Council (RPOC) meeting within this week. I don't want finger-pointing, I need to know first," he told the INQUIRER in a phone interview.

"In this RPOC meeting, we hope to come up with resolutions that all high-risk inmates with backgrounds such as terrorists, drug lords or [those] involved in narcopolitics, be transferred to [Camp Bagong Diwa in] Bicutan, or if not, deploy a strong contingent enough to resist armed elements," he said.

### Commander Robot et al.

It was in Camp Bagong Diwa where Abu Sayyaf leaders Ghalib Andang (alias Commander Robot), Alhamser Limbong (aka Commander Kosovo) and Nadjmi Sabdullah (alias Commander Global) were detained while on trial for the kidnapping of a group of Western tourists on the Malaysian island resort of Sipadan in 2000.

The Abu Sayyaf commanders and 19 other Moro rebels died after they attempted a jailbreak in 2005.

Marawi Mayor Majul Gandamra said "high-profile inmates should be brought to the regional detention cell in Parang, Maguindanao province, not in the provincial jail to prevent the same occurrence of jailbreak."

The provincial jail, which is under the jurisdiction of the provincial government, "must also have enough manpower

and firepower capability to secure the facility from intruders," Gandamra said.

On Monday, the Armed Forces of the Philippines alerted all military posts in Mindanao to help recapture the 23 inmates, including eight members of the Maute group.

Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla, AFP spokesperson, said the military would work closely with the police, the lead force in charge of the pursuit operation.

"Security forces have been alerted to watch out and expedite the recapture of these local terrorists who have fled jail," he said in an interview.

Lanao del Sur Gov. Soraya Alonto Adiong said her administration would "exert all efforts" to recapture the 23 inmates.

### Return to Butig

Police said the eight terrorist suspects had returned to their camp in Butig town.

"There were reports that the Maute group had already joined the bigger group based in Butig after its men crossed Lake Lanao in a motorized boat," Senior Supt. Augustine Tello, the provincial police chief, said on Monday.

Adiong, in a statement, said

all efforts would be exerted "to ensure that the escaped convicts return to jail and the perpetrators face the consequences of their actions."

Tello confirmed to the INQUIRER that he received such directive from the governor.

Col. Roseller Murillo, chief of the Army's 103rd Brigade, said his men were ready to assist the police in hunting down members of the Maute group.

### Checkpoint

Army soldiers arrested the eight suspects, who were allegedly transporting bomb-making components, at a checkpoint on Aug. 22.

The suspects included Hassim Balawag Maute, alias Apple Jihad, Abul Jabbar Tominaman Macabading, Jamil Batoa Amerul and Muhammad Sinodin Mulok.

"We have done our part," Murillo said, adding that the suspects were already under the jurisdiction of the police.

President Duterte ordered the military to "neutralize" the Maute group during his recent visit to the headquarters of the 1st Infantry Division in Pulacan, Zamboanga del Sur province.

*With a report from Cynthia D. Balana*

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## PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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# 'Lumad' expect Rody's presence in homecoming

By Chris V. Panganiban  
*Inquirer Mindanao*

SAN FRANCISCO, Agusan del Sur—When more than 3,000 Manobo evacuees start their four-hour, 110-kilometer trek back to their upland homes in Lianga, Surigao del Sur province, on Friday, they expect no less than President Duterte to supervise their return from Tandag City.

"The President himself had assured us during our meeting that he will personally supervise the safe return of the 'lumad' (indigenous) back to their communities," said Bishop Modesto Villasanta of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines, a convener of the Friends of the Lumad in Garaga.

### Commitment

Mr. Duterte made his commitment to be in Tandag on that day during a meeting in Malacñang on Aug. 15, Villasanta said.

The scheduled homecoming will happen exactly a year and a day after the lumad people were forced to leave their communities when members of the paramilitary group Magahat-Bagani killed three of their leaders in the village of Diatagon in Lianga.

The militiamen shot and killed administrator Emerito Samarca of the Alternative Learning Center for Agricultural and Livelihood Development (Alcadev), Dionel Campos and Juvello Sinzo in Diatagon's Sitio Han-ayan. Almost a year later, no suspect has been arrested even as the government put up a P3.6-million bounty on militia leaders Bobby and

Loloy Tejero and Margarito Layno.

Then Gov. Johnny Pimentel said the Magahat-Bagani was created by the military, an accusation that the Armed Forces of the Philippines had denied.

Army soldiers have set up camp in Han-ayan and are only awaiting word from the Manobo people about their confirmed date of return before their pullout, said Col. Isidro Purisima, commanding officer of the 75th Infantry Battalion.

### Mandate

Purisima said details of the turnover would be threshed out during a meeting today between military and lumad representatives, including Villasanta.

"Even before, we are ready to assist them. This is our mandate to protect the civilians from any harm," he said.

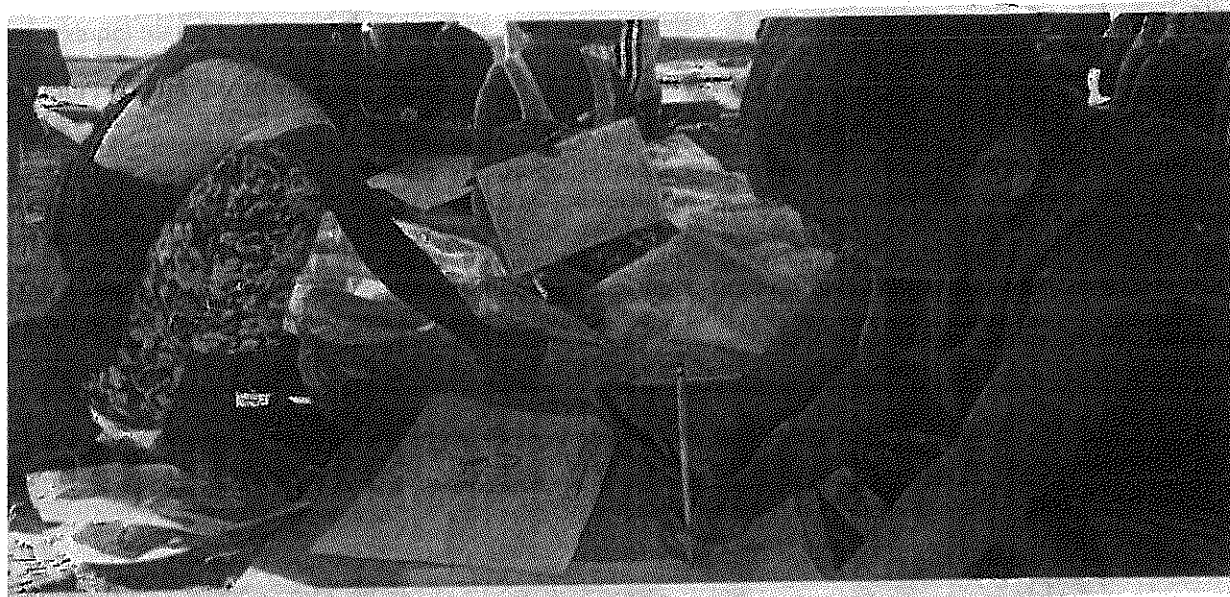
He denied claims from Malahutayong Pakigbisog sa mga Sumusunod (Persevering Struggle for the Next Generation) or Mapasu, an indigenous peoples organization, that his men had ransacked houses and damaged the facilities of Alcadev. The military has branded Mapasu a communist front.

### Military camps

"There is no truth to it. In fact, we guarded Han-ayan from anybody who will infiltrate the community while the residents were away," Purisima said.

In a statement, Mapasu said it had sent a group to the site on Aug. 24 and was "enraged upon seeing the large military camps

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**“LUMAD” children continue attending school in makeshift tents at the sports complex in Tandag City in Surigao del Sur province, where their families have been staying since leaving their communities in Lianga town last year.** NICO ALCONABA/  
INQUIRER MINDANAO

in our communities at Kilometer 9 and Han-ayan.” The inspection in 11 communities was initiated by the provincial government.

“Our hearts were crushed upon seeing our houses damaged, our once productive farms covered with weeds and our

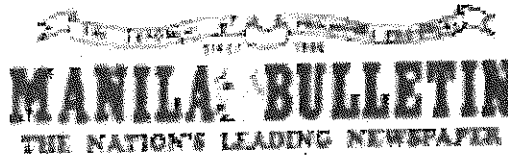
schools rendered unusable,” it said.

The group’s strong opposition to the entry of logging and mining companies in Lianga may have drawn the ire of the Magahat-Bagani, which is led by Datu Galpet Egua.

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# Army trains Negros drug dependents

By EDITH B. COLMO

BACOLOD CITY—Around 50 drug users and pushers finished a weeklong livelihood and values formation training at an Army camp in Negros Occidental.

"This was one way of diverting the attention of drug dependents. Otherwise, they will go back to their old ways," said Colonel Francisco Delfin, commander of

the Army's 303rd Infantry Brigade (303 IB).

The first batch of drug dependents were taught organic farming techniques and other livelihood skills at Camp Gerona, 303 IB's headquarters in Murcia town.

Delfin said the training is a joint project of the 303 IB and Negros Occidental provincial government under Governor Alfredo Marañon Jr. in support of the Duterte's ad-

ministration war against drugs.

Marañon has said that the drug problem in Negros Occidental has been reduced by at least 50 percent with the surrender of more than 10,000 drug users and pushers.

Marañon said Mayor Jeffrey Tabujara of Cauayan town has offered a part of its district hospital as a treatment center for drug dependents.



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Pahina. 2

## Sa pramis na dagdag-sahod SUNDALO AT PULIS, 'WAG MASYADONG UMASA

INAMIN kahapon ni Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana na posibleng hindi matanggap ngayong taon ang ipinangakong dagdag-suweldo ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte sa mga sundalo at pulis.

Sinabi ni Lorenzana na ang umiinto sa sahod ng mga unipormadong tauhan ng

panahalaan ay nakadepende sa pambansang badyet.

Kung sasabihin niya ni Budget Secretary Benjamin Diokno na may pondo ang gobyerno ay maaaring matuloy ang pagtaas ng suweldo ng mga sundalo at pulis ngayong taon.

Nasabi na rin umano ng katiwala ng maaaring sala-

ry increase sa mga sundalo.

"Sinabi ko nariyan sa mga tropa, na do not be too optimistic. Although, the promise of the president is good, sometimes the realities of the purse. I told them to hope for the best pero expect mga some aberya along the way. Pero mangyayariyan kung hindi ngayon, next year,"

paliwanag nito.

Nauna nang binanggit ni Diokno na walang nakalaan sa pambansang badyet para sa pagtupad ng pangako ng presidente. Gayunman, puwede aniyang madagdagan ang allowances ng mga sundalo at ang dagdag-benefisyo na suplay ng bigas.

(Myne Reyes)

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## Regionwide alert declared to recapture Marawi escapees

By Mario J. Mallari

Police and military authorities have declared a regionwide alert to recapture 23 detainees who were "rescued" by the Maute terror group from the Marawi City Jail on Saturday.

Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla Jr., spokesman of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), said that the military and police are closely coordinating for the recapture of the detainees.

"Security forces have been alerted to watch out and expedite the recapture of these local terrorists who have fled jail," Padilla said.

"We work closely with the police, the police are the lead, we are just supporting in the law enforcement functions," he added.

About 50 heavily armed members of the Maute group raided the local jail in the southern city of Marawi on Saturday and freed eight comrades who were arrested barely a week ago. Fifteen other detainees, held for other serious offenses, also escaped in the raid, said provincial warden Acmad Tabao.

In a report, Tabao said two women came to the prison gate, asking the guard to take delivery of some food for the detainees. When the guard opened the gate, hooded men forced their way into the compound.

The eight Maute group members rescued were arrested last Aug. 22 after soldiers manning a checkpoint found improvised bombs and pistols in the van they were driving.

The Maute group is one of several Muslim gangs in Mindanao.

The group has carried out kidnappings and bombings and is believed to have led an attack on an army outpost in the Mindanao town of Butig in February.

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MANILA BULLETIN  
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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## AFP deploys more troops to crush Abu Sayyaf Group

By FRANCIS T. WAKEFIELD

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) said yesterday that additional troops will be deployed in Patikul, Sulu, as part of the continuing offensive against the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG).

As this developed, 21 ASG fighters have already been killed since fighting broke out last Friday.

Marine Col. Edgard A. Arevalo, the chief of the AFP's Public Affairs Office, said that government forces who are part of Joint Task Force Sulu continue to scour the area in efforts of neutralizing the bandit group.

AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Ricardo Visaya said that the military will dedicate all resources and assets to gain the objective to follow the directive of President Duterte to crush the bandit group.

"Yes, continuing. Continuing iyung pursuit operation naming. Actually, yes kasama iyung personnel pero ayoko lang mag banggit ng exact number or ilang batallions. Magdadagdag tayo.

Arevalo, however, could not say if the group earlier encountered by troops had

the hostages

The Abu Sayyaf is still holding 24 people as hostages, 16 of them foreigners.

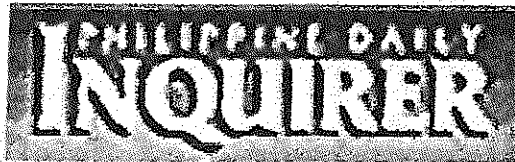
The AFP said that it expects more terrorists will be neutralized by government forces as more troops and war material continue to pour into Sulu, not to mention the support and cooperation of the local populace already sick and tired by the atrocities of the ASG.

"Let us vigorously pursue these terrorist/bandit Abu Sayyaf Group with no let up and destroy them," Gen. Visaya said during a recent high-level operations briefing.

"We have this one chance to annihilate this menace to society that claims links with ISIS. We have the full support of the Commander-in-Chief, President Duterte, and the backing of our citizens specially the people of Sulu," Visaya said.

"As your Chief-of-Staff, I am committing all personnel and material resources in the AFP inventory necessary for the success of this 'once and for all mission' in our lives as soldiers—i.e. to annihilate all ASG members, supporters, and sympathizers for the sake of the next generation," he added.

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# 'Ceasefire guidelines out in 60 days'

By Vince F. Nonato

THE PHILIPPINE government and communist leaders plan to hammer out guidelines for a bilateral ceasefire within 60 days, Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process Jesus Dureza said on Monday.

The cessation of hostilities is to be enforced through mechanisms that would monitor violations and enable joint cooperation, as the indefinite ceasefire declarations by the government and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP), the political arm of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), remain separate unilateral gestures for now.

"It is important to have mechanisms so there would be ways to prevent possible clashes—who will intervene and for what reasons," Dureza told reporters in a briefing on arrival in the country at the end of the first round of talks in Oslo, Norway.

He said it might be possible for the government to adopt a template similar to its ceasefire with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, but added that the NDFP might have other proposals in mind.

The government and the NDFP will return to Oslo for the second round of talks on Oct. 8-12.

President Duterte said yesterday the ceasefire should not prevent sol-

diers from patrolling around the country.

The President reminded the Armed Forces of the Philippines to comply with the ceasefire agreement that the government and the NDFP signed during the first round of talks in Oslo.

"But I do not believe in the theory that just because there is a ceasefire, there is an area where the soldiers or the policemen cannot enter," Mr. Duterte said during his visit to the wake of a policeman in Catbalogan, Samar.

The President said government forces and the communist rebels should stop killing each other.

For now, Dureza said: "We cannot discount [the possibility of shooting

incidents], but the idea is that both sides are committed. Don't expect this to be a walk in the park. There are still plenty of issues."

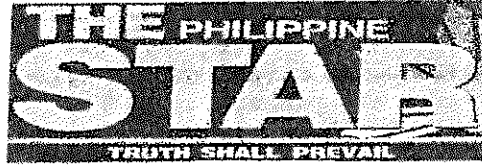
While the peace panels came up with an "indicative timeline" to finish an agreement within one year, Dureza stressed the importance of taking things one step at a time.

"While we'd like to see an early end, please also manage expectations. The road map is not always rosy," he said.

He described the basic advocacy of the NDFP as "*malalim at matir*" (deep and serious), as he acknowledged the need for socioeconomic structural reforms. *With a report from Marlon Ramos*



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## Heroes remembered; war vets, widows get P4.7 B

By CHRISTINA MENDEZ

Not every Filipino is given a chance to die for his country.

In a speech at the Libingan ng mga Bayani in Taguig City where he paid tribute to the country's heroes yesterday morning, President Duterte reiterated the words of former chief justice Jose Abad Santos, who he considers a hero for his

patriotism.

"I consider among the top the late justice Jose Abad Santos. He was taken prisoner of war and it was in Malabang where he was made to swear allegiance to the flag of the opposite forces, the enemy. He refused and his son began to cry," Duterte said.

Turn to Page 8

## Heroes

From Page 1

The President recalled how Abad Santos refused to renounce his citizenship despite pressure during the Japanese occupation.

He narrated how Abad Santos' son said, "Father, why don't you just make a salute? It doesn't make any difference. There are no people here. We are in a prisoner's camp. You can do it without losing honor for you are under threat and under duress."

"You know, from the books that we were lectured on, his answer to his son was, 'Son, do not do that to me because not everyone is given a chance to die for his country,'" Duterte said.

The President has been vocal about his willingness to risk his life and the presi-

dency amid the government campaign against illegal drugs.

"I will be insignificant in this country. I am not a splendid politician but how I wish I could hear from my son the same pleading and how could I have responded the way the chief justice did before he died," he said.

Abad Santos was the fifth chief justice and served as acting president of the Commonwealth of the Philippines during World War II on behalf of President Manuel Quezon after the government went into exile in the United States.

After two months, he was killed by the Japanese forces for refusing to cooperate during their occupation of the country.

## Benefits for war vets

Also yesterday, Duterte announced that a total of P4.7 billion will be released by the budget department to compensate widows of war veterans and retirees above 80 years old.

Duterte added that the joint implementing rules and regulations of the unpaid total administrative disability arrears had been signed by Budget Secretary Benjamin Diokno and Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana.

The President noted that the P4.7-billion payment of the arrears has been appropriated in the 2016 national budget but was not released by the administration of president Benigno Aquino III.

An estimated P3.5 billion is allotted for spouses of deceased war veterans while P1.2 billion is allocated for AFP

retirees who are 80 years old and above.

The budget will be distributed to more than 83,000 WWII and post-war veterans, as well as their spouses.

### **What genocide?**

Meanwhile, President Duterte stressed that his anti-drug campaign that has left nearly 1,800 people dead does not amount to genocide, but that he's ready to go to jail to defend his men from lawsuits.

Duterte drew a line between the widespread killings sparked by his anti-drug war and the brutality under Syrian President Bashar Assad and the atrocities committed by Islamic State group extremists.

"Genocide? Who did I kill? I did not kill any child. I did not drop barrel (bombs) just like Assad," the President said in his speech. "I'm fighting ... criminals."

Referring to Islamic State group militants, whom he called "idiots," Duterte said, "I do not burn women because they refuse to have sex."

At least 1,779 drug suspects have so far been killed in Duterte's campaign, including 712 who were gunned down in clashes with police, with the rest being slain in still-unclear circumstances, the national police chief told a Senate inquiry last week.

Human rights groups have expressed alarm over the spate of killings, and UN-appointed human rights experts warned steps should be taken to halt the violence, adding that the government and law enforcers could be held responsible.

The 71-year-old Duterte built a name with his deadly crime-busting style as a long-time mayor of Davao City.

He described his campaign against drugs as a harsh war that would involve the military because the problem has worsened into a crisis and claimed the lives of law enforcers.

"We might still end up like the South American countries and their fractured governments. I am declaring war," he said.

### **No special room**

But if he goes to jail because of his anti-drug campaign, Duterte said he does not intend to ask for a special room.

He, however, would appreciate some books to read.

"Prison? No problem. I would not even ask for a special room. Just give me a bed, a foam and books to read," he said, adding it would be a good time to catch up on his reading.

– With Giovanni Nilles, Alexis Romero, AP

30 August 2016

## PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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# War veterans get P4.7 billion in gov't benefits

By Marlon Ramos

**SURVIVING** World War II veterans and their dependents have a billion reasons to smile.

President Duterte yesterday ordered the release of P4.7 billion in unpaid benefits to war veterans and widows of soldiers who died defending the country from Japanese imperial forces.

It was a fitting tribute to the war veterans as the nation marked the annual National Heroes' Day.

The distribution of the cash benefits was earlier approved by then President Benigno Aquino III, but it was put on hold because of the election ban, according to Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana.

Mr. Duterte said part of the amount would be given to retired soldiers who were at least 80 years old. "It will be released as soon as possible," he said in a speech at a ceremony at Libingan

**WAR VETERANS/A9**

From page A1

ng mga Bayani in Taguig City.

He said P3.5 billion of the fund for the Total Administrative Liability (TAD) would be distributed to the veterans and widows while the remaining P1.2 billion would be intended for retired military officers.

"Be careful. If you are not loyal to your wife, she might be joining the widows (who will get) P3.5 billion. And if I were the wife, I would think again now. There's (money) waiting for me," Mr. Duterte said in jest.

The distribution of the cash benefits was stipulated under Republic Act No. 7696, which amended the law standardizing and upgrading the benefits for military veterans and their families.

Mr. Duterte, the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, thanked Budget Secretary Benjamin Diokno and Lorenzana for signing the joint implementing rules and regula-

tions (IRR) for the distribution of the funds.

"I think he (Diokno) is the best ever budget secretary. And so publicly, I would like to thank you sir for accepting my offer to join the Cabinet. I really appreciate it very much," he said of Diokno.

As mandated by law, each beneficiary should receive P1,700 in monthly allowance upon reaching the age of 70 starting April 9, 1994.

However, many of the veterans had died before they were able to collect their TAD allowances.

In the joint IRR, all beneficiaries should receive the entire amount due them.

The Philippine Veterans' Affairs Office and the AFP were directed to process and facilitate the immediate distribution of the amount to all beneficiaries.

As of September 2015, there were 16,237 surviving spouses entitled to the TAD pension. *With a report from Inquirer Research*

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## Esperon to address 62nd anniversary of AFP veterans group

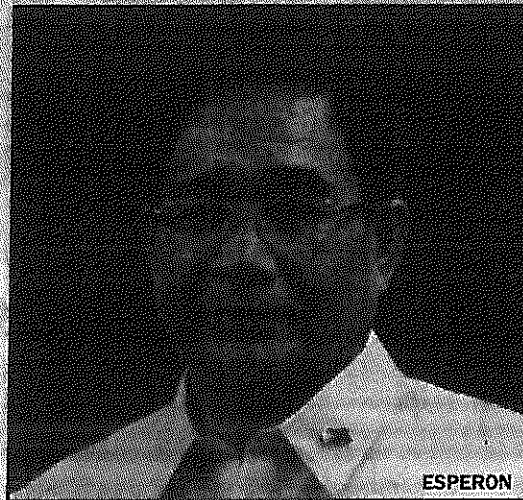
National Security Adviser Gen. Hermogenes C. Esperon Jr. will address the Armed Forces of the Philippines Retired Veterans Association, Inc. (AFPREVA) on its 62nd Anniversary celebration on Aug. 31 in

Camp Aguinaldo, Col. Simplicio F. Duque, AFPREVA president, announced.

He said that Esperon is expected to rally AFPREVA members behind President Duterte's anti-illegal drugs and corruption campaign.

Esperon will be joined by Bayambang, Pangasinan Mayor Cesar T. Quiambao, a well-known entrepreneur who helped build the Skyway infrastructure in Metro Manila.

Esperon, Quiambao and eight



others received the AFPREVA Sandigan Award as part of the association's celebration of National Heroes Day yesterday.

Chartered in 1954 by the Veterans Federation of the Philippines in accordance

with Republic Act 2640, the AFPREVA assists its members in securing their benefits and other entitlements.

Esperon was Presidential Management Staff chief under President Gloria Arroyo and AFP chief of staff under President Ramos.

The campaign against drugs, now considered a security problem, has eliminated more than 2,000 pushers and users since President Duterte implemented his campaign promise to make the country drug-free in three to six months.



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The Manila Times

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## Editorial

### Abu Sayyaf and Islamic State now a linked threat

**I**t is good news that the Philippine military, through the Army's Western Mindanao Command, has lately inflicted heavy casualties on the rebel Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) in a series of clashes in Sulu. And the military will continue such operations in order to press for the release of kidnapped hostages who remain in the clutches of the rebel group.

This suggests that President Duterte's order to the AFP to "destroy" the ASG may be achievable. That, however, is easier said than done.

It is bad news that in another development in Mindanao, the Maute group, an extremist group claiming links to the Islamic State stormed the Lanao del Sur provincial jail on Saturday and freed about two dozen detainees, including eight of their comrades who were arrested just a week earlier. This assault on a government penitentiary constitutes a major blow to law and order. Police and military must move swiftly and firmly to contain the situation.

Marawi City Chief Inspector Parson Asadil said the armed men freed their leader, Hashim Balwag Maute, who pledged allegiance to the Islamic State. The men were well armed, he added, and even carried rocket-propelled grenades during their assault on the provincial jail.

On Aug. 22, a joint Army-Philippine National Police checkpoint in Lumbayanague town in Lanao del Sur arrested eight men, including Hashim Balawag Maute, leader of the Maute group, who were reportedly involved in various terrorist activities in Lanao del Sur.

The jailbreak is just the latest mass escape from poorly secured jails, with the incidents often involving Muslim extremists.

We make a point of discussing these two events together in one editorial in order to underscore how precarious and volatile the situation in Mindanao remains to day, despite recent military gains in the conflict, and the greater push for peace and stabilization under President Duterte.

The simultaneous accession of three Mindanaoans to the presidency, the House speakership and the Senate presidency, has had no substantive effect on the situation in Mindanao. Peace must still be won by either strife or negotiation.

What complicate the situation further are signs of an increasing interest by the Islamic State in an alliance with Filipino Muslim rebel groups.

In June, the Islamic State declared in a video that it considered ASG's Isnlon Hapilon, aka Abu Abdullah, as the representative of IS in the Philippines. Any linkage of the IS and ASG will present a potential problem to our government's effort to finish off the Abu Sayyaf and the larger bid to forge a lasting solution to conflict and rebellion in our southern regions.

US intelligence and military officials say that "ISIL recognizing Hapilon has put the Philippines directly under its terror network, and this is a game-changer." The game change could come in the form of greater rebel activity in the South.

President Duterte is indubitably correct in saying that the Philippines should now be ready to confront militarily the threat posed by the Islamic State.

In the past, our government has tended to dismiss any apprehension that the Islamic State may strive to make inroads among disaffected Muslim communities in the South.

The danger is clear and present now. There should be no delay on the part of our government and military in developing a strategy to successfully confront the menace of this rebellion.

TUESDAY  
August 19, 2016

**The Manila Times**

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PAGTANAW AT PANANAW

## SUSPENDIDO LIBING NI FM

**Bert de Guzman**

**S**INUSPINDE ng Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) ang burial preparations para sa yumaong diktador na si ex-Pres. Ferdinand E. Marcos sa Libingan ng Mga Bayani sa Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City. Sinabi ni Col. Edgard Arevalo, AFP Public Affairs chief, ang suspensiyon sa preparasyon ay alinsunod sa status quo ante order na inisyu ng Supreme Court (SC).

Bilang pagtupad ni President Rodrigo Roa Duterte (RRD) sa pangako kay Sen. Bongbong Marcos at Marcos Family noong kampanya na ipalilibing niya ang bangkay ni FM sa Libingan kapag siya ang nanalo, pahihintulutan niyang maihimlay ang bangkay na hanggang ngayon ay nasa refrigerated crypt sa Batac, Ilocos Norte.

Malaki ang boto na nakuha ni Mano Digong sa Ilocos Norte at iba pang mga probinsiya sa Ilocos Region dahil sa paborableng pagpapalibing sa bangkay. Landslide. Layunin din daw ni RRD na mapaghilom ang mga sugat ng kahapon na likha ng martial law at mapag-isa ang mga Pinoy. Pero, sa halip na mapaghilom ang sugat, ito ay muling nagnaknak, muling nanariwa at sumiklab ang galit ng mga martial law survivor at mga taong nakaranas ng kaapihan, pagsupil sa kalayaan, demokrasya at press freedom.

Nagkakaisa sila sa paninindigan at paniniwalang bakit hahayaang mailibing ang diktador sa LNMB gayong sa panahon ng martial law, libu-libong Pinoy ang namatay, marami ang biglang nawala, at marami rin ang ikinulong dahil itinuturing silang kaaway ng Marcos regime. Papaano raw ihihimlay ang diktador na pinatalsik ng taumbayan noong 1986 kapiling ang mga tunay na bayani na nagbuwis ng buhay para sa bayan?

May suhesityon ang mga netizen at iba't ibang sektor at grupo, na sa Batac, Ilocos Norte na lang ilibing si Apo Macoy. Sa Ilocos, siya ay itinuturing na bayani, dakilang tao at pinakamagaling na pangulo ng bansa. Minamahal siya ng mga Ilocano at tiyak na ganap siyang mananahimik sa piling nila.

Sana ay maunawaan ito ni President Rody at ang ikonsidera niya ang ang pambansang damdamin ng mga Pilipino, hindi bunsod lamang sa pagtupad sa isang pangako noong kampanya. Sana ay magkaroon din ng tama at wastong desisyon ang SC tungkol sa isyung ito!

## ONLINE NEWS

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### FARM NOT WAR | Transforming the Society from Fighters to Farmers

Alvin Santiago August 29, 2016 0 Comment breaking Headlines



**BASILAN (DWDD)** – Loads of fresh farm produce that is grown locally and cheaper in comparison to Zamboanga yield will soon pour into Isabela City's marketplace as the 4TH Special Forces Battalion marks its premiere harvest from its livelihood project.

Ushering another era of socio-economic development, the unit opened its doors to "affordably" fresh vegetables last week. Loads of yield was harvested in its 1 hectare model farm, with consumers from nearby Lantawan, Maluso, and even as far out as Sumisip Municipality lining up for the fresh products.

A Pioneer in Basilan, the Model Farm for Vegetable Production is spearheaded by the 4TH Special Forces Battalion in partnership with the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries – ARMM (DAF-ARMM), Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI), United Workers Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Multi-Purpose Cooperative (UWARBMC), the Isabela City Water District (ISAWAD) and Nagdilaab Foundation Inc. The activity forms part of the unit's Peace, Security and Development initiatives under the Seed the Future Project.



Starting out as a community-based project, Seed the Future was conceptualized to catalyze the advancement of the local agriculture industry through the resource integration of different government agencies, non-government organization and other stakeholders to facilitate learning, skills development and application of crop production technology to achieve a self-sufficient and sustainable local agricultural industry. "Sustaining Food Security – Transforming Communities" is the project's tagline.

Going a step further, the 4TH Special Forces Battalion promoted cash-crop intercropping with perennial rubber trees to achieve a three-fold effect: 1) increasing the economic potential of intercropping with cash crops and permanent crops; 2) providing economic opportunity and 3) increasing food security to the island province of Basilan. Currently in its First Phase, the project is set to expand for its Second Phase to provide for a year-round harvest of fresh vegetables.

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





"We have seen these methods being introduced by many agricultural authorities.

However promising, theories being discussed to farmers is yet to be practiced in Basilan, until now" notes LTC Andrew B Bacala Jr, Commanding Officer of the 4TH Special Forces Battalion. "By setting the example through a model farm, people will be educated and encouraged to do the same. This will provide employment, increase vegetable production in the province and bring down the prices of farm yields, making produce affordable for all Basilenos. In effect, this will decrease our crop dependence from Zamboanga mainland, contributing to food security. A hectare of cultivated land could easily employ ten (10) farmers, which translates to ten (10) families being fed with enough appropriations to send their kids to school. Imagine how many people could benefit from the program and its implications to the improvement Basilan in ten (10) years – all that may well start from this project" he adds. LTC Bacala himself is a practicing farmer and came from a farmer-family in the highlands of Mountain Province.



The project, now on its 3RD month, has its conceptualization from the harsh experiences of the Province. As experienced during the three-week long Zamboanga Siege in 2013, Basilan, an Island-Province, was cut off from the mainland after government forces blocked sea routes to prevent rogue MNLF elements from destabilizing Zamboanga City. Nothing goes in or out of the Province – including food items. As food became scarce, commodity prices shoot nearly three times their retail price. This induced a critical point where threat groups could easily recruit members in exchange for food, money, or other sustenance. By understanding the effects of prolonged military operations on civilians, the unit recognized the relevance of socio-economic development and food security to prevent communities to be exploited by such events. "Lahat tayo kailangan kumita at kumain. Kakapit ako sa patalim wag ko lang Makita magutom ang anak ko" as a popular notion would take it.



Aside from its economic value, the project also aims to diminish the cultural resistance of indigent Basilenos to farming. "Basilenos are not stubborn – they don't know how to farm. They've been traditionally fishermen and traders. I'll take the best fishermen of the North and match them with a Badjao of Basilan. I doubt the Northerners stand a chance in getting a better catch – and just the same, let us not

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

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

compare the agricultural skills of the native Basilenos to that of us from Luzon or the Visayas. They have much to learn, and as their "big brothers", it is up to us to teach them." 1Lt Villarosa, CMO Officer of 4SFBn explains.

Last March, more than forty (40) sacks of rice was harvested by Tausug farmers from Brgy Matikang in the Municipality of Lantawan. "No one believed we can farm because no one trusted us with farming. They told us the people were too lazy to work. No one would help us or even teach us to farm. Now that we have proven our worth (after harvesting), the community slowly realized we can make a difference and started working together to clear the vast basakan (ricefields) left by the Visayan Farmers during the height of ASG atrocities.

We are well on our second cropping cycle", Angie Mohamad, a community leader from Brgy Matikang proudly commented (in tagalog) during an interview. The community is one of the project's pioneer, with Special Forces Operators providing essential machineries and technical skills in coordination with DAF-ARMM and other government agencies. The farmers earned more than P40,000.00 from their harvests, with spare rice to last them a year. "Hindi na kami magugutom" she cheerfully adds.

Provincial Agriculture Officer Gani N Yahiya proudly exclaims his appreciation for the unit. "The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries –ARMM (DAF-ARMM) of Basilan Province greatly commends this accomplishment.

With projects such as this, we can provide greater economic opportunities, specially in areas where food and livelihood is an issue. This is the first high-impact agriculture project being undertaken in the province that gave a very promising result. What's more interesting is, (that) soldiers, particularly the 4TH Special Forces Battalion are on the forefront of this revolution."

Asked on what to expect from the project, LTC Bacala explains: "We will use this template to normalize societies affected by conflict. By providing socio-economic opportunities, we hope to transform their communities from Fighters to Farmers. Beyond fighting, the Special Forces are here to build communities. We are here to make a difference." **Josephine Codilla / MCAG**

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## INTENSIFIED OPERATIONS | 21 ASG Neutralized in Latest Clashes

Alvin Santiago August 29, 2016 3 Comment breaking, headlines



File Photo

**SULU (DWDD)** – The government's intensified operations against the Abu Sayyaf group has resulted in the neutralization of three bandit leaders and 18 followers in two days of clashes.

AFP Western Mindanao Commander Lt. Gen. Mayoralgo de la Cruz said, the slain ASG leaders were identified as Mohammad Said, alias Amah Maas; Sairul Asbang, and a certain Abu Latip, whose bodies were recovered during mopping up operations, while bodies of other slain bandits carried away by fleeing bandits.

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

Troops recovered high-powered firearms, improvised explosive devices, and personal belongings after the encounters.



File Photo

A total of 17 soldiers had been wounded in clashes with the Abu Sayyaf in Patikul, Sulu, since Aug. 26.

According Maj. Filemon Tan Jr., spokesperson for Wesmincom, Said had five standing warrants of arrest for murder and their group was responsible for the Abduction of three Westerners and a Filipino woman from a resort on Samal Island in Davao del Norte, in September last year, where they beheaded Canadians John Ridsdel and Robert Hall, after the Canadian government refused to pay ransom for the two.

Filipino Maritess Flor was recently released without ransom to President Duterte, while allegedly P50-M had been paid for the freedom of Norwegian Kjartan Sekkingstad, but he still remains in captivity.

Recently, President Rodrigo Duterte ordered the Armed forces of the Philippines (AFP) to destroy the Abu Sayyaf after they beheaded an 18-year-old captive, Patrick James Almodovar, after his family failed to pay the P1-M ransom demand.

Currently, more than 1,200 troops, including special forces units, had been deployed in Patikul and other parts of Sulu, in offensives launched which was focused and deliberate to ensure the safety of hostages. **AES / MCAG**

[www.inquirer.net](http://www.inquirer.net)

## 21 Abu bandits killed in clashes

By: Julie S. Alipala

@inquirerdotnet

Inquirer Mindanao

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Philippine soldiers walk along a highway as they return to camp after an armed encounter with members of militant group Abu Sayyaf at the village of Bongkaong, Patikul town, Sulu province on the southern island of Mindanao on August 26, 2016. Philippine security officials killed six members of militant group Abu Sayyaf on August 26 including one involved in the kidnapping of two Canadians who were beheaded in the troubled south, the military said. / AFP PHOTO / STRINGER

ZAMBOANGA CITY—Three leaders of the Abu Sayyaf bandit group and 18 followers have been killed in two days of clashes with government troops, the military reported on Sunday.

Lt. Gen. Mayoralgo de la Cruz, chief of the military's Western Mindanao Command (Wesmincom), identified the slain bandit leaders as Mohammad Said, alias Amah Maas; Sairul Asbang, and a certain Abu Latip.

De la Cruz said 17 soldiers had been wounded in clashes with the Abu Sayyaf in Patikul, Sulu province, since Aug. 26.

He said troops recovered the bodies of 10 slain bandits, including the body of Said.

Said's group was behind the kidnapping of three Westerners and a Filipino woman from a marina on Samal Island, Davao del Norte province, in September last year.

The bandits beheaded two of the Westerners—Canadians John Ridsdel and Robert Hall—after the Canadian government refused to pay ransom for the two men's freedom.

Filipino Maritess Flor was released without ransom in June and, according to President Duterte, P50 million had been paid for the freedom of Norwegian Kjartan Sekkingstad.

Sekkingstad, however, remains in captivity.

#### **Wanted for murder**

Maj. Filemon Tan Jr., spokesperson for Wesmincom, earlier said Said had five standing warrants of arrest for murder.

Col. Edgard Arevalo, chief of the Armed Forces of the Philippines' public affairs office, said the bodies of the other slain bandits were not recovered by troops because these were carried away by their fleeing comrades. Troops recovered two M16s and an M203 grenade launcher, Arevalo said, quoting a report from Brig. Gen. Arnel de la Vega, chief of the military's Joint Task Force Sulu.

In three clashes from Aug. 11 to Aug. 27, the task force had captured two Abu Sayyaf bandits, recovered high-powered firearms and three homemade bombs, and rescued two kidnap victims, De la Vega reported.

#### **Another victim freed**

The report said another kidnap victim was released, but did not identify the victim and the two others who were rescued.

Tan said earlier that more than 1,200 troops, including special forces commandos, had been thrown into battle with the Abu Sayyaf in Patikul and other parts of Sulu.

De la Cruz earlier said offensives launched by the military were focused and deliberate to ensure the safety of Abu Sayyaf captives.

"We are very careful in the operation so as not to harm kidnap victims. Besides, we have intelligence information about the location of hostages while they are moving," he said.

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The President last week ordered the military to destroy the Abu Sayyaf after the bandits beheaded an 18-year-old captive, Patrick James Almodovar, whose family failed to pay the P1-million ransom demanded for the boy's release. ***With a report from Jaymee T. Gamil in Manila***

[www.pna.gov.ph](http://www.pna.gov.ph)

## **Ceasefire to bring development projects to countryside much faster**

By Priam F. Nepomuceno

MANILA, Aug. 29 (PNA) --- With an indefinite ceasefire now in effect between the military and rebels, Eastern Mindanao Command (EMC) head Lt. Gen. Leonardo Guerrero said peace and development projects of the government in the countryside will be able to proceed much faster.

"Now that a ceasefire with the CPP-NPA-NDF (Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army-National Democratic Front) is in effect, we expect the implementation of the government's peace and development programs in the countryside to proceed much faster," he said.

Guerrero stressed these projects will bring much needed services to remote barangays and will act as catalyst for further growth and development.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) has earlier lauded the decision of the NDF for extending indefinitely its week-long ceasefire in view of the ongoing peace talks.

"The AFP have noted with elation and optimism this breakthrough in the peace negotiations," said AFP public affairs office chief Col. Edgard Arevalo.

The rebel ceasefire took effect 12:01 a.m. of Aug. 21 and was supposed to end 11:59 p.m. of Aug. 27.

It was declared following the release of its high-ranking leaders Benito and Wilma Tiamzon, who were named consultants to the Oslo, Norway peacetalks scheduled Aug. 22 to 26.

During the past week, both parties agreed on six, instead of five, major contentious issues that would propel the negotiations.

Aside from the NDF's decision for an indefinite ceasefire, the panels also re-affirmed previously signed agreements, among them The Hague Joint Declaration in 1992, Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees (JASIG) in 1996, and the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect of Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL) in 1998.

The Philippine government (GPH) and NDF panels also agreed to reconstitute the JASIG list, which will be on an encrypted file and will contain photos and identities of NDF consultants who are still in hiding but will be immune to arrest as the negotiations are underway.

The JASIG list will contain the names and photos of 54 NDF "publicly known" consultants and 87 guerilla leaders who are known by their "assumed names".

Also given a thumbs up during the meeting were the revitalization of the joint monitoring committee, the submission of a recommendation to President Rodrigo Duterte on the issuance of an Amnesty Proclamation, subject to concurrence with Congress, for the arrested, imprisoned and charged NDF members.

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"It is a laudable move on the part of the CPP-NPA-NDF to respond positively to President Rodrigo Duterte's declaration of reimposition of the ceasefire 'for as long as necessary' to attain lasting peace in the land," he added.

"The AFP under the leadership of Gen. Ricardo Visaya will continue to uphold the letter and spirit of the ceasefire declaration of the Commander-in-Chief. The nation can rely on every soldier, sailor, marines and airmen to help provide an environment conducive to peace so that negotiators from both panels can work under the climate of trust and prospect of reconciliation," Arevalo stressed. (PNA)

LGI/PFN

[www.tribune.net.ph](http://www.tribune.net.ph)

## **AFP worries about possible exploitation of ceasefire**

**By Mario J. Mallari  
and Ted Tuvera**

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) is hopeful that mechanisms are formulated to address possible exploitation of the indefinite ceasefire. Col. Edgard Arevalo, AFP-Public Affairs Office chief, maintained that the 150,000-strong military could only hope that the communist group is sincere in talking peace with the government.

Arevalo said the military is hopeful that mechanism and safety nets would be covered by the joint statement to be crafted by the peace panels to ensure that the ceasefire would not be taken advantage.

"Hopefully, safety nets... mechanisms will be contained therein. Somehow we are hopeful to all of these, that they are sincere and those things will be threshed out or be part of the joint ceasefire document or mechanism," Arevalo said.

He added that while the military suspended operations against the NPA, troops could still monitor situation on the ground. He said that ceasefire mechanisms could address complaints arising from both sides during the truce.

"There could be mechanism that would allow us to, for example, complain if we are monitoring any such kind of actions (recruitment) on their part," the AFP official said.

For the military, Arevalo said that it can take advantage of the "silencing of the guns" by conducting retraining. "We are also taking advantage, good advantage of this lull," Arevalo said.

In fact, the military now enjoys redeployment of troops in Sulu and Basilan to finish off the terrorist Abu Sayyaf Group due to the ceasefire with the NPA.

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Tribune sources in the military have noted that previous ceasefire agreements with the CPP-NPA were only exploited by the communist group — taking advantage of the suspension of offensive military operations by consolidating its forces and recruiting new fighters.

The sources said the troops would be demoralized if nothing happened with the ongoing peace negotiations, noting the release of several top-ranking NPA rebels named as consultants by the NDF in the peace process.

A senior AFP official stressed that the military invested too much resources in capturing these NPA leaders, including couple Benito and Wilma Tiamzon, chairman and secretary general, respectively, of the CPP-Central Committee, and Tirso Alcantara.

But the AFP stressed that it fully supports peace initiatives of the Duterte administration.

President Duterte has declared an indefinite ceasefire with the CPP-NPA to pave the way for the formal peace negotiations between the government of the Philippines and the National Democratic Front, the political wing of the CPP-NPA.

The CPP-NPA reciprocated Duterte's ceasefire with its own interim ceasefire — extending the seven-day truce declared last Aug. 21 to 27 or during the first round of formal talks in Oslo, Norway.

Meanwhile, Malacañang said yesterday that it cannot touch the communist rebels from collecting their so-called "revolutionary taxes."

Presidential Communications Secretary Martin Andanar said, in a radio interview, that it's up to the leadership of the CPP-NPA-NDF if they will still pursue in collecting funds that are considered to be "extortion money."

"With respect to the other activities, purportedly done by the CPP-NPA-NDF, it's up to their ranks to manage their illegal activities," Andanar said as a response to the query if the government will lift a finger to stop the rebel's extortion activities.

As if boosting their moral, it is apparent that President Duterte is the first Chief Executive of the country to recognize the de facto governance of the CPP-NPA in guerilla zones in the countryside as a "revolutionary government."

Duterte earlier had revealed that he's willing to share the state's power to the communist movement.

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## Gov't to spend only for military honors at Marcos burial

By: Nestor Corrales

@NCorrales/INQ

INQUIRER.net

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The government will not be spending a single centavo for the hero's burial of former President Ferdinand Marcos, except for the military honors.

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said the government's concern would only be the military honors.

"Ang gastos lang natin ay 'yung (military) honors (Our only expenditure will be the military honors). There will be no money spent on transportation of the cadaver. Sa kanila (Marcos family) 'yon," Lorenzana said in a chance interview on Monday at the Libingan ng mga Bayani.

President Rodrigo Duterte had earlier ordered the Department of National Defense (DND) to facilitate the burial of Marcos.

Despite criticisms from human rights groups, the President insisted that Marcos should be buried at the heroes' cemetery as a soldier and a former President.

The Chief Executive earlier said that the issue of whether Marcos was a hero or not was merely political.

"They are contesting if Marcos is a hero. I do not care. Whether he is a hero or not, if he is a soldier, he should be buried there. The issue about his heroism is political," he said in a news briefing in Davao City. The Marcos burial is reportedly scheduled for September 18.

The Supreme Court, however, issued on August 23 a 20-day status quo order. **JE/rga**