

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



TEAM ARMY

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28 December 2016

Wednesday

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

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

NEWS HEADLINES 28 DECEMBER 2016



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

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BALANCED NEWS • FEARLESS VIEWS

TODAY'S WEATHER FORECAST | DECEMBER 28, 2016 | WEDNESDAY



PHILIPPINE AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY (PAR)

THE TROPICAL STORM "NINA" (TDC 28) LOCATED AT 545 KMS. WEST OF PORT JEA, MANILA. NOT THEAT T CONSIDER AFFECTING NORTHERN LUZON (as of 1:00 PM - Dec. 28, 2016)

| SUNRISE | SUNSET |
|---------|---------|
| 6:20 AM | 5:36 PM |

| MOONRISE | MOONSET |
|----------|---------|
| 5:11 AM | 4:53 PM |





| LAST QUARTER | NEW MOON |
|----------------|----------------|
| DEC 28 7:58 AM | DEC 29 2:57 PM |

| LOW TIDE | HIGH TIDE |
|---------------------|------------|
| MANILA SOUTH HARBOR | |
| 6:01 AM | 9:21 PM |
| -0.10 Meter | 1.03 Meter |

Partly cloudy to at times cloudy with rain showers
Partly cloudy to at times cloudy with rain showers and/or thunderstorms
Cloudy skies with rain showers and/or thunderstorms
Light rain

| DEC 28 | | DEC 29 | | DEC 30 | | DEC 31 | | JAN 1 | | JAN 2 | |
|---------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|--|
| METRO MANILA | 24 - 32 °C | 24 - 31 °C | 21 - 28 °C | 21 - 29 °C | 25 - 30 °C | 25 - 31 °C | 23 - 32 °C | 23 - 32 °C | 25 - 32 °C | 25 - 32 °C | |
| TUGUEGARAO | 22 - 29 °C | 23 - 30 °C | 25 - 32 °C | 25 - 31 °C | 23 - 32 °C | 23 - 32 °C | 25 - 32 °C | 25 - 32 °C | 25 - 32 °C | 25 - 32 °C | |
| LAOAG | 23 - 30 °C | 22 - 31 °C | 26 - 32 °C | 26 - 32 °C | 25 - 32 °C | 25 - 32 °C | 25 - 32 °C | 25 - 32 °C | 25 - 32 °C | 25 - 32 °C | |
| BAGUIO | 15 - 24 °C | 16 - 24 °C | 26 - 32 °C | 25 - 32 °C | 24 - 33 °C | 24 - 33 °C | 24 - 33 °C | 24 - 33 °C | 24 - 33 °C | 24 - 33 °C | |
| SBMA/CLARK | 24 - 32 °C | 24 - 33 °C | 25 - 32 °C | 25 - 32 °C | 25 - 32 °C | 25 - 32 °C | 25 - 32 °C | 25 - 32 °C | 25 - 32 °C | 25 - 32 °C | |

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Bato to cops: Gunshots? Break into houses

Drive vs celebratory gunfire: PNP to be unforgiving

By EMMANUEL TUPAS

If gunshots are heard, break into the house.

Philippine National Police (PNP) chief Director General Ronald dela Rosa gave this order yesterday to police officers in what he said was a campaign to prevent deaths and injuries from indiscriminate firing of guns during the New Year revelry.

Dela Rosa issued the order amid a PNP goal of attaining zero casualty from stray bullets during the New Year celebration.

"Knock on the door. Tell them you are going to arrest the person who fired the gun. If they refuse, break in," Dela Rosa said during a press briefing at Camp Crame. "Get inside immediately. Don't give these people a chance to hide their guns. If you can't destroy the gate, jump over the fence so you can capture the person who fired the gun."

Dela Rosa reminded his men to be in proper uniform and always introduce themselves as law enforcers.

He shrugged off concerns that this kind of action could result in the filing of

Turn to Page 6

Bato

From Page 1

charges against the officers for violating human rights.

He said he is not worried for as long as the PNP is performing its duty in protecting the citizens and that he will invoke the doctrine of hot pursuit.

"We expect harassment cases and counter-charges. In our judicial system, cases can be filed against us and we can defend ourselves," he said.

Dela Rosa ordered police officers to intensify patrol from 5 p.m. of Dec. 31 to 5 a.m. of Jan. 1, and put special focus on Metro Manila and other areas with history of indiscriminate firing and stray bullets.

He appealed to gun owners and members of the PNP to be responsible and avoid reckless

use of firearms.

"Please have pity on people who will be hit by the bullets that you fired," he said.

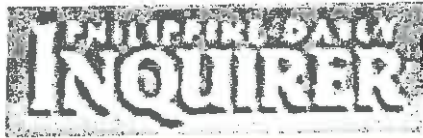
The PNP said three persons were hit by stray bullets during the Christmas holiday.

Two of the victims were listed in Cebu and the other in General Santos City.

Authorities arrested five men in connection with the illegal discharge of firearms and indiscriminate firing incidents that occurred from Dec. 18 to 24.

The suspects were identified as Wilfredo Bunagan of Kalinga, Carlo Jayson of Cebu, Mariano Jimenez of Pangasinan, Elmo Refuerso of Ilocos Sur and Dominador Tugarino of Pangasinan.

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MALAMPAYA MESS: GMA CLEARED, 25 CHARGED

STORY BY VINCE F. NONATO

■ **Ombudsman indicts former
DBM and DAR chiefs, Napoles
for misuse of P900-M fund**

■ **Former President Arroyo, now
Deputy Speaker, scores her
third legal victory since July**

■ **Fund was meant for agrarian
reform beneficiaries affected
by 'Ondoy' and 'Pepeng' in 2009**

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FROM A1

By Vince F. Nonato
@VinceNonatoINQ

Former President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, now a Pampanga representative and House Deputy Speaker, is off the hook in the alleged misuse of P900 million from the Malampaya Fund for lack of evidence, her third legal victory since July.

But Ombudsman Conchita Carpio Morales approved the filing of criminal charges against Arroyo's budget secretary, Rolando Andaya Jr., and agrarian reform secretary, Nasser Pangan-daman, and 23 others over the scheme to divert royalties from Malampaya gas wells meant for agrarian reform beneficiaries affected by Tropical Storms "Ondoy" and "Pepeng" in 2009.

Andaya is now a Camarines Sur representative and also a Deputy Speaker, while Pangan-daman is now mayor of Masiu, Lanao del Sur province.

Former Budget Undersecretary Mario Relampagos and former Agrarian Reform Undersecretary Narciso Nieto, along with Janet Lim-Napoles (alleged mastermind of the P10-billion pork barrel scam), her children Jo Christine and James Christopher and Ruby Tuason, a former social secretary to former President Joseph Estrada, will also be haled to the Sandiganbayan.

The indicted individuals face two counts of plunder, 97 counts of malversation through falsification of public documents and 97 counts of violation of Section 3(e) of the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act for causing undue injury to the government and giving unwarranted benefits to private parties.

Morales' finding of probable cause is subject to appeal.

The Ombudsman dismissed the criminal complaint against Arroyo, then Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, and two Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) employees for "insufficiency of evidence."

Morales applied the pre-

sumption of good faith and regularity in dismissing the complaint against Arroyo, Ermita, former DAR chief administrative officer Dominador Sison Jr. and cashier Nilda Baul.

The resolution noted that the National Bureau of Investigation, which initiated the case in 2013, "failed to prove that they conspired with their correspondents... or that they deviated from the regular procedure in their individual capacities."

Tuason returned P40 million to the government and turned state witness in the pork barrel scam involving Napoles and a number of lawmakers, but this did not save her from indictment for the Malampaya Fund scam in which she was accused of receiving a P242.8-million commission.

The staff of Napoles were said to have been directly involved in forging the signatures of the supposed beneficiaries of the projects.

Morales said 12 spurious nongovernment organizations (NGOs) linked to Napoles cornered the projects for 97 municipi-

palities by fabricating letters of request from their mayors.

Ombudsman investigators, however, found the documents to be fictitious, as the agricultural kits never found their way to the intended beneficiaries.

Arroyo signed Executive Order No. 843 on Oct. 13, 2009, which expanded the use of the Malampaya Fund outside of the energy sector five days after Andaya made a request amid

the disaster caused by Ondoy and Pepeng in much of Luzon.

The NBI found that Arroyo's order paved the way for the NGOs to be funded for what would turn out to be ghost projects.

It said that even two months before Arroyo issued the executive order, Napoles had already instructed her staff to make the documents, including fake request letters from mayors, to be

submitted to the DAR in order to "corner" the ghost projects.

The memorandums of agreement for the projects were signed by the mayors and agrarian reform undersecretary Nieto. He allegedly signed the checks that were released to and deposited in the bank accounts of the NGOs. The cash was then withdrawn and given to Napoles. —WITH A REPORT FROM ANA ROA, INQUIRER RESEARCH INQ

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120 NPA rebels return to the side of the law

By MIKE J. CRISMUNDO

PATINAY, Prosperidad, Agusan del Sur—One hundred twenty members of the New People's Army (NPA) surrendered to the authorities in the Caraga region from January to Dec. 15, 2016, field unit Army commanders disclosed yesterday.

In a statement, Col. Cristobal N. Zaragoza, commanding officer of the Army's 401st Infantry Brigade and Lt. Col. Rommel Pagayon, commanding officer of the Army's 26th Infantry Battalion (26th IB) underscored that the rebel returnees used to live in fear while they were far away from their families. Their lives were burdened by the hardships of evading the law and fighting against the government, he said.

"But things have changed when they laid down their arms and were welcomed back to the folds of the government," Col. Pagayon said.

The 26th IB commander emphasized that with the efforts of the Philippine

Army to neutralize the left-leaning groups, several NPA rebels already surrendered and returned to the mainstream society.

On July 31, Yoyoy Bat-aw and Rey Pasado Carlos alias "Rex," both regular fighters from Guerrilla Front Committee 34 of the CPP-NPA Northeastern Mindanao Regional Committee (NMRC), came down from the mountains of Loreto, Agusan del Sur and surrendered with their M1 Garand rifle and KG9. Col. Pagayon said.

On Nov. 10, Wengweng Gumansel of Guerrilla Front Committee 89 and Erwin Mansumangkay alias "RR" of Guerrilla Front Committee 88 of NMRC also gave up their arms and hoped to live a better and safer life. They brought along with them three high-powered firearms (1 AR18 rifle, 1 carbine and 1 Garand rifle) to attest their sincerity in surrendering to the government that they once challenged, he said.

"We used to run for our lives where we were told of the presence of the army

in our community for we were afraid to die. We walked the mountain trails even at the middle of the night or under the intense heat of the day with little food just to evade them," Col. Pagayon quoted Gumansel as telling him when the rebel returnee tearfully recalled his past experiences in the revolutionary movement.

In August 2016, Jason Istar Behing, 28, and Jeffry Azarcon Maca, 28, both members of SPP21C, Guerrilla Front Committee 21 (GFC21), NEMRC, voluntarily surrendered with two M16 rifle with bandolier and three magazines to 29th IB in Barangay Del Pilar, Cabadbaran City, Agusan del Norte, Col. Zaragoza also said.

In Bayugan City, Agusan del Sur, another regular fighter of the NPA who surrendered to the 3rd Special Forces Battalion was presented to Agusan del Sur Governor Adolph Edward G. Plaza on Nov. 9. The rebel returnee also surrendered his M16 rifle to the government.

www.retiredanalyst.blogspot.com

Army's 7ID backs Pres. Duterte-declared truce

Philippine News Agency

The Philippine Army's 7th Infantry Division which covers 14 provinces in Regions 1, 2 and 3 and two towns in Mt. Province, has expressed support on President Rodrigo Duterte's holiday truce making assurance on Monday that "no arrests will be made for those who will favor the President's invitation."

In a statement, the 7ID said it also opened its camps to all.

1Lt. Catherine Hapin, 7ID public affairs officer, said the command adhered to the decision of President Duterte who encouraged all rebel groups and members to spend the season with their families.

"However, members of the Maute Group and Abu Sayyaf Group as well as terrorists and criminal groups are not included in the ceasefire declared by the President," Hapin noted.

The 7ID maintained, however, that it would continue to be vigilant against criminals.

"The ceasefire will not hold back the 7ID from being vigilant against criminals and terrorist groups who will plan to disrupt the celebration of the holiday season and the declared ceasefire," Hapin said.

She said the command also shared the vision of President Duterte for a permanent ceasefire with the communists and Muslim rebels and the success of the peace negotiations.

Meanwhile, Major General Angelito de Leon, 7ID commander, visited Sunday the line units to impart message to the men and women under his charge.

Among the units visited by De Leon were the 701st Infantry Brigade, 71st Infantry Battalion, 69th Infantry Battalion and the 3rd Infantry Battalion in Mindanao; 56th Infantry Battalion in Barangay Calabuaanan, Baler, Aurora; 703rd Brigade in Barangay Calaanan, Bongabon, Nueva Ecija; 702nd Infantry Battalion in Barangay Lico, San Rafael, Bulacan; and 3rd Mechanized Infantry Battalion in Barangay Burgos, San Jose Tarlac.

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Manila court orders Marcelino's arrest

A Manila court has ordered the arrest of Marine Lt. Col. Ferdinand Marcelino over the drug case filed against him by the Department of Justice (DOJ) last September.

The Manila Regional Trial Court Branch 17 junked Marcelino's petition seeking dismissal of the case.

Marcelino and his co-ac-

cused, Chinese Yan Yi Shou, questioned their arrest during a raid by the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) and Philippine National Police (PNP) on a shabu storage facility in Sta. Cruz, Manila where 77 kilos of shabu worth P380 million were seized in January.

Marcelino and Shou main-

tained that they were inside the shabu laboratory because they were working for a covert surveillance operation.

The court rejected their defense and instead upheld the finding of probable cause by the DOJ.

Last June, the DOJ cleared Marcelino and Yan of drug charges for lack of evidence.

The PDEA and PNP filed a motion for reconsideration.

While the DOJ affirmed the dismissal of the conspiracy charge, a new set of prosecutors reversed an earlier resolution dismissing the drug charges against Marcelino and Yan.

– Edu Punay

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DAHIL UMANO SA KALASINGAN

Sundalo huli sa indiscriminate firing

NI BELLA GAMOTEA

‘Di nagdalawang-isip ang mga pulis na arestuhin ang isang sundalo dahil sa walang habas nitong pagpapaputok ng baril sa Taguig City, kahapon ng umaga.

Kinilala n’ Southern Police District (SPD) Director Chief Supt. Tomas Apolinario Jr. ang suspek na si Corporal Lovelyson Cutas y Lerede, nasa hustong gulang, miyembro ng Philippine Marines at nakatalaga sa Philippine

Marine Headquarters, Taguig City at residente ng FTI Bicutan ng nasabing lungsod.

Dakong 6:00 ng umaga dinakip si Cutas sa bukana ng PNR Compound, Western Bicutan matapos niyang paputukin ang kanyang service firearm na nagdulot ng matinding takot sa mga residente at ikinaalarma ng mga naka-duty na guwardiya sa lugar na nagtangka ring umaresto kay Cutas ngunit mabilis na tumakas sakay sa kanyang motorsiklo.

Sa follow up operation ng Taguig City Police, tuluyang nakorner at naaresto ang sundalo sa Vallezar Street.

Agad isinailalim sa medical examination si Cutas sa Taguig Pateros District Hospital.

Sinasabing lasing si Cutas nang magpaputok ito ng baril sa nabanggit na lugar.

Kasong grave threat, alarm scandal, illegal discharge of firearm at illegal possession of explosive (hand grenade) ang isasampa laban kay Cutas.

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The Manila Times

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Police, military on 'triple red alert' in Zambo Sur

PAGADIAN CITY, Zamboanga del Sur. Police and military forces in this province have been placed on "triple red alert" to be able to swiftly respond to atrocities from lawless and terrorist groups.

Senior Supt. Sofronio Ecaldre, provincial police director, on Tuesday disclosed they raised the alert status based on a recommendation of the National Security Council over an intelligence report of possible attacks and bombings by terrorist groups.

On Christmas Eve, 16 people, including a policeman, were injured in a grenade explosion in front of a Catholic church while

churchgoers were receiving holy communion in Midsayap, North Cotabato.

The grenade had been lobbed at a police car.

Authorities, however, said the attack was the handiwork of a drug syndicate affected by the government's anti-drug campaign in North Cotabato.

Ecaldre said it was agreed during a Provincial Peace and Order Council meeting that police and soldiers' visibility will be increased in public places such as public markets, plazas, bus terminals, malls and churches especially on New Year's Eve.

He added that city and municipal police stations would take charge of security in their respective areas while the Provincial Public Safety Company, together with the Army's 53rd Infantry Battalion, were designated to conduct mobile checkpoints along national highways.

Supt. Michael Palermo, city police chief, has advised the public to refrain from carrying backpacks while going to public plazas and malls.

Police authorities also advised the public to refrain from igniting firecrackers in welcoming the New Year.

PNA

28 December 2016



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WOUNDED IN SULU CLASH

ABU LEADER LINKED TO SAMAL KIDNAPPING NABBED IN HOSPITAL

ZAMBOANGA CITY—A suspected Abu Sayyaf leader allegedly involved in the 2015 kidnapping on Samal Island in Davao del Norte province was arrested while undergoing treatment at a hospital here, the military said on Tuesday.

Maj. Filemon Tan Jr., spokesperson of the Western Mindanao Command, said Hairulla Asbang, also known as

Ahadi, was wounded during a clash with soldiers in Patikul town in Sulu province and was taken by his relatives here for treatment.

When authorities confirmed that he was indeed the bandit leader, Tan said a police and military team, armed with a court warrant, was sent to the hospital to arrest Asbang on Monday.

Also arrested was a person identified only as Jaber, who was accompanying Asbang, he said.

Foreign hostages

Tan said Asbang was involved in the kidnapping of Canadians John Ridsdel and Robert Hall, Norwegian Kjartan Sekkingstad and Filipino Maritess Flor, from a marina on

Samal Island in September 2015.

Ridsdel and Hall were beheaded in separate occasions while Sekkingstad and Flor were released by the bandits.

Tan said Asbang faces kidnapping with murder charges in the Regional Trial Court Branch 10 in Dipolog City and similar charges in a court in Samal

—JULIE ALIPALA INQ

28 December 2016

The Manila Times

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Abu Sayyaf commander nabbed in Zamboanga

ZAMBOANGA CITY Police and military authorities arrested a notorious Abu Sayyaf commander at a private hospital in Zamboanga City where he was undergoing medical operation after being wounded in a battle with security forces in Sulu province.

The officials said Hairulla Asbang alias Ahadi, who was implicated in the September 2015 kidnapping of two Canadians and a Norwegian from a posh resort on Samal Island in southern Philippines, was arrested along with his bodyguard on Saturday night at the Zamboanga Peninsula Medical Center.

Asbang traveled to Zamboanga City by boat after escaping the military in Sulu where his group clashed with security forces.

The military's Western Mindanao Command has confirmed Asbang's arrest.

The terrorist leader is heavily guarded to prevent him from escaping and to stop the Abu Sayyaf from rescuing him.

The authorities did not say how it managed to track down Asbang but hospital guards usually report to the police the presence of gunshot victims.

Asbang is facing a string of criminal charges ranging from kidnapping to murder and military and police interrogators were all ready to question him and get more information about the Abu Sayyaf Group, which has pledged allegiance to the Islamic State.

The bandit group is still holding more than two dozen Asian hostages in southern Philippines where it continues to elude a massive military operation—ordered by President Rodrigo Duterte—aimed at dismantling its capability to conduct cross-border raids in Sabah, Malaysia.

AL JACINTO

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MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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Abu Sayyaf leader arrested in Zamboanga hospital

By **NONAY E. LACSON**
and **FRANCIS WAKEFIELD**

An Abu Sayyaf sub-group leader was arrested by operatives of the Armed Forces of the Philippines-Western Mindanao Command (AFP-WestMinCom) and the police during a law enforcement operation at a hospital in Zamboanga City.

Army Major Filemon Tan Jr., AFP WestMinCom spokesman, identified the arrested ASG sub-leader as Hairulla Asbang alias "Ahadi" who was reportedly in the hospital for treatment of bullet wounds.

Also arrested with him was his watcher, known only as "Jaber."

Tan said WestMinCom operatives together with elements of the Police Station 5 of the Zamboanga City Police Office, conducted a joint law enforcement operations resulting in the capture of Asbang at the Zamboanga Peninsula Medical Center in Zamboanga City.

Tan said Asbang's arrest was made possible by virtue of a warrant of arrest for kidnapping with murder and kidnapping and serious illegal detention issued by Branch 10, 9th Judicial Region, Dipolog City and for kidnapping with homicide issued by Branch 34, 11th Judicial Region in connection with the Samal kidnapping case in Sept. 21, 2015.

Those kidnapped were foreigners Robert Hall, John Ridsdel, Kjartan Sekkingstad and a Filipina, Maritess Flor. They were kidnapped at the Ocean View Resort in Camudmud, Samal City, Davao del Sur.

Reports said Asbang was admitted at the hospital at 7:30 a.m. of Dec. 26 for medical treatment of his gunshot wound, which was incurred during a previous encounter with government troops in Sulu.

Tan said the arrested ASG sub-leader is currently under tight watch by troops and PNP personnel in the hospital while undergoing custodial debriefing.

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The
Standard
PHILIPPINE NEWSPAPER

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ASG sub-leader, aide arrested

By Florante
S. Solmerin

A WOUNDED sub-leader of the Abu Sayyaf Group who sought medical treatment and his aide were arrested Tuesday inside a hospital in Zamboanga City, Major Felimon Tan Jr., spokesman of the Western Mindanao Command, said.

Tan said Hairulla Asbang, alias Ahadi, and his aide identified only as alias Jaber were arrested by policemen from Station 5 and military personnel at 6:45 p.m. inside the Zamboanga Peninsula Medical Center.

"The arrest was made by virtue of warrant of arrest for Kidnapping with Murder and Kidnapping and Serious Illegal Detention issued by Branch 10, 9th Judicial Region, Dipolog City and for Kidnapping with Homicide issued by Branch 34, 11th Judicial Region in connection with the Samal kidnapping case,"

Tan said

The Samal kidnapping in 2015 involved Robert Hall and John Ridsdel, both Canadians beheaded by the ASG after their families failed to give P300 million ransom each from an original demand of P1 billion each; Hall's Filipina fiance Marites Flor who was released with undisclosed amount of ransom payment; and Kjartan Sekkingstad, a Norwegian, who was also released with undisclosed amount of ransom payment shortly after President Rodrigo Duterte assumed power.

The four victims were abducted by armed men at the Ocean View Samal Resort in the Island Garden City of Samal and brought to Sulu.

Asbang was admitted at the said hospital at 7:30 a.m. of Dec. 26, 2016 for medical treatment of his gunshot wound, incurred during a previous encounter with government troops in Sulu.

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18 December 2018

The Manila Times

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GOVT OFFICIALS JOIN CPP ANNIVERSARY FOR FIRST TIME

Sison hits Duterte for non-release of detained rebels

COMMUNIST Party of the Philippines founder Jose Maria Sison has condemned the Duterte government for reneging on its supposed commitment to free 434 rebel leaders languishing in jails across the

country.

Sison, chief political consultant of the National Democratic Front (NDF), the CPP political arm negotiating peace with the Philippine government, claimed the Duterte

government violated two previous agreements on so-called political detainees: the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees and the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and

International Humanitarian Law.

"The non-release of political detainees also runs counter to the possible declaration of the bilateral interim ceasefire agreement between

Rebels A:

REBELS FROM A1

Sison hits

the NDF and the Philippine government and the acceleration of the peace negotiations," he said in a message during the 48th founding anniversary of the CPP on Monday.

Sison's video message was shown during the CPP anniversary rites in Davao City, Duterte's turf, which was joined by more than 15,000 people.

Government chief peace negotiator Silvestre Bello 3rd joined the celebration as well as the "National Peace Assembly" in Paquibato District, a first for a government official, assuring rebel leaders that sickly and elderly political detainees would be released soon.

Speaking before rebel sympathizers and supporters, Bello said: "It is just a matter of time. The President will keep his word. Let us just wait for the formal announcement of the President."

He said the release of rebels for humanitarian reasons was not tied to the bilateral ceasefire agreement that the government wanted the rebels to sign.

Bello, who is also labor secretary, was accompanied by Interior and Local Government Secretary Mike Sueno and Labor Undersecretary Joel Maglunsod.

The Cabinet official said he would meet the President on December 29 and bring up the matter of the detained rebels.

"There are some legal processes that we have to comply with before they can be released," he explained.

He said the next round of peace talks that will be held in Rome, Italy, would focus on the crucial agenda of social and economic reforms.

"We have tapped the expertise of economists from the University of the Philippines to draft the economic reform agenda of the government which we will present on the negotiating table in Rome," Bello said.

At least two days have been dedicated for discussions on social and economic reforms during the five-day formal talks, which begin on January 19, he said.

Duterte has repeatedly said he would not free the prisoners unless the NDF agreed to sign a bilateral ceasefire with the Philippine government. Both sides are operating on unilateral ceasefire declarations made in August when the peace talks began in Oslo, Norway.

NDF won't lay down arms

Luis Jalandoni, former head of the NDF peace negotiating panel and now senior adviser, stressed that the CPP won't lay down arms even as it is engaged in peace talks with the Duterte government.

Jalandoni also warned that "as human rights abuses are perpetrated with the continued implementation of the counter-revolutionary program Oplan Bayanihan and Enhanced Oplan Bayanihan, it

(NDF) will be forced to withdraw its ceasefire declaration to protect the masses and defend communities."

Communist rebels are accusing the Philippine military of violating its own truce by deploying troops to areas where the CPP armed wing, the New People's Army (NPA), was operating.

NDF consultant Eduardo Genelosa said: "Mindanao continues to be resilient and to advance despite escalating enemy attacks because communists, cadres, NPA combatants and revolutionary forces have rigorously waged the armed struggle and raised the people's war to greater heights."

NDF leaders have said "there can be no peace until the roots of armed struggle are addressed decisively. The revolutionary forces are now stronger more than ever to wage armed revolution, gain concrete benefits for the people, and ultimately attain justice and true peace."

AL JACINTO AND WILLIAM B. DEPASUPI

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Opinion:

To Be Credible is To Be Self-Reliant

M. A. P. Insights

Jaime S. de los Santos

By his words and actions, the Commander-in-Chief (CIC) has articulated succinctly the crafting of an independent foreign policy. Concomitant with this strategic shift, he has also intimated the possibility of procuring military arms and equipment from China and Russia.



To put this game-changing pronouncements in context, let us take a good look at the character and strength of the Philippine military.

First, it is shaped by its structure, the framework that holds the various elements comprising a military organization. This defines command, command and staff functions, chain of command, and the relationships among the different levels in the hierarchy. It is prescribed in a table of organization and equipment that specifies the essential and necessary armaments, transport and ordnance facilities, communication systems, and other service-support essentials.

Second, another essential of military operations is the arsenal, which covers the whole range of land, naval, and air warfare assets. The procurement of these assets are based on budget allocations.

At the moment, the bulk of our military assets are US-sourced, procured through the foreign military sales mechanism or as foreign aid. A few were sourced from European Union countries. To depend on budget allocations to strengthen military capability is wishful thinking, a hard lesson that we have had to learn time and again. As is always the case, a developing economy like ours will favor social services, education, and public works project over defense spending.

The level of sophistication and technology of our military hardware is negligible, given that most of what are still usable are rejects from US arsenal. Whether or not it is intentional on the part of the US to make us hostage to a culture of dependence is due also to own our doing.

Owing to our inadequacy to manage our internal threats, the continued proliferation of graft and corruption in

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the defense establishment, and the lack of appreciation and involvement to build up the psyche and mind-set of youth involvement in defense buildup, we have not earned the respect of allies even as our own strategic vantage point is harnessed for their own ends.

Third, doctrines which are the established procedures prescribed for military operations serve as the foundation for warfare.

By its very nature, a military prepares for war. That is the very reason for its existence. In peacetime, it performs the national security operations other than war and assists and supports the civil government in developmental roles.

Its employment in both cases are based on doctrines developed through experience, transfer of technology from the military of other countries, training, defense alliances, and national policies. From the time a soldier joins the military until his retirement, he goes through a process of indoctrinations, develops a military culture, and learns the skills and techniques of soldiery, based on US and western concepts and doctrines. From this process springs military traditions and practices that strengthen the bond among soldiers, impacting on morale and esprit de corps.

Fourth, a military is dependent on human resources. The training and expertise of our soldiers are western-biased. From the basic soldiery to officer training up to defense management and strategy, curriculum and doctrines are US-oriented. They take pride in being US-trained.

This, in turn, dictates their core competence. Competence which encompasses the psychological level. They feel that they possess a competitive advantage because of their western training. It is obvious that they want to be identified with a strong and powerful country like the US. Countries with affinity and alliance with the US somehow, if modestly, project residual power.

Our long association with the US in terms of a military alliance has developed a culture dependence that has shaped the military mind-set. This reality has influenced the military thinking that dictates that only the US is good. It has deprived the military of the ability to develop a critical and creative mind-set that could have enabled the exploration of other essential alternatives. This mind-set was further reinforced with a US military bias developed through military training and education. This mind-set has permeated into the leadership structure of the organization.

Seldom are US doctrines challenged, it is always accepted as gospel truth. It has built a confidence level and comfort zone.

The political leadership from whom the military derives its strategic directions rarely veers away from US interest. It has also deprived our political leaders to be innovative and responsive to change.

Political strength is always predicated on US interference and intervention, hence, there was little seriousness of purpose in the legislative agenda.

Let me cite two developments that could have at least restored our military strength relative to our ASEAN neighbors. These are the AFP Modernization Law and the BCDA law.

In both cases, these laws provided a mechanism to allocate funds in trust for a multi-year allocation for AFP enhancement and acquisition. These laws were more of form than substance. Since the US continues to provide foreign military aid, the law lay dormant, unimplemented. Our culture of dependence made us hostage to our own negligence and lackluster attitude.

The introduction of military equipment, facilities, and equipment that will be sourced from China and Russia will definitely undo many established protocols, affect efficiency and organizational capabilities.

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With these existing military assets in our use and inventory sourced from the US and EU, are we assured of professional training and availability of spare parts replacements? With the reduction or termination of US military aid, how extensive are the adjustments that must be made to include the cost implications?

Off hand, such changes would mean having to revise doctrines, rewrite military manuals, retrain personnel, test new doctrines and conduct language courses.

In the ASEAN region, save for Cambodia and Laos, military establishments are either US, British, or EU-oriented. Though ASEAN is a non-military alliance, it forms commonality in its military assets, in its campaign against terrorism, law enforcement and peacekeeping operations.

The pronouncement of the CIC is timely and expedient. There is a need to unlock and unfreeze a long-standing national psychological orientation that has blocked our initiative to innovate and adjust to the radical changes happening in the global environment. We cannot forever contain our priorities to very limited options that will perpetuate the culture of the dependence.

A credible AFP starts with a mind-set and character that are synonymous to strategic thinking, and that are translated in terms of an independent and credible mental attitude, leadership and decision-making techniques, from which springs the vision based on objectivity, creativity and independence.

A credible AFP must develop a defense program that is self-reliant, involving the natural resources and entrepreneurial attitude of its people. It goes without saying that every Filipino has a stake in providing inputs for a self-reliant defense program. It is not too late to start the establishment of a military-industrial complex.

The AFP has pursued a self-reliant defense program before, which was shelved in the dustbin of time due to political reasons. Let it be one of the programs under the public private partnership. Let us respond to the call of the CIC.

In conclusion, a credible armed force is not dependent on which country it aligns itself with, but the degree and magnitude of its being self-reliant.

The article reflects the personal opinion of the author and does not reflect the official stand of the Management Association of the Philippines.

Jaime S. de los Santos is a member of the M.A.P. National Issues Committee, the 42nd Commanding General of the Philippine Army, the 1st Force Commander of the UN Peacekeeping Force in East Timor, presently part-time Professorial Lecturer at UP Diliman, and Director, Graduate Studies at the Manuel L. Quezon University (MLQU).

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ONLINE NEWS
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<http://www.philstar.com/>

AFP Camps Damaged, Deploys Personnel Assets in NIÑA Devastated Area

Lui Claudio



CAMP AGUINALDO, Quezon City—Several camps and outposts of the Armed Forces of the Philippines were themselves severely damaged by Typhoon "Nina" that battered the provinces of Bicol and Southern Tagalog Regions including , Eastern Visayas, MIMAROPA, the National Capital Region, and the rest of Central Luzon.

According to Public Affairs Office Chief Colonel Edgard A Arevalo, initial damage reports from the units of the 9th Infantry Division posted in some areas of Quezon Province and Bicol Region reported that eight patrol bases were severely damaged while 12 others were partially damaged by the typhoon. All the floating assets of the Naval Forces Southern Luzon, meanwhile, were safe in the areas where they sought refuge.

"Report receive indicate that the 83rd Infantry Battalion headquarters in Camarines Sur and a company headquarters under the 22nd Infantry Battalion were totally damaged by the typhoon, although no casualties on government troops was recorded," Col Arevalo said.

In anticipation of the onslaught of the Typhoon meanwhile, the Southern Luzon Command ordered the prepositioning of disaster response units and medical teams at disaster prone areas to ensure the quick delivery of assistance when needed.

"SOLCOM was already on heightened alert status even prior Christmas Day in anticipation of Typhoon "Nina". This placed all personnel and equipment on standby for the conduct of humanitarian assistance and disaster response operations," Col Arevalo added.

Various AFP units including the 203rd IB, 503rd IB, 810th IB, and 202nd IB among others are currently assisting local government units in road clearing, relief, and evacuation operations.

"These are initial damage assessment reports. We are expecting updates from other forward deployed AFP units to come in. These are available information as at press time the delays owing to the communications issues," Col Arevalo said.

"Amidst the devastation in some AFP camps, the soidiers, airmen, sailors and marines remain steadfast and are still prepared to discharge its duties and responsibilities. They have prepared for this eventuality 3-4 days prior the onslaught of "Nina" and thus were able to respond to the call for help of our people although they were victims as well, concluded Arevalo.

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Meanwhile, AFP Chief of Staff LtGen Eduardo M Año lauded the troops for their foresight and for rising to the occasion. He expressed elation that the soldiers were on their toes and are of help when needed –on or before Christmas Day.

"Our units 'celebrated' Christmas Day under severe weather conditions.

"As expected of them, they manifested their preparedness for any disasters and calamities borne of their continuing training in Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief and rehabilitation operations.

No one desires that this readiness be applied, but must –as they did– efficiently and effectively discharged when situations like this call for it," LtGen Año said.

"Our people can count on their soldiers, airmen, sailors and marines to assist local government's disaster and relief teams in responding to the people's call for help.

"The AFP will be a reliable partner in capacitating the local government and their constituents to weather the storms", concludes LtGen Año.

<http://www.gmanetwork.com/news>

GPH chief negotiator downplays CPP-NPA's threat to end ceasefire

Published December 27, 2016 7:28pm

Amid threats that the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army might end its ceasefire declaration, the chair of the government peace panel believes communist rebels continue to support the Duterte administration and their ongoing peace talks with the government.

Chief negotiator and Labor Secretary Silvestre Bello III made the remarks in an interview on GMA News TV's Balitanghali on Tuesday.

Bello said he personally witnessed members of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) reaffirm their support for the President during a celebration of the group's 48th anniversary in Davao City on Monday.

"May differences of course [between the two parties] pero by and large... they expressly stated that they still support the leadership of President Duterte dahil alam naman nila na sinsero ang pangulo," said Bello.

In a statement on Monday, the Communist Party of the Philippines said the "termination of the CPP's unilateral ceasefire declaration becomes inevitable" as the Armed Forces of the Philippines continues to "conduct armed provocations" despite the ongoing peace talks.

Also on Monday, CPP founder and NDFP chief political consultant Jose Maria Sison called for a halt to the Armed Forces of the Philippines' "Oplan Bayanihan" as he slammed the appointment of Lt. Gen. Eduardo Año as AFP chief of staff.

In response, Bello said the government so far has not received any complaint from communist rebels against Oplan Bayanihan.

"We have been talking with them [rebels] regularly. Direct ang line ko kay [NDF Spokesman Fidel] Agcaoili ng peace panel. Eh wala naman dumadating na reklamo... So far wala pa kaming natatanggap na formal complaint tungkol diyan," Bello said.

"Alam naman nila na there is a line between them and our panel. Alam naman nila and kung may reklamo man sila ay dapat ipaalam sa amin," he added.

Bello said President Duterte didn't "resort to such foul means" when dealing with the communist movement, adding that the President honored an "open and transparent relations with them." —Mark Merueñas/NB, GMA News

<http://www.inquirer.net/>

Arrest warrant out for Marcelino, Chinese companion

By: Ed Margareth Barahan



Presidential Security Group (PSG) member Jonel Sanchez and Former Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency official Marine Lt. Col. Ferdinand Marcelino MARC JAYSON CAYABYAB/ARNOLD ALMACEN

The Manila Regional Trial Court (RTC) on Tuesday ordered the arrest of Marine Lt. Col. Ferdinand Marcelino and his Chinese companion Yan Yi Shou over a drug case in connection with the P380-million worth of shabu seized in Manila early this year.

The Department of Justice (DOJ) has accused Marcelino and Shou of violating Section 11 (possession of dangerous drugs), Article II of Republic Act No. 9165 or the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002, and filed an illegal drugs case against the two on September 21.

After Manila RTC Branch 17 Judge Felicitas Laron-Cacanindin earlier deferred the issuance of warrants and postponed the arraignment of Marcelino and Shou last September 26, Manila RTC Branch 49 Presiding Judge Daniel Villanueva on Tuesday ordered the arrest of the two.

In September, the DOJ filed an illegal drugs case against Marcelino and Shou at a Manila regional trial court, tweaking an earlier resolution that dismissed charges against the two.

The DOJ partially granted the motion for reconsideration filed by the Philippine National Police (PNP) anti-illegal drugs group and the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) assailing its previous resolution that dropped the complaint against Marcelino and Yan Yi Shou.

Through state prosecutor Alexander Suarez, the DOJ accused Marcelino and the Chinese national of violating Section 11 (possession of dangerous drugs), Article II of Republic Act No. 9165 or the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002.

But the DOJ said the dismissal of complaint for violation of Section 8 or manufacture of dangerous drugs and/or controlled precursors and essential chemicals in relation to Section 26 (attempt or conspiracy) of Article II, RA 9165, was maintained.

The DOJ accused Marcelino and his companion of "conspiring, confederating and all of them mutually aiding one another, without being authorized by law, did, then and there willfully, unlawfully and feloniously have in their possession, control and custody of 76.6977 kilograms of 'shabu.'"

Marcelino, a former PDEA intelligence officer, and his companion were arrested in a drug raid last January in a house in Sampaloc, Manila, where over P380 million worth of drugs were confiscated.

The DOJ also denied Marcelino and Yan's motion to release personal effects seized from the accused, saying the objects seeking to be released were evidence.

<http://www.philstar.com/>

Alleged Abu Sayyaf kidnapper nabbed in Zamboanga City

By Roel Pareño



File photo

ZAMBOANGA CITY, Philippines — Joint military and police forces arrested a wounded Abu Sayyaf leader — believed involved in the kidnapping of tourists from Samal Island and a former Italian priest — while confined in a local hospital here Monday.

The arrested suspect was identified as Hairulla Asbang alias Ahadi, sub-leader of the Sulu-based Abu Sayyaf group, according to Maj. Filemon Tan Jr., spokesperson of the Western Mindanao Command (Westmincom). Asbang was arrested Monday afternoon while confined in a local private hospital for a gunshot wound. Government security forces also arrested Asbang's companion, identified as a certain Jabil Noni alias Abu Jabs. The police reported three others were also invited for questioning.

Police said Asbang was brought to the hospital about 7:30 a.m. The hospital management immediately alerted the authorities of the presence of the shooting victim, who turned out to be an Abu Sayyaf leader.

Maj. Tan said operatives of the Westmincom and Police Station 5 in Barangay Divisoria immediately launched the operation on the strength of a warrant of arrest.

Asbang had standing warrants of arrest for kidnapping with murder and kidnapping and serious illegal detention, and for kidnapping with homicide.

Tan said the cases against Asbang stemmed from his alleged involvement in the kidnapping of former Italian priest Rolando del Torchio on October 7, 2015 in Dipolog City.

The Abu Sayyaf freed Del Torchio in Jolo, Sulu in April 2016 after reportedly being paid a ransom of of P29 million.

Tan said Asbang was also involved in the kidnapping of Canadians John Ridsdel and Robert Hall, Norwegian Kjartan Sekkingstad, and Hall's Filipino girlfriend Marites Flor from a resort in Samal Island on September 21, 2015.

Ridsdel and Hall were beheaded in April and June early respectively after the failure to pay P300 million in ransom each.

Flor and Sekkingstad were freed separately reportedly on payment of ransom.

"The arrested ASG sub-leader is currently under tight watch by our troops and PNP personnel in the hospital while undergoing custodial debriefing," Tan said.

Tan said Asbang was among those wounded in an encounter with the Army Scout Rangers at Bud Dajo in Patikul, Sulu on August 26.

Eight Abu Sayyaf were killed in the firefight, including its leader Kahal Mohammad, alias Ama Maas.

Tan said Asbang remained confined at the hospital while under tight security by police and military.

He said appropriate legal procedures are also underway against the arrested Abu Sayyaf leader and his companions.

The police and military are also investigating how Asbang was able to slip into the city.

Tan said earlier that security in the hospitals in Sulu was tightened to prevent the Abu Sayyaf from snatching medical physicians to help treat the militant casualties.

<http://www.pna.gov.ph/>

Wounded ASG leader, escort bagged in Zamboanga City operations

By Priam F. Nepomuceno

MANILA, Dec. 27 (PNA) — Western Mindanao Command (WMC) troopers together with operatives of the Zamboanga City police have successfully arrested a wounded Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) sub-leader and his companion during operations at the Zamboanga Peninsula Medical Center Monday evening.

WMC spokesperson Major Filemon Tan identified the arrested bandit leader as Hairulla Asbang alias Ahadi and his escort identified only as Jaber.

Asbang's arrest at 6:45p.m. was based on the virtue of warrant of arrest for kidnapping with murder and kidnapping and serious illegal detention issued by Branch 10, 9th Judicial Region, Dipolog City, and for kidnapping with homicide issued by Branch 34, 11th Judicial Region in connection with the Samal kidnapping case.

Asbang was admitted at the said hospital at 7:30 a.m Monday for medical treatment of his gunshot wound which was incurred during a previous encounter with government troops in Sulu.

Tan said Asbang is now under tight watch by soldiers and police while custodial debriefing in the said hospital.

Appropriate legal procedures are also underway.

The military continues to support the police in the intensified conduct of law enforcement operations to ex

www.retiredanalyst.blogspot.com

Bicol to Manila road impassable, AFP conducts clearing operation

Philippine News Agency

Roads from mainland provinces and municipalities in Bicol, especially in the municipality of Nabua, Camarines Sur going to Metro Manila are still not passable to all forms of vehicles due to landslide, floods and debris brought by typhoon Nina.

2nd Lt. Rachelle Marie Villaluz of the 901st Brigade of the Philippine Army said military personnel from the 901st brigade and 83rd Infantry Battalion were conducting massive clearing operations in Camarines Sur, Albay and Catanduanes, the Bicol provinces most affected by floods, landslide and debris due to typhoon Nina.

"Our team have been deployed early morning today (December 26) to assist other government agencies and local government units in clearing the roads to make it accessible to relief operations," Villaluz said.

As of 12 noon Monday, 21 landslides were reported to have occurred in San Miguel, Catanduanes while 10 municipalities in Albay, Camarines Sur and Camarines Norte have remained flooded. Villaluz said all provincial bus operations from Bicol to Manila were suspended after Daang Maharlika remained impassable.

"Debris can easily be removed along Daang Maharlika, however, while some main roads remained flooded," she said.

The Office of Civil Defense (OCD) in Bicol has initially reported that electric power in the provinces of Catanduanes, Albay, Sorsogon, Camarines Sur and Camarines Norte have yet to be restored while mobile phones (Globe and Smart) have become operational since 12 noon.

OCD-Bicol Director Bernardo Rafael Alejandro said that after an aerial survey this morning, they found out that national roads from Albay to Camarines Sur up to Manila have yet to be cleared from debris and toppled electric posts.

He urged the public to help the government in coordinating with their barangay officials in the clearing operations to facilitate immediate post-disaster operations.

He said an initial report from the Albay Power Energy Corp. showed that power along 264 electrical posts have yet to be restored in Albay.

"We are still waiting for the complete assessment report from the other provinces hit by typhoon Nina," Alejandro added.

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20 military outposts, camps damaged by Typhoon Nina

From Rappler

The military gives assurances it will continue its rescue and relief operations for typhoon victims



CAMPS DAMAGED. The Armed Forces of the Philippines says at least 20 military camps have been damaged by Typhoon Nina but assures the public soldiers are ready to help in operations. File photo by Ben Nabong/Rappler

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) said at least 2 of its camps and several outposts in Bicol and the province of Quezon were damaged by Typhoon Nina (Nock-ten).

The headquarters of the Army's 83rd infantry battalion in Camarines Sur as well as a company headquarters of the 22nd infantry battalion in the same region were "totally damaged," according to Colonel Edgard Arevalo, AFP Public Affairs Office chief.

He added that 8 patrol bases were "severely" damaged while 12 others were "partially" destroyed.

The provinces of Camarines Sur and Catanduanes were among the areas hardest hit by the typhoon.

"These are initial damage assessment reports. We are expecting updates from other forward deployed AFP units to come in," Arevalo said.

Arevalo gave assurances the military will continue its rescue and relief operations for typhoon victims.

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