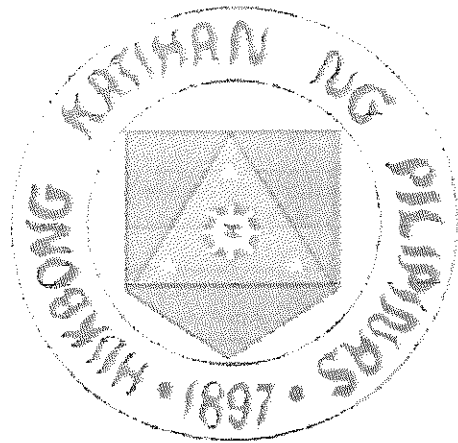


*Army Vision: By 2028, a world-class Army that is a source of national pride*



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10 July 2016

Sunday

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**THE PHILIPPINE STAR**  
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**AIR 21**  
BAGOT NG PAGALA NG!

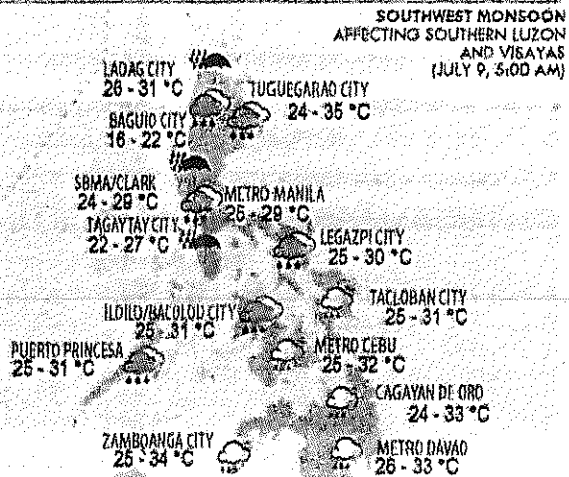
**5:00 AM - 5:30 AM**  
Mondays to Sundays

**SUNRISE** 6:33 AM  
**SUNSET** 6:30 PM  
**MOONRISE** 10:31 AM  
**MOONSET** 10:55 PM

**LOW TIDE** 7:01 PM JUNE 4  
**HIGH TIDE** 8:52 AM JULY 12

**MANILA SOUTH HARBOR**  
6:10 AM 0.54 Meter  
1:22 PM 1.02 Meter

**TODAY'S WEATHER FORECAST JULY 10, 2016 | SUNDAY**



EXTENDED WEATHER FORECAST	JUL 11 MON	JUL 12 TUE	JUL 13 WED	EXTENDED WEATHER FORECAST	JUL 11 MON	JUL 12 TUE	JUL 13 WED
METRO MANILA	24 °C 30 °C	25 °C 32 °C	24 °C 32 °C	PUERTO PRINCESA	25 °C 31 °C	26 °C 32 °C	25 °C 32 °C
TUGUEGARAO	25 °C 34 °C	24 °C 35 °C	24 °C 35 °C	ILOILO/BACOLOD	24 °C 32 °C	25 °C 33 °C	25 °C 33 °C
LAOAG	25 °C 30 °C	25 °C 31 °C	25 °C 32 °C	METRO CEBU	25 °C 33 °C	24 °C 32 °C	26 °C 33 °C
BAGUIO	16 °C 22 °C	17 °C 23 °C	17 °C 24 °C	TACLOBAN	24 °C 32 °C	25 °C 32 °C	25 °C 32 °C
SBMA/CLARK	24 °C 28 °C	25 °C 30 °C	25 °C 31 °C	CAGAYAN DE ORO	25 °C 34 °C	24 °C 33 °C	25 °C 31 °C
TAGAYTAY	23 °C 28 °C	23 °C 29 °C	22 °C 30 °C	METRO DAVAO	24 °C 34 °C	25 °C 34 °C	26 °C 33 °C
LEGAZPI	25 °C 30 °C	25 °C 32 °C	24 °C 33 °C	ZAMBOANGA	25 °C 33 °C	24 °C 33 °C	25 °C 31 °C



10 July 2016

PHILIPPINE DAILY  
**INQUIRER**

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# China on war footing

## Navy holds combat drills ahead of UN court ruling

BEIJING—China has begun military drills in the South China Sea, state media reported on Saturday ahead of a ruling by an international arbitration court on a dispute with the Philippines over the strategic waters.

The Navy on Friday carried out "combat exercises" with "live missiles" between the Paracels and the southern Chinese island of Hainan, the PLA Daily, the military's official newspaper, said on its website.

State television CCTV broadcast images of fighter aircraft and ships

firing missiles, helicopters taking off and submarines surfacing.

The drill focused on air control operations, sea battles and anti-submarine warfare, said the PLA Daily, whose article was reposted on the

CHINA AID

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defense ministry website.

The military maneuvers come as the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague is set to make its final decision on Tuesday in the territorial dispute between the Philippines and China.

The PLA Daily, however, insisted they were "routine exercises" and unrelated to the court's ruling.

China asserts sovereignty over almost all of the strategically vital waters in the face of rival claims from its Southeast Asian neighbors, most notably the Philippines and Vietnam.

Brunei, Malaysia and Taiwan also have overlapping claims in the South China Sea, a strategic waterway crisscrossed by sea-lanes where \$5 trillion in seaborne global trade passes every year and where islets, reefs and atolls are believed to be sitting atop vast energy reserves.

To bolster its claims, China has rapidly turned reefs into artificial islands capable of hosting military planes.

### Violation of sea law

Manila lodged its suit against Beijing in 2013, challenging China's claims to much of the strategic waterway and saying it was in violation of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (Unclos), to which both countries are signatories.

Beijing has boycotted the proceedings, saying the court has no jurisdiction over the issue and that it will ignore the ruling.

The United States, a longtime treaty ally of the Philippines, on Thursday urged respect for the arbitral court's ruling, which most legal experts and analysts expect to go against China.

"We urge both parties to comply with the ruling and urge all claimants to avoid provocative actions or statements," Abraham Denmark, the senior Pentagon official responsible for East Asia, told a congressional hearing about the decision.

Although the United States is not directly part of the territorial disputes in the South China Sea, it has urged they be resolved through diplomacy, not Chinese force.

Washington, however, has boosted its military presence in the region, dealing with neighboring countries' concerns about China's actions in the South China Sea.

The United States has also strengthened its defense alliances with the Philippines, Vietnam and other countries in the region.

### US naval patrols

The aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan is currently patrolling the South China Sea.

Three US destroyers—the Stethem, Spruance and Momsen—also have been patrolling near Chinese-held reefs in the hotly contested Spratly archipelago and Panatag Shoal (international name: Scarborough Shoal), a resource-rich reef that China seized from the Philippines in 2012 after a two-month standoff with the Philippine Navy and the Philippine Coast Guard.

It was the loss of Panatag Shoal, located in the West Philippine Sea, South China Sea waters within the Philippines' 360-kilometer exclusive economic zone (EEZ) recognized under Unclos, that forced Manila to bring the law of the sea suit in January 2013.

The Philippines asked the UN-backed



court to void China's claims to almost all of the South China Sea and demanded respect for its right to explore resources within its EEZ.

Manila's move angered China, which insists it has "undisputed sovereignty" over nearly 90 percent of the 3.5-million-square-kilometer South China Sea.

### 'Price to pay'

The dispute and US backing for the Philippine move and challenge to China's excessive claims in the South China Sea through naval patrols and surveillance flights have raised tensions in the region, with Chinese state media warning in recent days that there will be a "price to pay" if the United States crossed China's "bottom line" by meddling in the disputes.

"If the United States, regardless of the cost, chooses the path of 'brinkmanship' that pressures and intimidates others, there will be only one result, that is, that the US bears all responsibility for possibly further heightening tensions in the South China Sea," the Communist Party newspaper People's Daily wrote in an editorial on Wednesday.

On Tuesday, the state-run newspaper Global Times published an editorial saying China should prepare for military confrontation over the South China Sea disputes.

Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Hong Lei, however, played down the comments, saying on Wednesday that China was committed to peace.

Hong said China would work with Southeast Asian countries "to safeguard the peace and stability of the South China Sea."

But following reports of US naval patrols near the artificial islands China has built in the South China Sea and as expectations of the arbitral court's ruling built up, Global Times on Friday wrote that China will not take a "single step back" if the United States and the Philippines "act on impulse and carry out flagrant provocation."

Faced by international pressure to respect the court's ruling, China, the paper said, will "fight back."

China, it said, could turn Panatag Shoal

"into a military outpost" and "tow away or sink" the BRP Sierra Madre, an old and rusting hospital ship that Manila grounded on Ayungin Shoal (Second Thomas Shoal) in 1999 to mark Philippine territory in the Spratly archipelago, to "resolve the stand-off once and for all."

### 'Ironclad' commitment

At the congressional hearing in Washington on Thursday, senior US state department official Colin Willett said the United States would not hesitate to defend its national security interests and honor its commitments to Asia-Pacific allies and partners.

"Scarborough Reef is a disputed feature that we don't recognize any country's sovereignty over. That said, our treaty commitment to the Philippines is absolutely ironclad," Willett said, adding that occupying a currently unoccupied land feature or militarizing an occupied feature would be very dangerous and destabilizing.

Denmark said the arbitral court's ruling would be a chance to determine "whether the Asia-Pacific's future will be defined by adherence to international laws and norms that have enabled it to prosper, or whether the region's future will be determined by raw calculations of power."

China has repeatedly said it does not consider any decision reached by the arbitral court to be legally binding.

"China adheres to the position of settling disputes through negotiation and consultation with states directly concerned," state news agency Xinhua said in a commentary on Saturday. "This has always been China's policy, and it will never change."

The Philippines said on Friday it was willing to share natural resources with Beijing in the contested seas even if it wins next week's legal challenge.

Foreign Secretary Perfecto Yasay said President Duterte's administration hoped to quickly begin direct talks with China following Tuesday's verdict.

He said the negotiations could cover jointly exploiting natural gas reserves and fishing grounds within the Philippines' EEZ. *Reports from AFP, Reuters and AP*



7<sup>th</sup> July 2016



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## AFP awards medals to soldiers wounded in Sulu encounter

CAMP NAVARRO, Zamboanga City – The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) on Saturday awarded medals to the five soldiers who were wounded in the latest clash with the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) brigands in the province of Sulu.

Gen. Ricardo Visaya, AFP chief-of-staff, personally pinned the medals to the wounded soldiers who were admitted at Camp Navarro General Hospital in this city.

Lt. Gen. Mayoralgo de la Cruz, Western Mindanao Command (Westmincom) chief, assisted Visaya in the awarding of medals to the recipient-soldiers.

Awarded the Wounded Personnel Medal (WPM) were Cpl. Ian Dexter Gavina; Cpl. Rambo Balnawi; PFC Radel Gumban; PFC Christian Naganag; and, PFC Bernie Joe Nagoy.

They were wounded in an intense fighting against 150 ASG brigands, led by ASG senior leader Radulan Sahiron and sub-leader Hadjan Sawajaan on Thursday in Patikul, Sulu.

Intelligence report showed that nine Abu Sayyaf bandits were killed while 13 wounded when the troops pounded them with artillery.

Visaya visited Westmincom to get first hand information of the ongoing focus military operations against the ASG brigands in the provinces of Sulu and Basilan.

"I am here now to see how Westmincom implemented our plans (against the ASG)," Visaya said.

He said the troops were directed to ensure the safety of the hostages as they were ordered to continuously pursue the ASG brigands. **PNA**

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# PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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**FRIENDSHIP DAY** Patricia Licuanan, chair of the Commission on Higher Education, and Spanish Chargé d'Affaires Guillermo Escibano lay a wreath at the Baler Church, the last stand of Spanish soldiers in the Philippines. The siege ended on June 2, 1899, nearly a year after the end of Spain's war with Philippine revolutionaries.

TARRA QUISMUNDO

16 July 2016



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# AFP steps up drive to rescue Abu hostages

By ROEL PAREÑO

**ZAMBOANGA CITY** – The military has stepped up its operations to rescue the remaining hostages of the Abu Sayyaf, an official said yesterday.

“Our soldiers were directed to continue the pressure for the rescue of the hostages,” said Armed Forces of the Philippines chief Gen. Ricardo Visaya, who arrived in this city yesterday to oversee the operations.

Visaya said the soldiers were ordered to also ensure the safety of the hostages.

Norwegian Kjartan Sekkingstad, Dutch birdwatcher Ewold Horns, seven Indonesians and three Filipinos remain in the hands of the Abu Sayyaf.

Sekkingstad along with Canadians John Ridsdel and Robert Hall as well as Filipina

Marites Flor were taken from Samal Island on Sept. 21.

Ridsdel and Hall were beheaded on April and last month, respectively, after the deadline for the payment of ransom lapsed. Flor was released on June 24.

## No deadline

President Duterte did not give a deadline to rescue the hostages, Visaya said.

“The government is taking many steps to address the problem. The political side will do its thing and we will do our thing. The main objective here is to end the Abu Sayyaf

problem,” he said.

## LGUs support

Visaya said the support to be extended by officials of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) in law enforcement operations against the Abu Sayyaf is a welcome development.

ARMM Gov. Mujiv Hataman presented the action plan of concerned local government units to Visaya yesterday.

“He (Hataman) met with the governor and mayors of Basilan...that is very welcome ...because we cannot solve the problem alone. We need the help of others, especially local government units,” Visaya told reporters before he attended a security briefing at the Western Mindanao Com-

mand (Westmincom).

Visaya flew to Basilan after the Westmincom meeting to oversee the military operations under the 104th Infantry Brigade.

“The operation is ongoing... so far we have not incurred any casualty,” Westmincom chief Lt. Gen. Mayoralgo de la Cruz reported.

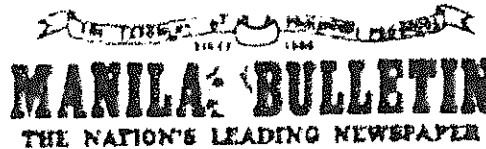
## Abu bandit falls

Meanwhile, suspected Abu Sayyaf bandit Hasbi Ahadin was arrested during a raid in Barangay Muti at around 4:30 a.m. yesterday, said Chief Inspector Edilberto Alvarez, Zamboanga police intelligence chief.

Ahadin was tagged in a roadside bombing in the area on June 29.

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## No Abu hostages in Basilan – Hataman

ISABELA CITY, Basilan (PNA) – Governor Mujiv Hataman of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) said there were no signs that the Sulu-based Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) had transferred its hostages to this province.

Hataman issued the statement after he disclosed that there were Sulu-based ASG brigands who had fled to this province to escape from the continuous military offensive in the province of Sulu.

"I'm sure there are no hostages, we have information there are no hostages here. They (ASG brigands) transferred here due to (the military) pressure in nearby Sulu," Hataman said.

The ASG brigands are still holding captive nine foreigners and three Filipinos in the province of Sulu.

The foreigners included a Dutchman

birdwatcher, a Norwegian and seven Indonesian sailors.

Maj. Filemon Tan Jr., Western Mindanao Command (Westmincom) spokesman said the Joint Task Force Sulu continued to conduct focused military operations.

Westmincom received intelligence report that nine ASG brigands were killed while 13 wounded when the troops pounded on Thursday the ASG position in Barangay Kabintakas, Patikul, Sulu.

Hataman said based on reports he received, there were about 200 ASG brigands operating in this province.

"Ang nagparami sa kanila ay yon taga Sulu, Zamboanga Sibugay, and Marangan, Zamboanga City," Hataman said.

Marangan is a sitio in Barangay Muti, Zamboanga City, which Hataman

said around 30 ASG brigands came from the area and joined their comrades in this province.

He disclosed they learned there were some ASG brigands from Zamboanga Sibugay who have transferred operations here since one of them was arrested by the military in the nearby town of Al-Barka.

He said the ASG brigands staged the attack on Wednesday in Tipo-Tipo as they wanted to instill fear among the residents in the area.

"Hindi namin papayagan at hindi namin hahayaan na gagawin nila yon," he said.

Hataman met with the provincial, city and municipal officials of this province and discussed measures to address the problem on peace and order of this province.

16 July 2016



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## Rody not softening stance vs Abus

By CHRISTINA MENDEZ

President Duterte is not backing down on his earlier statement that he would seek justice for those kidnapped and beheaded by Abu Sayyaf bandits, Malacañang said yesterday.

"He was just trying to explain the context...what the Abu Sayyaf did. Basically, he was saying these are people who have become desperate," presidential spokesman Ernesto Abella said over government-run dzRB in clarifying Duterte's statement that he does not consider Abu Sayyaf members as criminals.

Addressing a gathering of Muslims celebrating Eid'l Fitr at the SMX in Davao City, Duterte said he is "not including" the Abu Sayyaf in the

definition of criminality, noting that there is a "different setup" in Mindanao.

Abella said the President only meant he knows the root cause of the peace and order situation in Mindanao.

He said it does not mean that the Abu Sayyaf would not be held liable for atrocities they committed.

"They still have to be answerable for their actions," Abella said.

In his speech at the 69th anniversary celebration of the Philippine Air Force at Clark Field in Pampanga last week, Duterte said the kidnappings should stop because it is giving the country a "very bad image."

The President said "a time for reckoning will be coming soon."

July 2016

The  
**Standard**  
DEFINING THE NEWS

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## ASG STILL LIABLE, PALACE CLARIFIES

THE Palace clarified on Saturday that the extremist Abu Sayyaf group will still have to be held accountable for their actions even if they were spurred by desperation spawned by historical injustices as claimed by President Rodrigo Duterte.

"He is not condoning what they have done. He is only putting their actions in the context that they were forced to desperation," Abella said in an interview over state-run dzRB. "But they still need to be answerable for the actions."

Abella made the clarification after Duterte said he was excluding the Abu Sayyaf from his anti-criminality campaign because they were only "driven to desperation over broken promises."

"I'm not including the Abu Sayyaf *dito sa* criminality. You've never heard me say that they are criminals," Duterte said, pertaining to the Moro rebellion that was spurred by real injustices experienced in the past.

Even before he assumed office, Duterte had already said that neutralizing the Islamic militant group, which recently beheaded two foreign hostages and kidnapped seven more, would be a top military priority.

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said the kidnappings of the extremist group—which is also blamed for the worst terror attacks in Philippine history—were already affecting the country economically.

"Our first priority is the Abu Sayyaf because that is the order of our new president: address the Abu Sayyaf immediately so we can neutralize them," he told reporters.

**John Paolo Bencito**

16 July 2016

The  
**Standard**  
DEFINING THE NEWS

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## REDS TOLD TO STOP ALL ATTACKS ON MILITARY

By John Paolo Bencito

PRESIDENT Rodrigo Duterte on Saturday urged Communist rebels to stop their attacks against the military and start building goodwill as the peace talks are set to resume next month.

Duterte in a speech before the Muslim community in his hometown on Friday sought a stop to ambushes and kidnapping of soldiers.

"Let's stop the killings and kidnapping of soldiers. It's nonsense. Let's do this so there's no rambling whatsoever. Because the military cannot just keep silent while all of their men are being kidnapped and killed and while we're in the process of perfecting the wherewithals of how to proceed with the peace talks," he added.

On Wednesday, the New People's Army has been ordered to strengthen its ranks and continue launching tactical offensives against "enemy units that have committed fascist crimes against the people" amid efforts to forge an alliance with the Duterte administration.

In an editorial in its official publication, *Ang Bayan*, the Communist Party of the Philippines also urged its armed wing to "disarm and arrest the biggest criminals involved in peddling illegal drugs" and to "launch actions to protect the environment against destructive mining, logging and plantation operations."

The editorial, written in Filipino, acknowledged the "great potential" of building a "progressive and pro-people alliance between Duterte and the national democratic forces" even as it stressed that its forces are aware of "the limitations of this alliance" and the "dangers of being tied down, sucked up and drowned by this work."

It recognized that Duterte himself "is working on and pushing this alliance" as it pointed out that he is also the head of a "reactionary state" that remains dominated by elite and foreign interests.

Duterte cited as an example chairman Al Haj Murad Ebrahim of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, which has kept its peace despite the non-passage of a Bangsamoro Basic Law, the key to its peace agreement with the government.

"And Nur is also just having a stand down somewhere in Jolo," Duterte added.

Duterte earlier expressed interest in granting safe conduct passes and political amnesty to four leaders of the Communist Party of the Philippines who are currently locked behind bars and or currently seeking political asylum in other countries as long as Communist rebels lay down their arms and give way to the peace process initiated by the government.



July 2016

The Manila Times

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# ASG WILL PAY FOR CRIMES - PALACE

BY CATHERINE S. VALENTE  
REPORTER

MALACANANG on Saturday gave assurance that the government will hold Abu Sayyaf rebels accountable for their atrocities.

The Palace issued the statement hours after President Rodrigo Duterte said he does not consider Abu Sayyaf members criminals.

Presidential spokesman Ernesto Abella gave the assurance following

Duterte, during the Mindanao Hari Raya Eid'l Fit'r gathering in Davao City, said he

did not consider the Abu Sayyaf as a band of criminals because the group had been "driven to desperation."

The President attributed the radicalization of some people in Mindanao to poor governance.

"I am not including Abu Sayyaf [in the definition of] criminality. You've never heard me say: 'mga kriminal [they are criminals],' " Duterte said.

"It is a different set up there because these are the guys who were driven to desperation," he added.

Bu Presidential spokesman Ernesto Abella said Duterte's statement was taken out of context and that it does not mean that the government will no longer apprehend the terrorist group.

"Hindi po niya (Duterte) pinapalampas 'yung mga ginawa nila, pero nilalagay lang po niya in context 'yung mga, 'yung kanilang pinaggagawa, that they were forced to desperation," Abella said in a radio interview.

"Meron silang motive, kaya lang po they still have to be answerable for the

actions," he added.

The Abu Sayyaf had become infamous for kidnapping and executing hostages, bombings, and extortion activities.

Its gunmen kidnapped Canadians John Ridsdel and Robert Hall in 2015 and beheaded them early this year.

The group freed another victim, Marites Flor, but it kept Norwegian Kjartan Sekkingstad as hostage.

Duterte said federalism will help resolve the various conflicts in Mindanao

► Crimes A8

## ASG

because it will give everyone there the same opportunities.

He gave assurances that he will keep his promise to bring peace to Mindanao within his term.

"It will not come overnight. Probably, it will be something about two to three years from now, but I assure you something will change before I end my term," Duterte said.

The President also said there will be peace negotiations with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF).

"Simultaneous ang ating usa-

pan with the [MILF] and [MNLF]. But I said, I assure you, if there's no federalism, kung ayaw talaga ng the rest of the country [if the rest of the country disagrees], well then I said what you give to [MILF] must be given to the [MNLF]. I hope we can have peace in the land," he said.

"Ready na kami sa aming group sa gobyerno [our group in the government is ready] to talk to the MILF," Duterte added.

He likewise asked the New People's Army to refrain from holding soldiers captive to ease tensions amid the looming resumption of peace talks between the government and the communist movement.

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7 July 2016

The Manila Times

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# Foreign jihadists helping Abu Sayyaf

BY AL JACINTO  
SENIOR CORRESPONDENT AND  
MOHD SAADUDDIN  
CORRESPONDENT

**ZAMBONGA CITY:** Indonesian and Malaysian militants have joined the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) in fighting Filipino security forces in the southern province of Basilan in the Muslim autonomous region, reports said.

Abu Sayyaf chieftain Isnailon Hapilon who is based in Basilan province is now the leader of the Islamic State's new battalion in the Philippines, the Katibah Al-Muhajir or the "Battalion of Migrants" made mostly of Indonesian

➤ JihadistsA2

and Malaysian jihadists.

Malaysian media also quoted Singapore-based terrorism expert Rohan Gunaratna as saying that the new battalion in Basilan was set up because of difficulties faced by IS recruits in going to Syria and Iraq.

"Now we have seen that in the Philippines, IS has created Katibah Al-Muhajir, the Battalion of Migrants. They are (made up of) Malaysians and Indonesians," he was quoted as saying by the New Straits Times. "There are about 10 Malaysians (there now)," he added, citing intelligence on the new battalion.

Just last month, IS released a propaganda video telling its supporters in Southeast Asia to head to the Philippines if they found it hard to go to Syria and Iraq.

"The Philippines can be a very important launching pad to reach Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore because southern Philippines is very centrally located," Gunaratna said, noting that regional militants have changed their focus to the new battalion base instead of IS's base in Syria and Iraq.

There was no immediate confirmation from the Philippine military about the new IS

## IS-affiliates in Lanao, Maguindanao

In Maguindanao and Lanao del Sur provinces, the radical Bang-

salatan, but security forces had previously killed several foreign jihadists in Basilan, the base of the Abu Sayyaf in southern Philippines, just several nautical miles south of Zamboanga City.

### Basilan IS base

In January this year, the regional newspaper Mindanao Examiner reported that Basilan province has become the bastion of power of the Abu Sayyaf after it pledged allegiance to the caliph of the Islamic and named Hapilon as its new chieftain.

In a propaganda video released by the Abu Sayyaf late last year, more than two dozen gunmen, including ethnic warriors, led by Hapilon were seen hiking in the hinterlands of Basilan while chanting the 'Dawlah Islamiyah (Islamic State)' and reciting an Arabic script of *bayat* or pledge of allegiance.

Hapilon, alias Abu Abdullah, took over Abu Sayyaf leader Abdurazak Abubakar (Abulani) who was slain in a police shootout in Basilan in December 1998.

The Abu Sayyaf is not just a notorious group known for having carried out kidnappings, bombings and other criminal activities in southern Philippines.

The US government has offered a \$5 million bounty for major threats - such as this.

In the video, Hapilon was

shown with Abu Harith Al-Bilbibeni, reportedly the deputy commander of al-Ansar Infantry Division of the IS, and Mohd Najib Husen (Hussein), alias Abu Annas Al-Muhajir, a division head of the Ansar al-Sharia of the IS.

The militants explained in the video that they had previously done the *bayat* but did it again in front of their new leaders. It was unknown when the video was recorded, but it was released just after the military's Western Mindanao Command in Zamboanga City claimed in December that Husen was killed during offensive operations in Basilan.

Husen was with other Malaysian jihadists - Mahmud Ahmad, Muhammad Joramee Awang, Raimoe Amin Baco and Iekmal Adil - who fled to southern Philippines reportedly to recruit militants and send them to 'Dar al-Harb' (place of war), referring to Syria and Iraq, where the IS established its own caliphate state.

Sur provinces, the radical Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) and the Ansarul Khilafah also pledged allegiance to the ISIS. Radical militants in Indonesia and Malaysia, including the Southeast Asian terror group Jama'ah Islamiyah, had also done the same.

The jihadists also released a video of the IS's Alhaya Media Center which shows the Philippines as among countries in Southeast Asia they were planning to expand its 'Khilafah (caliphate).'

The Abu Sayyaf is now using the Daesh flag and also the Khilafah Islamiyah Movement and other radical groups in Lanao del Sur where local militants of the Ghuraba (Strangers) - both the Ghuraba and Khilafah Islamiyah Movement are headed by a leader called Humam Abdul Najid who was implicated in the 2015 Cagayan de Oro City bombings.

The Ghuraba is reportedly harboring foreign militants, including an agent of the Jama'at al-Tawhid wal-Jihad, a group believed to be the original name of now infamous international threat group IS.

Spontaneous fighting between security and Abu Sayyaf forces since early this week was also reported in Basilan and Sulu province where the Abu Sayyaf militants had beheaded a Malaysian and two Canadian hostages and is threatening to execute a kidnapped Norwegian man.

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## AFP deploys 135 soldiers to Haiti

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) deployed on Friday a 135-strong peacekeeping contingent to strife-torn Haiti in line with its continuing commitment to the United Nations (UN).

AFP chief Gen. Ricardo Visaya himself led the send-off ceremony as the soldiers boarded a UN-chartered flight at Villamor

Air Base in Pasay City.

"The Filipino contingent is the Philippines' contribution to the UN peacekeeping operations worldwide," AFP spokesman Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla said.

To date, the Haiti peacekeeping operations is the AFP's largest UN deployment after the

Philippines decided to pull out its contingents in Liberia due to the outbreak of the Ebola virus.

The Philippines also pulled out its peacekeepers deployed under the UN flag in conflict-stricken Golan Heights due to the increasing terror threat, highlighted by heavy fighting between Filipino troops and ter-

rorists out to capture and hold them hostage in 2014.

Padilla said the Haiti-bound troops from the Philippine Army is composed of 15 officers and 119 enlisted personnel – 14 of them women – and are under the command of Col. Rosalio Pompa.

– Jaime Laude

10 July 2016

## PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Page: AT

# With UN court verdict, Asean can make stand on sea dispute

By Estrella Torres

INTERNATIONAL Criminal Court (ICC) Justice Raul Pangalangan on Friday said members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) could use this week's ruling by an international court to make a stand on the South China Sea territorial disputes without hurting China.

With four members—the Philippines, Vietnam, Brunei and Malaysia—having conflicting claims with China in the South China Sea and other members leaning toward China because of economic interests, Asean faces serious divisions over the ruling to be handed down by the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague on Tuesday.

Most legal experts expect the ruling to go against China, depriving it of a basis for its claims to almost all of the South China Sea.

### 'Game changer'

But Pangalangan, former dean of the University of the Philippines College of Law who is also a trustee of the think tank Stratbase ADRI, said the Philippine case was a "game changer," as it elevated the dispute to the level of international law.

He said the Philippines would have been at a disadvantage if it pursued bilateral negotiations with China in trying to resolve the territorial dispute.

### 'David vs Goliath'

"In a David vs Goliath scenario, the Philippines would have been helpless; by filing the case, we have shifted it from a two-party settlement and submitted it to a third-party decision-maker on the tribunal," Pangalangan said in a statement issued by Stratbase ADRI.

He said the Philippine challenge to China's claim to almost all of the South China Sea also undermined the military aspect of the maritime disputes and instead "highlighted the primacy of international law."

The Philippines has asked the arbitral tribunal to void China's sweeping claims in the South China Sea, and demanded its right to explore resources in its exclusive economic zone, waters locally known as West Philippine Sea, be respected.

"It (arbitration) will provide our neighbors in Asia and our allies abroad a neutral ground upon which to take a position on the issue. In other words, without states saying 'China is right' or 'the Philippines is right,' we provide even the erstwhile hesitant Asean states an opportunity to take a decision without riling China's sensitivities," Pangalangan said.

### Joint exploration

President Duterte said on Thursday he expected the ruling to be in favor of the Philippines and, if it is, he was willing to talk with China about joint exploration of resources in the West Philippine Sea.

Foreign Secretary Perfecto Yasay said Mr. Duterte and Ambassador Zhao Jinhua discussed joint exploration during the Chinese envoy's visit to the President in Malacañang on Thursday.

### No preconditions

"If the Chinese, in respecting the decision of the arbitral tribunal, would like to negotiate within the context of that arbitral tribunal along with the other claimants, if at all that would be covered by the decision, to see how we can jointly use and explore the area, by all means let's pursue that," Yasay said at a news forum in Makati on Thursday.

Earlier, Zhou said China hoped bilateral negotiations with the Philippines could start soon.

He said there should be no preconditions for the talks, as both countries were committed to friendship and cooperation.

"Let me emphasize this, we have been talking too much about the disputes in the last six years. Let's focus on friendship and cooperation. That's better," Zhou said.



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INQUIRER

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# PH fishermen bear brunt of Scarborough tension

By Gabriel Cardinoza  
Inquirer Northern Luzon

**INFANTA, Pangasinan**—For more than a month now, Carlo Montehermozo had not returned to the Scarborough Shoal in the West Philippine Sea for a fishing trip.

He used to sail there at least twice a month like other fishermen in the village of Cato here, taking the risk of being chased away by Chinese coast guards who had been patrolling Philippine maritime territory.

Because more Chinese Navy and Coast Guard ships have started guarding the area, Montehermozo said, fishing boats are no longer allowed to sail even near the shoal.

"It has been difficult for us," Montehermozo said. "Fishing is the only livelihood we know."

The Scarborough Shoal, also known as Panatag Shoal and Bajo de Masinloc, is 260 kilometers from this town. It is a rich fishing ground and has served as a mid-sea refuge for fishing boats during stormy weather at sea until the Chinese began patrolling the area in 2012.

About 80 percent (or 3,703)

of Cato's 4,629 residents are fishermen, most of them working as crew members of commercial fishing boats.

Because no boat has left the shoal, many fishermen are idle, said Cato village chair Charlito Maniago.

Some fishermen turn to the "payao" (artificial reef) scattered in the West Philippine Sea.

"But it's a big gamble when they go there. They are not sure if there are fish in the payao," said Maniago.

A payao is made of small bamboo rafts fitted with palm leaves to attract small fish, which feed on plankton that settle on the fronds. Big fish, like tuna, are in turn attracted to the payao by the small fish.

Maniago said Metro Manila-based owners of payao visit the artificial reefs regularly to harvest.

But Montehermozo said income from the payao is barely enough for the needs of his family.

"If you're lucky, maybe you will earn more," he said.

A fisherman from Bolinao said he usually earns P6,000 from fishing in the payao. But there are days when he would earn only P1,000.

At Scarborough Shoal, Maniago said, fishermen are assured of bigger income by the abundance of fish.

Wilfredo Nantes, a fishing boat operator, said fishermen would risk being harmed by

Chinese patrols in Scarborough because they were sure of recovering expenses of up to P60,000 per fishing trip.

Montehermozo said he hoped President Duterte would fulfill a promise to reclaim the shoal. The Philippines has challenged China's claims over nearly the entire South China Sea, and is expecting a ruling next week from the United Nations Arbitral Tribunal in The Hague.

Even if the court decision favored the Philippines, Montehermozo said he is not optimistic that China would leave the shoal.

"I hope that even if the Chinese are there, they will allow us to fish freely. It's the only thing we want to do there," he said.

† July 2016

## INQUIRER

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# 'Abu Sayyaf still to pay for crime'

THE ABU Sayyaf may not be criminals in President Duterte's eyes, but the government would still hold them accountable for their kidnapping for ransom activities and beheading of hostages, presidential spokesperson Ernesto Abella said yesterday.

Mr. Duterte, the country's first President from Mindanao where the Abu Sayyaf operates, was only putting the actions of the group in context when he said that he was not considering its activities as criminality, said Abella.

"He is not giving them a pass on their actions, he is just putting it in context, that they were forced to desperation," Abella said in an interview over state-run Radyo ng Bayan.

For the President, the Abu Sayyaf had motives for what they did and they did not simply commit a crime "in the sense of just ordinary bandits," he said.

But even if the Chief Executive understands where the group's members are coming from, they would still have to answer for what they had done, Abella said.

"They are accountable for what they have done, because they really did do something," he added.

In May, Mr. Duterte told Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau that he would bring to justice the killers of Canadian national John Ridsdel, whom the Abu Sayyaf kidnapped and beheaded earlier this year.

The conversation took place when Trudeau called Mr. Duterte to congratulate him on his victory as president.

After killing Ridsdel, the Abu Sayyaf beheaded another Canadian hostage, Robert Hall. It released Hall's Filipino partner Marites Flor, but still has in its custody Norwegian Kjartan Sekkingstad.

*Leila B. Salaverria*

16 July 2016

The Manila Times

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# China holds war games

**B**EIJING: Beijing has begun military drills in the West Philippine Sea (South China Sea), state media reported Saturday ahead of a ruling by an international arbitration court on a dispute with the Philippines over the strategic waters.

The navy Friday carried out "combat exercises" with "live missiles" between the Paracels and the southern Chinese island of Hainan, the PLA Daily, the military's official newspaper, said on its website.

State television CCTV broadcast images of fighter aircraft and ships firing missiles, helicopters taking off and submarines surfacing.

"The drill focused on air control operations, sea battles and anti-submarine warfare", said the PLA Daily, whose article was reposted on the defense ministry website.

»War **A2**

The military maneuvers come as the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague is set to make its final decision on Tuesday in the territorial dispute between the Philippines and China.

The PLA Daily however insisted they were "routine exercises" and unrelated to the court's ruling.

China asserts sovereignty over almost all of the strategically vital waters in the face of rival claims from its Southeast Asian neighbors, most notably the Philippines and Vietnam.

To bolster its claims it has rapidly turned reefs into artificial islands capable of hosting military planes.

Manila lodged its suit against Beijing in 2013, challenging China's claims to much of the strategic waterway and saying it was in violation of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), to which both countries are signatories.

Beijing has boycotted the proceedings, saying the court has no jurisdiction over the issue and that it will ignore the ruling.

### Maintaining relations

University of the Philippines political science professor Roland Simbulan described the war exercises as China's means of expressing its resolution not to abide by the upcoming resolution of the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague, Netherlands on the sea dispute between the Philippines and China.

Simbulan however maintained that the Philippines should not close its doors on bilateral negotiations with China.

"We have tried multilateral. If we win this case I think that will just be leverage for us," he said.

"I think China is open to talk to us and also I think they do

not want our territory to be used against them because through EDCA (Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement), we are allowing US forces to actively use our territory against them and I think that is not a good thing because it could lead to war," he added.

Former Philippine Ambassador Alberto Encomienda, meanwhile, noted that the Philippines and China should have a cordial relationship "for the simple reason that both sides cannot be without each other."

In a rejoinder also on Saturday, Yasay reiterated that the government will wait for the July 12 ruling on the arbitration case and study its implications.

He explained that the bitter sea dispute could be resolved by negotiating with claimant countries and that any agreement could include sharing of the fruits of the sea.

Brunei, Malaysia, Taiwan and

Vietnam have also overlapping claims in the strategic waters.

"What I said is we have to wait for the ruling and study and dissect its implications.

As the ruling will not address sovereignty and delimitation, it is possible that some time in the future, claimant countries might consider entering into arrangements such as joint exploration and utilization of resources in disputed areas that do not prejudice the parties' claims and delimitation of boundaries in accordance with Unclos," Yasay said.

### Friendship

The military exercises were held days after Chinese Ambassador to Manila Zhao Jianhua vowed that China will not take any action in the disputed West Philippine Sea (WPS) that will undermine its friendship with the Philippines.

Yasay said the ambassador issued the statement during his recent courtesy call on President Rodrigo Duterte.

"We summarily spoke about

the strengthening of our friendship. We have expressed the hope and commitment from both sides. Notwithstanding the arbitral tribunal or the case we have filed before it or the impending decision on July 12, our friendship will remain," Yasay said in a recent forum in Makati City.

He also disclosed that Duterte and Zhao discussed the possibility of joint exploration and utilization of resources in the strategic waters.

The President, he said, is willing to negotiate with China on the matter.

In an earlier interview, the Chinese envoy said Beijing is hopeful that the bilateral negotiations with Manila will resume under the Duterte administration.

He said there should be no precondition to the talks as both countries are committed to friendship and cooperation.

"Let me emphasize this: We have been talking too much about the disputes in the last six years. Let's focus on friendship and cooperation. That's better," said Zhao.

### Non-negotiable

Talks of joint exploration of the WPS with China, however, did not sit well with a group advocating the enforcement of Philippine sovereignty over the disputed waters.

The group, Kalayaan Atin Ito [Freedom This Is Ours], on Saturday lashed out at Yasay for expressing willingness to share the resources of the disputed waters with Beijing.

In a Facebook post, the group recounted the bullying it suffered in the hands of the Chinese Navy when they sailed to and swam in the disputed territory in a bid to assert the Philippines' sovereign rights over it.

"Mr. Yasay, you were not with us when we risked our lives and swam the waters of Scarborough Shoal and braved the propeller of the Chinese coast guard speed boats who chased and blocked us, just to show to China that Scarborough shoal belongs to the Philippines, and raised the Philippine flag there in June 12," the group said.

WITH MICHAEL JOE DELIZO

10 July 2016



Pahina. 3

## Ex-NPA nilikida sa droga

Patay ang isang dating NPA at sinasabing gun man ng isang maimpluwensyang drug personality sa Lucena City na nilikida ng dalawang 'di nakilalang suspek kamakalawa ng tanghali.

Sa report ng Lucena PNP, dakong alas-11:30 ng tanghali, natutulog sa loob ng kanyang bahay sa St. Jude Village, Brgy. Cotta, Lucena City ang biktimang si Danilo Enopia Morsiquillo @ Danilo Lusterio/Arman Alcala, 61-anyos, nang pwersahang pasukin ito ng mga suspek sa pamamagitan ng pagwasak ng pinto.

Habang nakahiga, binaril na ito ng isa sa mga suspek gamit ang kalibre .45 bariil.

Ayon sa pulisya, ang biktima ay talamak na pusher at kasama sa top drug watchlist ng Lucena City Police at tauhan ng kapatid ni dating Agriculture Secretary Proceso Alcala na si Athel Alcala na minsan na ring natimbog dahil umano sa ilegal na droga. (Ronilo Dagos)

July 2016

**MANILA BULLETIN**  
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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SWIMMING AGAINST THE CURRENT

# The Navy and maritime domain awareness



By JESUS P. ESTANISLAO

**T**WO facts stood out when the Basic Ordering Agreement (BOA) asked about maritime domain awareness. The first: While the Philippine Navy (PN) is expected to play a key role in this regard, it is not the only player within the Philippine public sector in providing information on maritime activities within the Philippine maritime territory. The Coast Guard, the Maritime Police, and other agencies share this role with the Navy under the National Coast Watch System. The second: The AFP relies on the Navy to increase AFP's capability for maritime awareness and intelligence in view of its increasingly important duty for territorial defense.

The Navy Sail Plan very obligingly listed as among its strategic outcome priorities, the "AFP as a satisfied stakeholder." In identifying the strategic initiative that the Navy must undertake in order to more effectively pursue this particular strategic priority, the PN came up with a committed breakthrough result for 2015. It set a target of "31" as the number of "linked and functional maritime situational platforms." This target number represented an

increase of ten, which was the figure the Navy reported for 2013.

Why is this a breakthrough? This is what the Navy has to say: It is one of the Navy's "major contributions" to the National Coast Watch System. Aside from increasing the nation's capacity for "maritime domain awareness", these platforms also "help in identifying the appropriate response" to be deployed to various situations that may arise within the Philippine maritime domain; they (would) further capacitate Navy units under the AFP into "mission-capable" units for territorial defense." In other words, the Navy would be in a much better position to know what is happening at any time within our territorial waters.

The external auditors sent to verify the number of such "linked and functional maritime situational platforms" already being operated by the PN, reported that they found the committed number of "31" was already exceeded by the middle of 2015. The Navy had on record 36 such platforms. Thus, the Navy was given a rating of "8" out of ten on this score (number of platforms made operational). This is because the auditors found some operating issues associated with procedures

in submitting reports. The Navy needed to "strengthen its monitoring procedures as well as the feedback and follow-through process to ensure the timely provision of reports." Thus, instead of "10" for exceeding the committed number, the auditors gave a rating of only "8."

However, the rating the Navy received for the positive impact of this strategic initiative was a "10" out of ten. Most of the comments — all positive — refer to the type of information the stakeholders have been able to use. A sample of their comments:

- From the Commander, Naval Task Force: The information they provide is "very relevant to the conduct of Maritime Security Operations within the area of jurisdiction of the Naval Task Force".

- From the Commander, Naval Forces, Western Mindanao: "As a stakeholder, the relevant information obtained from the MSAP's operations are significant in addressing maritime security needs".

Furthermore, one of the BOA members commented that it is high time the Navy is able to increase our nation's capability for maritime domain awareness to a more respectable level. More work needs to be done; the percentage of our maritime

domain actively and closely watched will have to go up to a much higher, more comprehensive level. But the fact that the Navy has achieved what it committed to set up represents a transformational breakthrough, for which the Navy has to

be commended.

Again, this breakthrough result was being delivered even as the CNLE was still finalizing its Book II of the Navy Sail Plan. The effort to sail on never flagged; it never stopped.



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The Manila Times

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# A day in the lives of one-time communist rebels

[Second of five parts]

THE road to Capas, Tarlac, was long. Even if reckoned from Angeles City, which was our first stop for the journey from Manila. Diego was driving, and the trip was reminiscent of those days in the latter half of the 80s when we would go to meetings of our intelligence unit in the house of Jake, a Bulacan entrepreneur, who was the third member of our collective; at other times, Diego and Jake would go to Clark Field to case, in intel lingo, movements of American soldiers. The difference between then and now was that, before, Diego drove his yellow worn-down Volkswagen Beetle; this time around, he steered a sedan that endured the tough unpaved, very narrow passageways meandering across a vast expanse of rice paddies with newly-planted *palay* seedlings.

Earlier, Bilog had informed us, as we fetched him from his residence in Balibago, that our final destination was the farm of Juaning Rivera, who, Bilog told us, had acquired a 76-hectare tract of land. As we negotiated our way through the rice field, I wondered to myself if this was the land Bilog had talked about.

I remembered the first time I settled on my piece of land in Antipolo. It was roughly four hectares of stark cogon patch which, given the mindset of much smarter comrades, I could have titled in my name back in the early 70s. But we were communists, weren't we? So why bother having it titled as a private property? And in 1989, RK and I had a discussion which ended with a declaration from RK that before the first presidential election of 1992—which I perceived would consolidate



MY SAY

MAURO GIA SAMONTE

the political power of the bourgeoisie (Cory's government was a revolutionary one and very shaky as evidenced by the several coups that threatened to overthrow it)—the revolution shall have won already. As history would have it, Sison issued his Reaffirm in 1991, fragmentizing the Party and the Army—contributing wittingly by some obnoxious design or unwittingly by ideological conceit and humbug to the crumbling of the revolution. And my original settlement of four hectares—which at this writing had turned into premium real estate—has been reduced to more or less just 1 ha. under the incessant intrusions of what are generally regarded as “informal settlers” (am I not one among them, anyway?) and my claim to ownership of the remaining parcel must contend with obsessive passion by a former police general to land grab it. It took the intercession of my friend, Tony Halili, to stay the general's attack. Tony, then not yet the Duterte-like mayor of Tanauan, Batangas, told the general: “Mao and I belonged to the same world of RK.”

Magnificent, I said to myself of the sprawling rice land as we gingerly negotiated the final bend of the passageway. Both for livelihood purposes and for security purposes, too. I thought I could liken it to the Mamasapano SAF 44 carnage site, which was so extremely flat and

open that you could see an enemy approaching even from miles away. Only in the midst of the terrain was a slight area covered by trees, shrubs and bushes. There was no way you could tell that the spot was a human habitat except that the meandering passageways ended there.

Concealed by the vegetation was a house typical of provincial middle-class residences, with fowl, hog and farm animals completing the rural ambience. At the driveway, a man, tall, robust-framed and visibly fit and strong, greeted our arrival. This, Bilog introduced, was Ka Juaning Rivera, the host of the affair; hosting of the event goes on a round-robin among members of the group.

True to Mindo's assurances, no issues either of reaffirm or rejection of the Sison line were raised in the happening. There was only rejoicing at the continuing opportunity to renew a camaraderie born of the pure spirit of serving the people and steeped in the blood and sacrifices in the armed struggle.

Everybody appeared resigned to the fact that armed struggle would no longer get them anywhere. I shared this view, citing Fidel Castro's overthrow of Fulgencio Batista, in Cuba, as the last communist armed struggle to achieve victory.

Bilog quickly retorted, “*Yung kay Castro hindi naman communist 'yun, eh* (Castro's was not a communist rebellion). *Rebolusyon lang 'yun laban kay Batista.*”

I was enthused by the remark. Bilog actually touched on a most sensitive aspect of the Sison-led protracted people's war whose political line—the overthrow of US

imperialism—I had been criticizing early on in my membership in the Party. For though it is admitted that our strategic enemy is US imperialism, it was foolhardy to even think of trying to overthrow US imperialism in the Philippines at a time when it maintained a stranglehold on all aspects of Philippine society—economically, politically, culturally and, most importantly, militarily. All US military installations in the country at the time were well in place.

Bilog rightly pointed out—as I had been consistently holding—that Castro never raised the issue of communism and US imperialism in the Cuban revolution. It was purely a revolution against the dictatorship of Cuban strongman Batista. The effect—the US did not intervene in the struggle; nay, it did, lending logistics to Castro. Only when Batista fell and Castro was ensconced in power did he proclaim himself to be a communist.

In the struggle against the Marcos dictatorship, a brilliant strategist would have zeroed in on Marcos, leaving both the influence of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse Tung Thought and US imperialism untouched.

But then that's how the Sisonite revolution had been made and that's why it happened the way it did.

Errata: Mea culpa for two errors in my last column. Luzvimindo David was cited as former firebrand of *Kilusang Makabayan*, which should read *Kabataang Makabayan* (KM). Sheer oversight here. The other error, the Sandinista uprising was cited to be in Panama, which should read Nicaragua. Thanks to the reader who pointed this out.

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

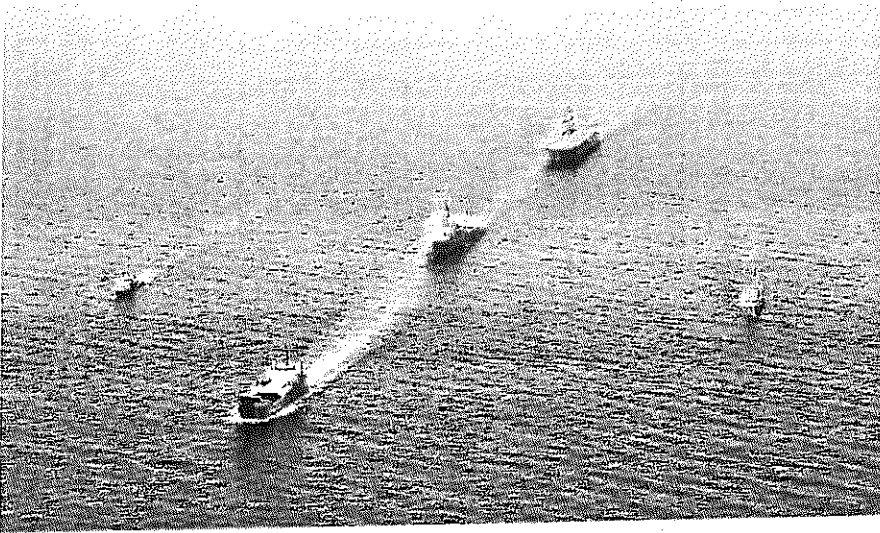
## ONLINE NEWS

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[www.philstar.com](http://www.philstar.com)

## Philippines's win in arbitration case will level playing field in sea row, think tank says

By Kristine Delgado-Basastiana (philstar.com) | Updated July 9, 2016 - 3:44pm



Visited: the Philippine Navy and the United States 7th Fleet website for information on the 2nd Joint Task Force (JTF-2) in the South China Sea. US Navy Photo Courtesy: US Navy.

MANILA, Philippines — A favorable ruling for the Philippines on the South China Sea will reinforce a non-military scenario and lead the way toward further diplomacy, a think tank said.

"If we get the verdict we expect, it is imperative to cull the best thinking on different post-arbitration scenarios and initiate dialogue on strategically approaching geopolitical, economic, and social changes in the region," said Dindo Manhit, president of the Stratbase Albert del Rosario Institute (ADRI).

According to Manhit, the Philippines should capitalize on the international interest in the case to gain international support, drawing strong statements from other countries.

"While we pursue diplomatic initiatives, the Philippines needs to take steps to protect itself from any adverse Chinese reaction," said Manhit.

"On a medium term, we need to make peace and foster a new era of engagement with China based on mutual respect and the rule of international law," he added.

Stratbase ADRI Trustee and International Criminal Court Justice Raul Pangalangan said the arbitration case was a "game changer" for the country.

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

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"In a David versus Goliath scenario, the Philippines would have been helpless; by filing the case, we have shifted it from a two-party settlement and submitted it to a third-party decision-maker in the tribunal," he said.

While the case undermined the military aspect of the conflict, it highlighted the primacy of international law, providing a venue for alliance-building, Pangalangan said.

"It will provide our neighbors in Asia and our allies abroad a neutral ground upon which to take a position on the issue. In other words, without states saying 'China is right' or 'Philippines is right,' we provide even the erstwhile hesitant ASEAN states an opportunity to take a decision without riling China's sensitivities," he said.

However, getting other more capable countries involved in the case may further complicate the dispute, said ADRI Trustee Renato de Castro.

The Philippines forged stronger ties with Japan and the US to ensure peace and stability in the South China Sea through unified defense cooperation of the three countries.

ADRI noted that China may become more "belligerent" and "uncompromising" in dealing with the Philippines if both the US and Japan will intervene.

The Permanent Court of Arbitration under the United Nations will issue a ruling on Manila's case against the nine-dash line claim of Beijing in the South China Sea on July 12.

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[www.philstar.com](http://www.philstar.com)

## AFP steps up operations vs Abus to rescue hostages

By Eric Pareja (philstar.com) | Updated July 9, 2016 - 5:21pm



The AFP chief of staff Gen. Ricardo Visaya said the Duterte administration is taking several actions to rescue the remaining foreign and local hostages of the Abu Sayyaf group in Sulu.

ZAMBOANGA CITY, Philippines – Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) chief-of-staff Gen. Ricardo Visaya said the Duterte administration is taking several actions to rescue the remaining foreign and local hostages of the Abu Sayyaf group in Sulu.

Visaya said the military has intensified the surgical strike against the group to keep the militants on the run.

Visaya, who was here Saturday to personally see the ongoing military operation, said their main goal is to rescue the foreign and local hostages, including Norwegian captive Kjartan Sekkingstad as instructed by President Rodrigo Duterte.

"Our soldiers were directed to continue the pressure for the rescue of the hostages," said Visaya.

However, the AFP chief-of-staff said the soldiers were also directed to take caution and consider the safety of the hostages.

"We should ensure the safety of the hostages that we can rescue them without compromising their safety," said Visaya.

Aside from Sekkingstad, the Abu Sayyaf bandits have been holding captives Dutch birdwatcher Ewold Horns, seven Indonesian sailors and three local residents.

Sekkingstad was abducted along with Canadians John Ridsdel and Robert Hall, and Filipina Marites Flor last Sept. 21, 2015 in Samal Island resort off Davao province.

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Ridsdel and Hall were beheaded in April and June, respectively, by the Abu Sayyaf group after the Canadian government refused to pay the P300-million ransom for each captive. Flor, on the other hand, was freed on June 24.

Flor's release came barely a day when the Abu Sayyaf group seized seven Indonesian tugboat crew members off Tawi-Tawi.

Visaya said there is no ultimatum set by the president in the rescue and recovery of the hostages.

"The government is taking many steps to address the problem. The political side will do its thing and we will do our thing. The main objective here is to end the Abu Sayyaf problem here," he said.

Army Core Purpose: Serving <sup>20</sup>the people. Securing the land.

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[www.rappler.com](http://www.rappler.com)

## Duterte: Members of the Abu Sayyaf not criminals

Duterte became the first Philippine President considers the Abu Sayyaf bandit or not the criminals.

Published 7:09 PM, July 09, 2016

Updated 7:24 PM, July 09, 2016



President Rodrigo Duterte said the Abu Sayyaf group is not a criminal organization, but a band of desperate people who are driven to violence by poverty and lack of opportunities in Mindanao.

JAKARTA, Indonesia - President of the Philippines, Rodrigo Duterte made a shocking statement in celebration of Eid on Friday night, July 8 in the city of Mindanao, southern Philippines. Duterte said the Abu Sayyaf group is not appropriate if called as a group of criminals.

This makes it the first President of the Philippines that is not labeled the Abu Sayyaf as criminals since the group was formed in the early 1990s.

"I do not consider the Abu Sayyaf in the sense of being criminals. You will never hear me say 'their criminals'." He said at the SMX Convention Center in Davao City.

According to him, the situation of Muslims in Mindanao that are mostly located below the poverty line to encourage members of the Abu Sayyaf perform actions that look desperate.

"The situation is very different, because these people do this due to despair," he said again.

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Starting from Nun (Misuari) to ARMM (Autonomous Region for Muslim Mindanao), judged, do not have equal attention.

"Therefore, they had no other option and become radicalized," he said.

Although Duterte been reluctant to label them as criminals, but the acts of terrorism and crimes committed group were related. According to members of the intelligence services, the network of Abu Sayyaf are also involved in various criminal activities such as drug trafficking and robbery. Activity is different from kidnapping aimed for ransom.

### Still hunted

Duterte controversial statement was finally clarified by the Presidential spokesman, Ernesto Abella on Saturday, July 9th. Abella according to what was presented by Duterte did not reach the government will release the Abu Sayyaf group for granted.

"Not that he mengampungi their works (so far), but he's just trying to provide the context of their actions. That they have been doing it out of desperation. Only that. In another sense, (Duterte) understand they still have to be responsible for his actions during this time," said Abella provide an explanation.

He helped explain the meaning of the sentence means the former Mayor Duterte Davao Abu Sayyaf member was understood arise because something (deeper)

"They have a motive, but that we must take responsibility for what they've done," he said.

Since its entry in monitoring the security authorities in the Philippines since the early 1990s, the President of the Philippines is always referred to them as a group of bandits. In fact, since President Fidel Ramos lead, the number one in the Philippines rejected the possibility to negotiate with the group. That possibility can now be changed under the leadership of Duterte.

Abu Sayyaf was formed after a split from the group Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) in 1997. The MNLF and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) has condemned the acts of terror and criminal acts committed that group.

Abu Sayyaf has become the international spotlight after kidnapping involving foreigners. Particularly in 2000 where they kidnapped 10 foreign tourists and 11 workers a resort in Sipadan, Malaysia.

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The group was also responsible for the Superferry bombing that killed more than 100 people in 2004. But now their focus more to kidnapping for ransom. They targeted the foreigners who rated could be one way to get money to fund their operations.

Earlier, the Abu Sayyaf group has beheaded two Canadians because their government refused to pay a ransom. Now, the Norwegians also threatened to join, executed if the requested ransom demands were not met.

The Abu Sayyaf has now also started targeting the citizens of Indonesia. Evidently, three Indonesian flagged vessels has been the target of piracy. A total of 21 Indonesian nationals have been kidnapped, where 14 of them have been freed.

As a result of the hijacking were repeated, the Indonesian government issued a moratorium sailing and exporting coal to the southern Philippines. The Malaysian government is already taking the first policy after its citizens were subjected to abduction. As a result, food prices in the southern Philippines shot up. - Rappler.com