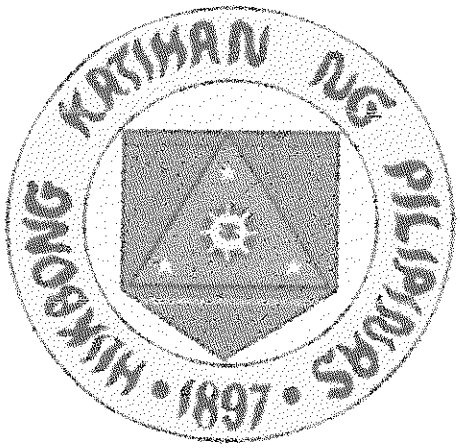

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12 July 2016

Tuesday

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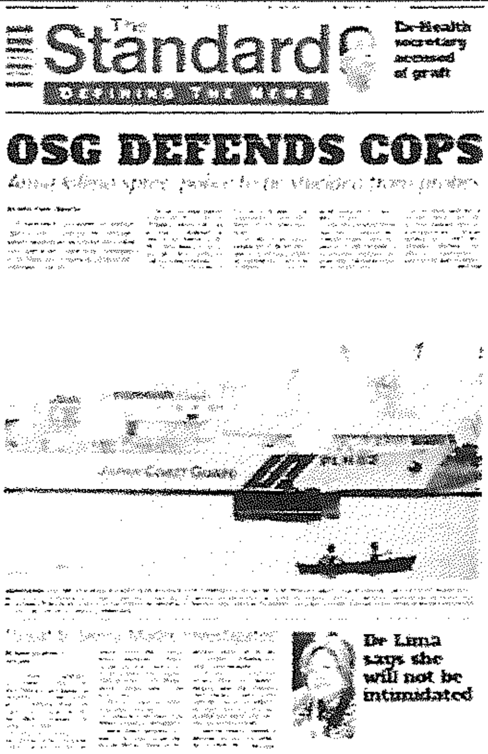
12 JULY 2016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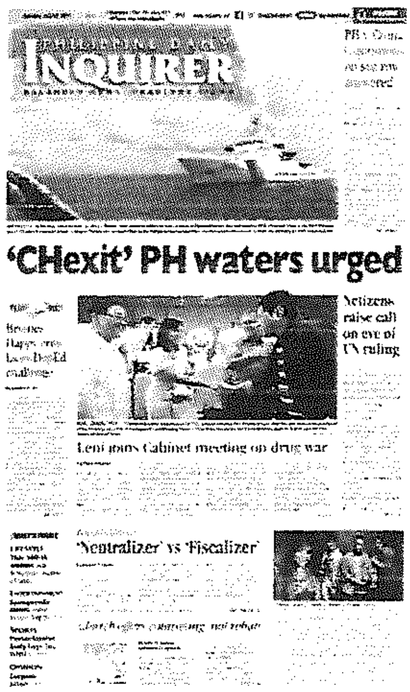
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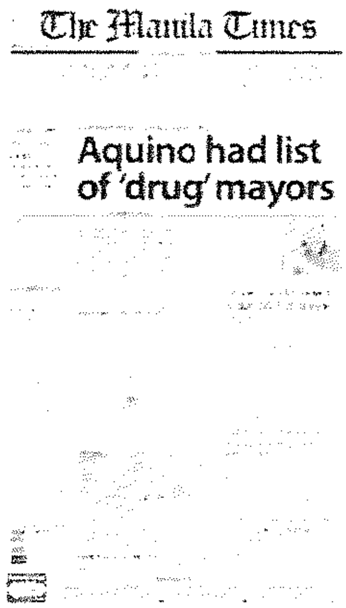
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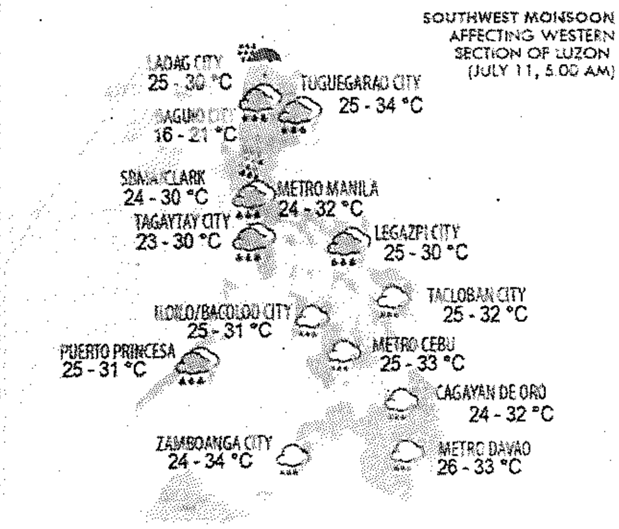

EXTENDED WEATHER FORECAST	JUL 13 WED	JUL 14 THU	JUL 15 FRI	EXTENDED WEATHER FORECAST	JUL 13 WED	JUL 14 THU	JUL 15 FRI
METRO MANILA	24 °C / 33 °C	25 °C / 33 °C	25 °C / 33 °C	PUERTO PRINCESA	25 °C / 31 °C	26 °C / 32 °C	25 °C / 32 °C
TUGUEGARAO	25 °C / 35 °C	24 °C / 35 °C	24 °C / 35 °C	ILOILO/ BACOLOD	24 °C / 32 °C	25 °C / 33 °C	25 °C / 33 °C
LAOAG	25 °C / 31 °C	25 °C / 31 °C	25 °C / 32 °C	METRO CEBU	25 °C / 33 °C	24 °C / 33 °C	26 °C / 33 °C
BAGUIO	16 °C / 22 °C	16 °C / 23 °C	16 °C / 23 °C	TACLOBAN	24 °C / 32 °C	25 °C / 32 °C	25 °C / 32 °C
SBMA/ CLARK	24 °C / 31 °C	25 °C / 32 °C	25 °C / 32 °C	CAGAYAN DE ORO	25 °C / 33 °C	24 °C / 33 °C	25 °C / 32 °C
TAGAYTAY	23 °C / 31 °C	23 °C / 32 °C	22 °C / 32 °C	METRO DAVAO	24 °C / 34 °C	25 °C / 34 °C	26 °C / 34 °C
LEGAZPI	25 °C / 32 °C	25 °C / 32 °C	24 °C / 33 °C	ZAMBOANGA	25 °C / 33 °C	24 °C / 33 °C	25 °C / 32 °C

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'CHexit' PH waters urged

Netizens raise call on eve of UN ruling

IT IS TIME for China to do a #CHexit from the West Philippine Sea, social media users and activists in the Philippines said on Monday on the eve of a crucial UN tribunal ruling.

Inspired by the Brexit term coined for Britain's vote to leave the European Union, the catchy new reference for China has quickly gained currency on Facebook, Twitter and protest placards ahead of the verdict of the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague on Beijing's claims to most of South China Sea, including Philippine territorial waters.

"We ask our friends from other countries, especially our brothers and sisters in Southeast Asia, to call for a #CHexit," Mong Palatino said as he

CHEXIT/A14

From page A1

protested with a small group of people outside the Chinese Consulate in Manila. "China should stop bullying its neighbors."

On social media, some of the messages were more blunt. "China, get out of Philippine territory! #CHEXIT," wrote @emiletabiar on Twitter.

"The West Philippine Sea is not for you to own. #CHexit," said @rmcocoba.

Other Filipinos were not amused. "'CHexit'?!?!? Cringing on this one," said @titobabis.

China claims nearly all of the strategically vital sea, even waters approaching the coasts of the Philippines and other Southeast Asian nations.

Challenging China claim

Manila filed a case in the arbitral tribunal in The Hague in 2013 challenging China's claim. China refused to participate in the hearings and vowed to ignore Tuesday's verdict.

Experts have said that the ruling is likely to be in Manila's favor.

Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) spokesperson, Charles Jose, said the ruling would clarify the maritime entitlements of coastal states like the Philippines based on the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

In a statement on June 29, the court said it would not rule on questions of sovereignty over the land territory and would not delimit any maritime boundary between the parties.

China has repeatedly announced it will not abide by the arbitration court, saying the Philippines failed to exhaust negotiations to settle disputes.

Former Foreign Undersecretary Lauro Baja Jr. said "China will use every excuse to justify (its moves). They (Chinese) are worried that the tribunal panel will rule against them."

"The decibels of China's rhetorics is increasing. If we analyze the statements coming from China, they look like people who are losing," Baja said.

Comply with ruling

The Philippines has called on China to respect and comply with the decision.

The DFA said it was confident that the arbitration ruling would be favorable to the Philippines, but maintained it would "respect and comply" if ever the ruling was favorable to China.

A key factor that could change the equation of the consequences of The Hague ruling is how President Duterte decides to respond.

His predecessor, Benigno Aquino III, filed the case, straining Manila's relations with Beijing, but Duterte has shown readiness to mend frosty ties with China.

Mr. Duterte has pointed out the benefits of nurturing friendly relations with Beijing, including a Chinese offer of financing railway projects in the Philippines. His rise has given China an opening to make inroads in one of America's closest security allies.

Last week, Mr. Duterte said

CONSULATE PROTEST **Activists belonging to Bagong Alyansang Makabayan picket the Chinese Consulate in Makati City on Monday in anticipation of a ruling of the Permanent Court of Arbitration on a complaint filed by the Philippines against China over the West Philippine Sea.** MARIANNE BERMUDEZ

his administration stood ready to talk to China if the Philippines gets a favorable ruling.

"When it's favorable to us, let's talk," he said. "We are not prepared to go to war, war is a dirty word."

It remains to be seen, however, how far Mr. Duterte can stray from Manila's critical stance on Beijing's territorial assertiveness, given his country's close ties with Washington and growing nationalist sentiment against Chinese actions.

The decision of the arbitral court would test the mettle of Mr. Duterte as the country's chief diplomat, said Chester Cabalza, a professor at National Defense College of the Philippines.

Jay Batongbacal, an expert on South China Sea issues at the University of the Philippines, said Manila should avoid revealing its cards ahead of potential negotiations with Beijing, "otherwise you lose the leverage that you have."

Experts say the outcome of the dispute could provide ammunition for other countries involved in disputes with China.

Six states have overlapping territorial claims in the South China Sea—China, Vietnam, the Philippines, Taiwan, Malaysia and Brunei.

In addition, China's nine-dash line overlaps waters that are part of Indonesia's internationally recognized exclusive economic zone.

"This is a time for China not to keep pushing forward too aggressively because they could embolden Vietnam and Indonesia to file a case as well," said Bonnie Glaser, senior adviser for Asia at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington.

Regardless, the ruling is unlikely to stop China from continuing to pursue more effective control over the sea space and airspace of the South China Sea, Glaser said.

US exercises

Over the last few months, the United States has held combined exercises by two Navy aircraft carrier strike groups off the coast of the Philippines and freedom of navigation cruises near China's man-made islands to assert its presence in the Western Pacific.

Chinese state media have accused Washington of trying to turn the South China Sea "into a powder keg" and warned it not to underestimate China's determination to defend its territorial claims.

Chinese warships, fighter jets and submarines have held live-fire war games as part of what the People's Liberation Army Navy called routine exercises in the week running up to the tribunal's ruling, drills that were seen at least in part responding to the US presence.

"There's a real game of nerves going on here with China perhaps assuming that the US is bluffing and the US hoping that China will actually not test American resolve," said Hugh White, professor of strategic studies of Australian National University. *Reports from AFP, AP, Nikko Dizon and Estrella Torres*

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Page 1

China urged to respect UN arbitral court ruling

By PIA LEE-BRAGO

Netizens called for #CHexit or a Chinese exit from contested waters, while Manila urged Beijing to respect whatever ruling is issued today by a UN-backed tribunal on the two countries' dispute in the South China Sea.

With over 40 nations – including the richest and most powerful ones – voicing support for arbitration to settle the maritime row, the Philippines said the world expects China to respect and uphold the verdict of the Permanent Court of Arbitration on the case filed by Manila contesting Beijing's expansive claim in the South China Sea and West Philippine Sea.

The tribunal will issue its ruling today at approximately 11 a.m. in The Hague (5 p.m. in Manila).

"We are calling on China to also do the same thing, to respect and comply with the decision especially when the decision is not in favor of China," said Foreign Affairs spokesman Charles Jose.

Victoria Bataclan, ambassador to Belgium and Luxembourg and head of the Philippine Mission to the European Union, said Manila has made clear its readiness to abide by any ruling of the arbitral court.

"Since under UNCLOS an impleaded party is bound by a tribunal's ruling whether it

Turn to Page 12

China urged From Page 1

participates or not, it therefore behooves China, as a law-abiding member of the community of nations, to do likewise," Bataclan said, referring to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which both countries have ratified.

"The issue of the South China Sea must be raised as widely as possible, because it involves a country whose ability to affect the lives of everyone in the planet has increased along with its economic clout," Bataclan said.

"China is indeed on the rise, and the rest of the world, including the European Union, expects her to respect and uphold the basic principles which the international order is based," she added.

The Philippines is hopeful the tribunal would not give China the "golden key" to a scenario of Beijing's nine-dash line becoming a "Berlin Wall of the Sea" and a "giant fence" owned exclusively by China.

Ahead of the ruling, Filipinos in China this weekend received mobile phone text messages from their embassy, warning them not to discuss politics in public and to avoid engaging in discussions on social media. They were advised to carry their passports and residency permits with them at all times and to contact the embassy or Chinese police if there are any untoward incidents.

China says much of the building and reclamation work it has been doing in the South China Sea is to benefit the international community, including for civilian maritime navigation.

The official *China Daily* said yesterday that China will soon start operations of a fifth lighthouse in the South China Sea, on Mischief Reef.

Taiwan is also watching the case closely.

Its single holding of Itu Aba is the biggest feature in the Spratlys and the one some analysts believe has the strongest claim to island status and an exclusive economic zone.

"If the ruling touches on our sovereign rights we will respond strongly," said deputy foreign minister Leo C.J. Lee to lawmakers in a parliamentary committee session yesterday.

The coast guard, which directly oversees Itu Aba with the support of the military, will not "soften" its defense of the island, coast guard chief Lee Chung-wei added.

Arbitration backers

The Washington-based think tank Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) said 40 countries have voiced support for the arbitral proceedings. They are Albania, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom, United States, Vietnam and members of the European Union. While the last may not have issued individual statements, their support is based on EU statements presented as the position of all members.

Countries supporting China's position included Afghanistan, Gambia, Kenya, Lesotho, Niger, Sudan, Togo and Vanuatu.

At a US congressional hearing last week, Abraham Denmark, deputy assistant secretary of defense for East Asia, urged both parties to comply with the ruling. Denmark said it was a chance to determine whether the region's future will be defined by adherence to international laws or by "raw calculations of power."

China might use strong rhetoric but not take aggressive action to avoid having the topic dominate the agenda at upcoming multilateral forums, said Bonnie Glaser, senior adviser for Asia at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington.

Glaser said Chinese officials she's spoken to say privately they hope the case would not rule entirely in the Philippines' favor so that Beijing can say in internal discussions that Chinese interests have not been "irreparably harmed."

Rody factor

A key factor that could change the equation of the con-

sequences of this ruling is how President Duterte decides to respond. His predecessor Benigno Aquino III's administration filed the case, straining Manila's relations with Beijing, but Duterte has shown readiness to mend frosty ties with China.

While Duterte has made critical remarks against the US, he has pointed out the benefits of nurturing friendly relations with Beijing, including a Chinese offer of financing railway projects in the Philippines. Duterte's rise has given China an opening to make inroads in one of America's closest security allies.

"When it's favorable to us, let's talk," he said. "We are not prepared to go to war, war is a dirty word."

It remains to be seen, however, how far Duterte can stray from Manila's critical stance on China's territorial assertiveness, given his country's close ties with the US and growing nationalist sentiment against China's actions.

Jay Batongbacal, an expert on South China Sea issues at the University of the Philippines, said the government should avoid revealing its cards ahead of potential negotiations with Beijing, "otherwise you lose the leverage that you have."

Experts say the outcome of the dispute could provide ammunition for other countries involved in disputes with China. Six other countries have overlapping territorial claims in the South China Sea – China, Vietnam, Taiwan, Malaysia and Brunei. In addition, China's nine-dash line overlaps waters that are part of Indonesia's internationally recognized exclusive economic zone.

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Regardless, the ruling is unlikely to stop China from continuing to pursue more effective control over the sea space and airspace of the South China Sea, Glaser said.

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CHexit

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"The West Philippine Sea is not for you to own. #CHexit," said @rmcocoba.

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Meanwhile, a senior Chinese diplomat said South China Sea is not on the agenda and should not be discussed at a major summit between Asian and European leaders in Mongolia at the end of the week.

Chinese Assistant Foreign Minister Kong Xuanyou signaled discussion of the South China Sea would not be welcomed at the event, which happens once every two years, as it's designed to discuss issues between Asia and Europe.

– With AFP, Reuters

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3 Indonesian fishers seized—AFP

By Julie S. Alipala
Inquirer Mindanao

ZAMBOANGA CITY—Sulu-based bandits on Sunday kidnapped three Indonesians in the waters of Lahad Datu, Malaysia, the military said here yesterday.

Maj. Filemon Tan Jr., Armed Forces of the Philippines Western Mindanao Command spokesperson, said the victims—Lorence Koten, Teo Dorus Kopong and one identified only as Emanuel—were crew members of a fishing boat.

Tan said the suspects originally took all eight crew members of the vessel hostage but later freed five. He identified the vessel owner as Chia Tong Lim.

In Sulu, soldiers on Saturday morning rescued a 23-year-old school teacher who had been abducted by armed men last month.

Tan said members of the 41st Infantry Battalion rescued the teacher of Kanlagay Elementary School in Kalingalan Caluang town in Sulu.

The victim, who was held in Barangay Tagbak in Indanan town, said she was taken by armed men while on her way to school on June 20. She identified the leader of her abductors as Salim Susulan.

The other suspects were identified as Lauril Susulan, Basar Saudan, Jipy Susulan and Salma Saudan.

Tan said the victim told him she was forced to marry Salim on June 27.

He said the teacher was rescued when she screamed while the vehicle she was riding in stopped at a military checkpoint, prompting the soldiers to ask the passengers to alight and come inside the camp of the 12th Light Armored Cavalry.

The suspects are in the custody of the Indanan police.

12 July 2016

MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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Gov't troops in Surigao clash with NPA

BUTUAN CITY – A fire fight between government forces and New People's Army (NPA) rebels erupted Sundaymorning in Barangay Amontay, in San Francisco town, Surigao del Norte, First Lieut. Ryan D. Layug, Civil Military Operation (CMO) officer of the Army's 30th Infantry Battallion (30th IB) yesterday said.

According to Layug, troops from the 30th IB were responding to complaints by villagers about the presence of unidentified armed men in the vicinity when the encounter took place.

The encounter lasted 10 minutes before the armed men retreated and left behind an M16 Armalite rifle and live ammunition..

"There was no casualty on our operating troops in the area," he added.

Meanwhile, a soldier from the 36th Infantry Battallion (36th IB) was wounded in a clash on Sunday with another lawless armed group (LAG) at Sitio Hitaob, Barangay Awasian, Tandag City, Surigao del Sur.

An initial report reaching this city said the wounded soldier was Pfc. Marjun Bayo, who sustained wounds in his right arm and left leg due to a landmine blast. He was declared in stable conditionon Monday.

The gun battle took place after the command section of the 36th IB received a report from a concerned villager of the presence of suspicious armed men in their barangay, who were allegedly extorting money from the residents, claimed 36th IB Civil Military Operations (CMO) officer Capt. Francisco Gallero, Jr., in a press statement yesterday. (Mike U. Crismundo)

Sundalo, NPA nagsagupa sa Surigao

BUTUAN CITY – Nagkaroon ng palitan ng putok sa pagitan ng mga komunistang New People's Army (NPA) at pwersa ng gobyerno Linggo ng umaga sa lungsod ng San Francisco, Surigao del Norte. Inihayag ni First Lieutenant Ryan D. Layug, isang Civil Military Operation (CMO) officer ng Army's 30th Infantry Batallion (30th IB) na nasabat ng combat maneuvering troops ang isang M16 Armalite rifle at live ammunitions pagkatapos ang 10-minutong bakbakan. Nagsagawa ng operasyon ang 30th IB sa Brgy. Amontay upang bantayan ang mga Lawless Armed Group (LAG) na inirereklamo ng mga lokal na residente. Nangangamba ang mga residente ukol sa tangka nitong ambushin ang mga pulis at sundalo na nagpapatrolya sa lugar at pagpigil nito sa kanilang pagpunta sa bukid ng halos isang linggo. Ayon kay Layug wala namang nasaktan sa kanilang operating troops. Nanawagan naman si Lt. Col. Rico Amaro sa lider ng grupong LAG na isuko na ang kanilang mga kasamahan lalo na ang mga naging sugatan sa engkwentro upang mabigyan ang mga ito ng karampatang lunas. **(Mike U. Crismundo)**

Soldier hurt in pursuit against NPA abductors in Surigao del Sur

By: **Erwin M. Mascariñas, InterAksyon.com**
July 11, 2016 2:48 PM

A soldier takes a quick rest outside the domestic airport in barangay Awasian, Tandag City. Photographed by Erwin Mascariñas, InterAksyon.com

InterAksyon.com
The online news portal of TV5

Butuan City – A soldier of the Philippine Army 36th Infantry battalion was wounded at the weekend while conducting hot pursuit operation against members of the New People's Army (NPA) at a hinterland village in Tandag City, Surigao del Sur after the abduction of the police officer.

Last July 5, 2016, members of the NPA abducted PO1 Richard Yu Jr., of the Carmen Municipal Police Station at around 6:25 in the morning in Sitio Hubason, Barangay San Vicente, Carmen town, Surigao del Sur to investigate allegations about drug trafficking in the area.

Lt. Col. Randolph P. Rojas, commanding officer of the 36th IB based in Tandag City, said that at around 8:00 in the morning, Pfc Marlojun Bayo was wounded when an improvised explosive device (IED) went off, fracturing his left arm and then suffering a gunshot wound on his right thigh from the ensuing firefight.

Bayo was immediately brought down from the scene of the encounter at the hinterland area of Sitio Hitaob to Tandag City, where he was rushed to Adela Serra Ty Memorial Medical Center for initial treatment before being airlifted to the army hospital at 4th Infantry Division headquarters in Patag, Cagayan de Oro City.

"Our soldiers were conduction a hot pursuit operation at the farthest part of Barangay Awasian to confirm reports that elements of the NPA band who abducted PO1 Yu were in the area. The NPA rebels might have been alerted to the arrival of our troops under Bravo Company, and then took advantage of their familiarity of the terrain as our troops were approaching. They had set up the explosive device along the route, and the 15-minute firefight immediately followed the explosion," said Rojas.

Captain Joe Patrick Martinez, spokesman of the 4th ID, confirmed that the soldier has been brought to Cagayan de Oro City after a quick stop at Butuan City. The soldier is out of harm's way and is now recovering from his wounds.

Ka Sandara Sidlakan, spokesperson of the NPA's Front 21 operating in Surigao del Sur confirmed the incident and described it as "an ambush".

"We used the controlled detonated device to suppress the firepower and ability of the soldiers since we acknowledge that they have superiority in arms. But it was not a landmine or an explosive device that we just leave on the ground that might endanger anyone who passes by. We buy the line that the military operation was connected with the abduction, since the military campaign has been going on long before we abducted the police officer. We think the Army is just using the abduction as a pretext to intensify their operation even though we've already indicated that we have plans to release PO1 Yu," said Ka Sandara, adding that the military operation could further complicate the release of Yu back to his family.

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Sundalo vs sundalo: 1 sugatan

Isang sundalo ng Philippine Army ang malubhang nasugatan makaraang pagbabarilin ng kanyang kasamahan sa Barangay Sangali, Zamboanga City, iniulat ng pulisya kahapon.

Ayon sa imbestigasyon ng Zamboanga City Police Office (ZCPO), nangyari ang insidente dakong 9:00 ng umaga nitong Linggo sa Sitio Daap, Barangay Sangali, Zamboanga City.

Kinilala ni Senior Insp. Helen Limen Galvez, ng ZCPO, ang sugatang biktima na si Pfc. Ricky Bunsalao, habang ang suspek ay nakilala lamang bilang "Rene Upo."

Ayon sa pulisya, nakasakay sa motorsiklo ang biktima kasama ang kanyang misis nang biglang lapitan at barilin ng suspek.

Nakatakbo pa sa loob ng inuupahang bahay ang biktima at nakahingi ng tulong habang ang kanyang misis ay pinalad namang hindi tinamaan ng bala, ayon sa police report.

Inaalam pa ng pulisya ang motibo sa pamamaril ng suspek na kasamahang sundalo ng biktima. **Fer Taboy**

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2 drug lords isinuko ng Army

Dalawang pinaghihinalaang drug lord ang isinuko ng Philippine Army sa tanggapan ng Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) sa Negros Occidental, ayon sa opisyal kahapon. Sinabi ni AFP Public Affairs Office Chief Col. Edgard Arevalo, natunton ng tropa ng militar ang pinagtataguan ng mga suspek na sina Alain Gamboa, 32, at Aldrin Dejelo. Isinuko rin ng mga suspek ang apat na kilo ng shabu habang nagsuko rin ng cal. 45 pistol at cal. 380 pistol ang suspek na si Dejelo. Sa tala, sinabi ni Arevalo na sina Gamboa at Dejelo ay kapwa tinaguriang number 1 at number 3 na drug lords sa talaan ng PDEA sa Silay City, Negros Occidental. ***Joy Cantos***

HOSPITAL CAPABILITY | DOH Donates Equipment to Phl Army

FORT BONIFACIO, Taguig City (DWDD) – Two units of Mobile Dental Vehicle (MDV) and 100 sets of bed and mattress donated by the Department of Health (DOH) will be formally receive by the Philippine Armyin a simple turn-over ceremony to be held at its headquarters tomorrow, July 11, 2016.
The medical equipment will be received by Army commanding general, Lt. Gen. Eduardo M. Año from DOH Secretary Paulyn Jean Rosell-Ubial after the flag raising ceremony.

The ceremonial turnover will be followed by the signing of the Deed of Donation and blessing of the new equipment.

"The medical equipment will help enhance the Army's hospital capability and boost the morale of the Army personnel and dependents who are recipients of health care services provided by Army General Hospital," said Col. Benjamin L. Hao, the Army spokesperson.

The 200-bed capacity, Army General Hospital is capable of performing diagnostic, surgical and treatment procedures to emergency cases, confined patients and ambulatory clients seeking consultative services of Orthopedics, Urology, Ophthalmology, Physical Medicine, Neuro-Psychiatry and Dental Services.

Meanwhile, the donation was made possible through the Army's continuous engagement with various key stakeholders as embodied in the Army Transformation Roadmap's (ATR) and AFP Internal Peace and Security Plan (IPSP) Bayanihan.**OACPA / MCAG**

www.dwdd.com

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Kidnapped teacher rescued in Sulu

By ROEL PAREÑO

ZAMBOANGA CITY – A public school teacher kidnapped on June 20 was rescued by government troops in Indanan, Sulu on Saturday, an official said yesterday.

Ratina Abubakar, 23, of Kanlagay Elementary School in Kalingalang Caluang town, was in a vehicle with her captors when they were pulled over at a checkpoint in Barangay Tigbak, said Maj. Filemon Tan Jr., spokesman for the Western Mindanao Command.

"While the troops were checking the vehicle, the victim screamed and told the troops she had been kidnapped," Tan said.

The soldiers seized the vehicle and brought the passengers to the 12th Light Armored Calvary Troops headquarters for questioning.

Abubakar was turned over to her family.

The victim said she was on her way to school at around 6 a.m. when she was taken by a group of men led by Salim Susulan.

Abubakar said Susulan brought her to a barangay hall and forced her to marry him.

The other suspects were identified as Lauril Susulan, Basar Saudan, Jipy Susulan and Salma Saudan. They are being held at the Indanan police station.

– With Cecille Suerte Felipe

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Soldiers rescue teacher forced to marry captor

By Florante S. Solmerin

A TEACHER who claimed she was abducted and forced to marry a Muslim man was rescued on July 9 while government security forces were conducting a routine checkpoint in Barangay Tagbak, Indanan, Sulu.

Major Felimon Tan Jr., spokesman of the Western Mindanao Command (Westmincom), identified the rescued kidnap victim as Ratina Abubakar, 23, a teacher at Kanlagay Elementary School.

Tan said Abubakar screamed for help while inside a Mitsubishi Strada just as troops of the 41st Infantry Battalion were manning a checkpoint.

He said Abubakar told the soldiers she "was forcibly taken by her captors, identified as Lauril Susulan, Basar Saudan, Jipy Susulan, Salim Susulan and Salma Saudan."

"During the initial debriefing, Abubakar disclosed that at around 6 a.m. on June 20 she was on her way to school when she was forcibly taken by the group of Salim Susulan and later brought to the Barangay Hall in Kanlagay, Kalingalan Caluang, Sulu," Tan said.

"Abubakar further disclosed that she was held captive by Salim for several days and that she was forcibly married to him according to Muslim rites on June 27, 2016," he added.

After the interview, the military turned over the victim to her family. The suspects were brought to the Indanan Municipal Police Station for the filing of appropriate charges.

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18 Sayyaf men killed, 9 hurt in Basilan

ZAMBOANGA CITY – Eighteen Abu Sayyaf bandits have been killed and nine others wounded in firefights with government troops in Basilan since last week, an official said yesterday.

Maj. Filemon Tan Jr., spokesman for the Western Mindanao Command, said two of the fatalities were identified as Julkifli Sariul and Kussien Pallam Seong while among those wounded were Boy Indama, Abdul Karim, Hakim Jalul, Bong Assam, Albert Tuason and Gapul Melling.

Tan said ground forces are validating the identities of the other slain bandits.

The group is led by Isnilon Hapilon and Furuji Indama.

"Military operations are ongoing in coordination with the police and local governments of Basilan and Sulu to neutralize the Abu Sayyaf," he said.

He said three bandits tagged in the kidnapping of broadcast journalist Ces Drilon in Sulu in 2008 were killed in separate encounters in Sulu on Wednesday last week. The bandits were identified as Sabtola Mahalli, Mallah Sangkula and Bas Sariyul.

Soldier shot dead

Sgt. Carlito Macotocruz was killed by an Abu Sayyaf bandit they arrested. The unidentified bandit was killed by responding Army troopers in Tipo-Tipo, Basilan on Saturday.

The 104th Army Brigade said Macotocruz and his team captured the unidentified bandit at a checkpoint in Barangay Baguindan.

The suspect managed to grab Macotocruz's firearm and shot him. – **Roel Pareño, Cecille Suerte Felipe**

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All-out war vs Abu Sayyaf

THE Armed Forces of the Philippines has launched an "all-out war" against the terrorist Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) in the South, the AFP Western Mindanao Command (Westmincom) announced on Monday.

The military vowed to defeat the ASG in response to President Rodrigo Duterte's order for an the intensified conduct of focused military operations launched by the Joint Task Forces Zambasulta in Zamboanga, Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi.

Earlier, Gen. Ricardo Visaya, AFP chief of staff, met with top military officials and soldiers of the Westmincom, telling them about the intensive campaign against the use of illegal drugs.

Visaya spoke before troops of the Philippine Army's 104th Brigade, in Barangay Tabiawan, Isabela City, Basilan, and troops of the 2nd Marine Brigade in Barangay Busbus, Jolo, Sulu, during his official visit on Sunday (July 10) to discuss operational measures taken by ground troops in defeating the Abu Sayyaf.

The AFP chief of staff then inspected facilities and equipment in Kuta Heneral Teodulfo Bautista Station Hospital stationed in Jolo, Sulu.

Brig. Gen. Retituto Padilla Jr., AFP spokesman, said Visaya conducted assessment and examination of the ongoing operation against the jihadists, lawless elements and other terrorist groups in southern Mindanao to know if there is a need to adjust operational requirements.

"May mga bagay na napag-usapan na hindi ko maibahagi dahil operational po ito, pag ganitong bagay ang unang considerasyon ay mapangalagaan ang seguridad ng ating tropa sa hindi paglahad ng mga hakbang na ito [There are matters discussed that I cannot divulge because they are operational in nature. The primary consideration is the security of the soldiers]," he said.

But the most important thing, according to Padilla, is the guidance of Duterte to rescue remaining hostages of the terrorist-group and bring peace to the area.

Maj. Felimon Tan, Westmincom spokesman, said the military has not validated reports of the involvement of ASG in the kidnapping of three Timorese off the waters of Coast Felda Sahabat on Saturday.

Tan said the military continues to intensify intelligence monitoring in collaboration with the police.

FERNAN MARASIGAN

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AFP: 40 Abu Sayyaf dead in Sulu, Basilan clashes

BY VICTOR REYES

THE military yesterday said soldiers have killed around 40 members of the Abu Sayyaf since last week in skirmishes in the provinces of Basilan and Sulu, based on intelligence reports gathered by troops.

At least 25 other members of the group notorious for kidnapping for ransom were wounded.

On the government side, the fatality remained at one, said Maj. Filemon Tan, spokesman of the military's Western Mindanao Command. Six other soldiers were wounded in the Sulu clashes.

"Focused military operations are intensified, in coordination with the police and the local governments of the provinces of Basilan and Sulu, to neutralize the Abu Sayyaf Group," said Tan.

Tan said "heavy firefight" was ongoing in Basilan as of 4:30 p.m. yesterday, "involving armored vehicles, artillery fires and close-air support."

The fighting in Basilan, particularly in the towns of Unkayan Pukan and Albarka, broke out last Wednesday. The criminals were under Isnilon Hapilon and Furuji Indama, the military said.

In Sulu, the fighting erupted last Thursday in Patikul town, against the group of Abu Sayyaf leader Radulan Sahiron. Artillery rounds were de-

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AFP

livered to known of the Abu Sayyaf.

Tan said the breakdown of Abu Sayyaf casualties is 18 dead and nine wounded in Basilan, and 22 killed and 16 wounded in Sulu.

He said some of the reported slain bandits were Julkifli Sariul, Kussien Pallam Seong, Sabtola Mahalli, Mallah Sangkula, and Bas Sariyul.

Tan said Mahalli had a standing warrant of arrest for involvement in the kidnapping of ABS-CBN reporter Ces Drilon in June 2008 and Filipino-Chinese businessman Nelson Lim in April 2011.

In his assumption speech last July 1, AFP chief Gen. Ricardo Visaya vowed non-stop operations against the Abu Sayyaf, in keeping with the thrust of President Duterte to crush the group.

Visaya said the military will be unrelenting in the operations against the Abu Sayyaf and its allied groups. Army chief Lt. Gen. Eduardo Año has said the goal is to end the Abu Sayyaf within the term of Visaya who is retiring in December.

The Abu Sayyaf is still keeping a dozen foreign and Filipino hostages in Sulu, including seven Indonesian tugboat crew members abducted from the Sulu Sea last June 22.

Authorities are still in the process of validating if the Abu Sayyaf was also responsible for the kidnapping of three more Indonesian tugboat crew members in Malaysian waters last Saturday.

Tan said the military is not "discounting the fact that the said abduction may have been perpetrated by the Abu Sayyaf Group, but the probability is low based on proximity and the intelligence reports gathered by troops."

Malaysian authorities did not directly link the Abu Sayyaf to the kidnapping but said the victims were likely brought to the southern Philippines. The three were abducted off the east coast of Sabah on Borneo island.

AFP spokesman Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla also said the military is still validating the report.

"We cannot confirm it up to now. We are still collating information to determine if this really took place or if a group from our country is involved," Padilla told a briefing in Camp Aguinaldo.

Told that Malaysian authorities suspect the victims may have been brought to Sulu, Padilla said: "Yes, they mentioned it but they didn't confirm if the group is from there (in Sulu)... This could be the result of their speculation."

"On the part of the Philippines, unless we have clear proof that they are within our territory and they are within some of our islands, we cannot confirm it," said Padilla.

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40 patay sa militar

All-out war vs Abu!

Ni JOY CANTOS

Umaabot sa 40 miyembro ng Abu Sayyaf Group ang napaslang sa pagpapatuloy ng operasyon ng militar kasunod ng utos ni Pangulong Rodrigo "Digong" Duterte sa Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) na all-out war laban sa mga bandido at sagipin ang lahat ang mga hostages na kanilang hawak sa Sulu at Basilan.

Ayon kay Major Felimon Tan Jr., ng AFP Western Mindanao Command, bunga ng magkakasunod na all-out offensive ng militar, 40 miyembro ng ASG ang kanilang napatay habang 25 ang sugatan. Sa nasabing bilang, 18 ang nasawi sa Basilan encounter.

Sinabi ni Tan na ang operasyon ay alinsunod sa direktiba ni AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Ricardo Visaya na lipulin ang mga bandido at iligtas ang nalalabi pang mga bihag.

Sa panig ng militar, isang sundalo ang nalagas at pito ang nasugatan.

Ang grupo umano ng mga bandido na sinasagupa ng Joint Task Force Basilan ay pinamumunuan nina Abu Sayyaf Commanders Isnilon Hapilon at Furuji Indama.

Natukoy ang dalawa sa mga napaslang na bandido sa Brgy. Baguindan at Silangkum; Basilan na sina Julkifli Sarijul at Kusseien Pallam Seong habang ang mga nasugatan ay sina Boy Indama, Abdul Karim, Hakim Jalul, Bong Assam, Albert Tuason at Gapul Melling at kinikilala pa ang ibang nasawi.

"Heavy firefight is still ongoing involving armored vehicles, artillery fires and close air support against the ASG as of this time", ani Tan.

Sa Sulu, kabilang sa mga napatay na bandido ay sina Sabtola Mahalli, Mallah Sangkula at Bas Sariyul; pawang mga tauhan ni Abu Sayyaf subleader Basaron Arok na napatay naman ng tropa ng mga sundalo sa Brgy. Maligay, Patikul ng lalawigang ito.

Si Mahalli ay may standing warrant of arrest kaugnay ng pagdukot kay ABS-CBN reporter Ces Drilon noong 2008 at sa negosyanteng si Nelson Lim ng Mega Fishing, may ilang taon na ang nakalilipas.

Indonesia urges action from RP as high-seas kidnappings surge

Indonesia yesterday called on the Philippines and Malaysia to do more to secure their "unsafe" waters after the weekend abduction of sailors by suspected Islamist militants.

Armed men in a speedboat kidnapped the three sailors late Saturday from a Malaysian-flagged trawler in Malaysian waters off Borneo island and took them toward the strife-torn southern Philippines, officials said.

The kidnappers were apparently targeting Indonesian citizens, as three Malaysian sailors and an Indonesian who concealed his nationality were released from the same vessel, the military said.

It takes to 24 the number of Indonesians kidnapped this year in the vital waterway between the three countries, with the Abu Sayyaf accused of being behind all the abductions.

"This kind of incident cannot be tolerated at all," said Indonesian

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OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFA

Indonesia urges action from RP as high-seas kidnappings surge

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Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi.

"Serious efforts, I repeat, serious efforts, must be taken immediately both by the Philippine and Malaysian governments."

"This goes to show that the waters of Malaysia and the Philippines are unsafe," added Indonesian armed forces chief Gatot Nurmantyo.

Separately, the Philippine military said Abu Sayyaf, which has earned millions of dollars from kidnappings-for-ransom, was behind the latest outrage.

The three new captives would add to the seven Indonesians and two Europeans already being held by the group, said Ma. Filemon Tan Jr., spokesman of the Western Mindanao Command (Wesmincom).

But AFP spokesman Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla Jr. said there is still no confirmation to the reported abduction of three Indonesians being brought to Sulu.

"So far we have no confirmation on that," he told a press conference.

Padilla, however, assured that the 13 remaining hostages of the bandit group are in good condition.

"What we can say is that they are in good condition...we have information that they are in good condition," he said.

Of the Indonesians abducted this year, 14 were released after being held in Abu Sayyaf's stronghold in the southern Philippines but there was no information on whether a ransom was paid.

A further seven were kidnapped in the area last month, after which Jakarta banned Indonesian-flagged vessels from sailing to the Philippines.

The Abu Sayyaf this year beheaded two Canadian hostages after its multi-million-dollar ransom demands were not met, and in 2015 executed a Malaysian hostage. **Mario J. Mallari and AFP**

OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAI ...om – Tel no. (02) 845-9555 Local: 5285, 5295

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3 Indonesians kidnapped by suspected ASG members

SUSPECTED members of the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) kidnapped three Indonesian fishermen on the weekend in the latest in a series of incidents highlighting weak security in the Cerebes Sea that borders Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines.

The head of Indonesia's intelligence agency said on Monday that the men were working on a Malaysian fishing boat off Lahad Datu in the Malaysian part of northern Borneo. Sutiyoso, who goes by one name, said the kidnappers fled with their hostages into Philippine waters.

Several crew on the fishing boat escaped and are now in Malaysia.

Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines agreed in May to carry out coordinated patrols in border waters, following kidnappings of Indonesian tug boat and barge crews by ASG militants based in the southern Philippines. The three governments are concerned that unchecked kidnappings, piracy and other crime could undermine commerce in the region.

The Indonesians, who were held captive in the jungles of Sulu province in the southern Philippines, were later released. The Indonesian government denied it had been involved in paying a ransom.

"We are still investigating this case and continue to coordinate with the related institutions in the Philippines to find the location where the three hostages are being held," Sutiyoso told The Associated Press. "We suspect that the hostages are held by a militant group, which is part of the Abu Sayyaf network."

The Philippines, meanwhile, has stepped up its military offensive against Abu Sayyaf, which earlier this year beheaded two Canadians it had held hostage since September. *AP*

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Philippine Daily Inquirer

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Authorities arrest suspected Abu member in Sipadan kidnap

ZAMBOANGA CITY —Combined police and military operatives have arrested an alleged Abu Sayyaf Group brigand involved in the kidnapping of 21 people in Sipadan, Malaysia 16 years ago, an official announced Monday.

Senior Insp. Helen Galvez, local police spokesperson, identified the arrested suspect as Edward Lee Pisan alias Salih Abdulla Jainal, 52, a resident of Barangay Camino Nuevo, this city.

Galvez said Pisan was arrested around 4:45 p.m. Saturday near a shopping mall along La Purisima Street, Barangay Zone III, this city.

Galvez said Pisan has a standing warrant of arrest for kidnapping and serious illegal detention with no recommended bail issued by a court of Parang, Sulu.

She said Pisan was involved in the kidnapping of 21 people—10 Europeans and 11 Asians—on April 23, 2000 in Sipadan Dive Resort in Malaysia.

She said the arrested suspect is a follower of the late ASG leader Ghalib Andang alias Commander Robot.

The ASG brigands herded the hostages to the hinterlands of Sulu where they were released in batches months later.

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US defense chief calls counterpart in Phl

By JOSE KATIGBAK
STAR Washington bureau

WASHINGTON – US Defense Secretary Ash Carter telephoned Philippine Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana to discuss the scheduled release today of the arbitral court's ruling on China's expansive claim to the South China Sea, and they both agreed to consult closely when the ruling is announced, the Pentagon said.

The Philippines has sought

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a decision from the tribunal on the validity of China's nine-dash line under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) as well as clarification of its maritime entitlements to islands and other geographic features in the South China Sea.

A Pentagon statement on Sunday said Carter congratulated Lorenzana on his new position and invited him to visit Washington early in his tenure to discuss ways to continue to deepen and enhance Philippine-US defense cooperation.

Lorenzana, a retired army major general, is no stranger to Washington and senior US military and government officials.

He served as defense and Armed Forces attaché at the Philippine embassy in Washington from 2002 to 2004 and after his retirement from active duty headed the Veterans Affairs Office at the embassy from 2004 to 2009 and from 2014 until his appointment as defense chief.

Meanwhile, State Department Counselor Kristie Kenney said the US will continue to raise the issue of China's reclamation in the South China Sea and seek legal and diplomatic solutions and without resorting to provocative actions.

Kenney, former US ambassador to the Philippines, said the South China Sea dispute should not hinder growth in the region.

"This is no time for anyone to use provocative action. This is a time to use legal, diplomatic solutions," Kenney said in an interview on *ANC*'s "Headstart."

– Pia Lee-Brago

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Air Force wants HQ near Iloilo Airport

By TARA YAP

ILOILO CITY— To be able to operate more efficiently during calamities and beef up military operations, the Tactical Operations Group of the Philippine Air Force (PAF-TOG6) is reviving the proposal to acquire a headquarters adjacent to the Iloilo Airport.

Col. Rey Bes, PAF-TOG6 commander, said there's a need for the Air Force to be near the airport located in Cabatuan and Sta. Barbara towns.

Since the June, 2007 closure of the old airport in Iloilo City, PAF-TOG6 relocated to Dingle town, where the Philippine Army's 301st Infantry Brigade (301 IB) is based.

However, this has posed challenges when carrying out both civic and military operations as the 301 IB headquarters can only accommodate helicopters and not a C-130, the military transport aircraft.

Speaking at the regional celebration of the Air Force's 69th anniversary, Bes said too much money is spent for logistical costs to shuttle personnel and other equipment between the 301 IB headquarters and the airport.

PAF-TOG6 is still negotiating with Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines (CAAP).

It is also tapping the assistance of Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) as the adjacent lots near the airport are privately-owned.

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ASG death toll in Basilan, Sulu military offensives now placed at 40

By Priam F. Nepomuceno

MANILA, July 11 (PNA) --- In the almost week-long military offensive against Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) terrorists in Basilan and Sulu, a total of 40 terrorists were believed to have been killed and another 25 wounded.

This was disclosed by Western Mindanao Command (WESMINCOM) spokesperson Major Filemon Tan in an interview Monday.

ASG casualties can be broken into two military offensives, with the first one in Basilan which started July 6 and still ongoing as of this posting.

In this operation, 18 bandits were reported killed and other nine wounded.

In the Sulu offensive, which started July 7, terrorists reported killed reached 22 and 16 wounded, Tan added.

Focused military operations are intensified, in coordination with the police and the local governments of Basilan and Sulu, to neutralize the bandit group. (PNA)
RMA/PFN

www.pna.gov.ph

Abducted teacher rescued by soldiers in Sulu

ZAMBOANGA CITY — Soldiers rescued on Saturday morning a school teacher who was abducted in Sulu last month.
Major Filemon Tan Jr., spokesperson of the Western Mindanao Command, said members of the 41st Infantry Battalion rescued the 23-year-old teacher, who had been working at the Kanlagay Elementary School of Kalinggalang Caluang town.
The victim, who was rescued in Barangay Tagbak in Indanan town, said she was taken by armed men while she was on her way to school on June 20. She identified the leader of her abductors as Salim Susulan.
The other suspects were identified as Lauril Susulan, Basar Saudan, Jipy Susulan and Salma Saudan.
Tan said the victim claimed she was forced to marry Salim on June 27.
Tan said the teacher was rescued when she screamed while the vehicle she was riding in stopped at a military checkpoint, prompting troops to invite its passengers to the camp of the 12th Light Armored Cavalry Troops.
The suspects are now in the custody of the police in Indanan town. **SFM/rga**

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