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oacpa.army2012@gmail.com

OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS
NEWS CLIPPINGS

19 June 2016

Sunday

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

NEWS HEADLINES

19 JUNE 2016

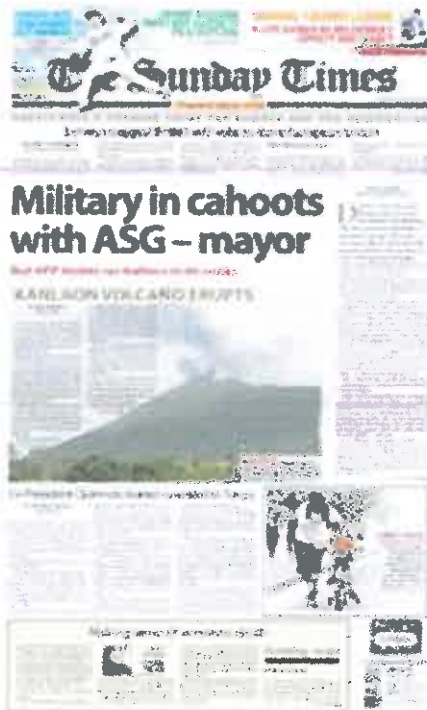


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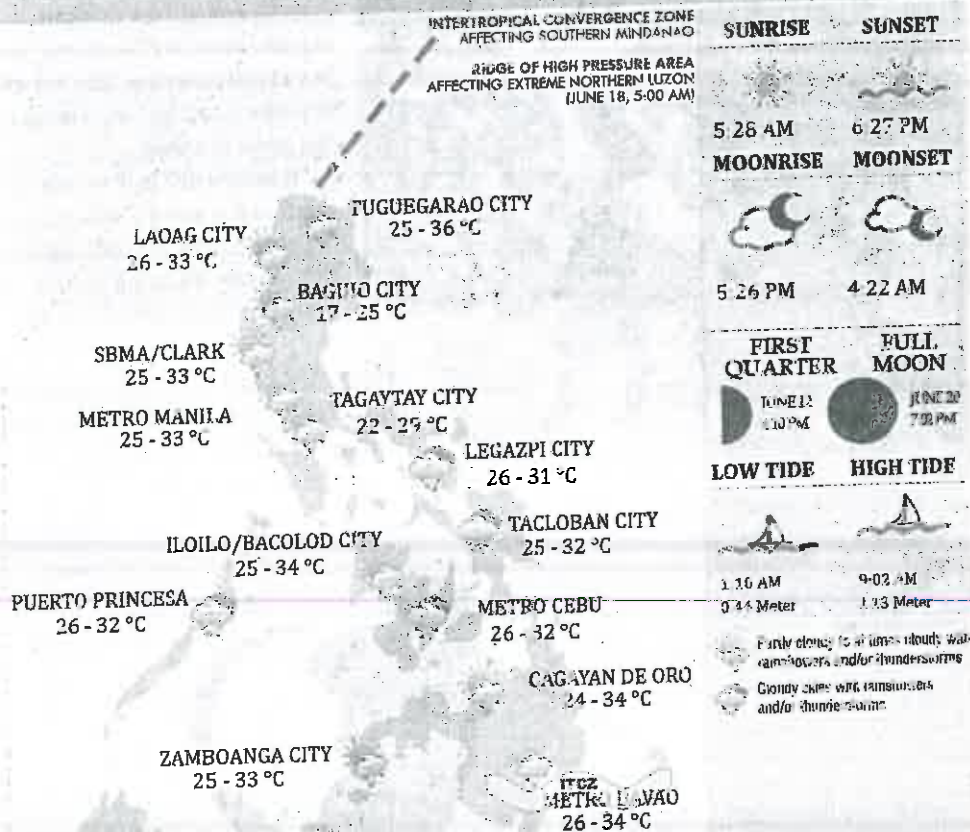
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TODAY'S WEATHER FORECAST JUNE 19, 2016 | SUNDAY



SUNRISE SUNSET

5:26 AM 6:27 PM

MOONRISE MOONSET

5:26 PM 4:22 AM

FIRST QUARTER FULL MOON

JUNE 19 10:00 PM JUNE 20 7:02 PM

LOW TIDE HIGH TIDE

1:10 AM 9:02 AM
0.44 Meter 1.13 Meter

Early cloudy to all times cloudy with rain showers and/or thunderstorms
Cloudy with rain showers and/or thunderstorms

JUNE 19 SUNDAY	JUNE 20 MONDAY	JUNE 21 TUESDAY	JUNE 22 WEDNESDAY	JUNE 23 THURSDAY	JUNE 24 FRIDAY	JUNE 25 SATURDAY
METRO MANILA 26 - 33 °C	METRO MANILA 26 - 33 °C	METRO MANILA 26 - 35 °C	BAGUIO 17 - 24 °C	BAGUIO 16 - 24 °C	BAGUIO 17 - 26 °C	
METRO CEBU 25 - 31 °C	METRO CEBU 26 - 34 °C	METRO CEBU 26 - 33 °C	PUERTO PRINCESA 25 - 31 °C	PUERTO PRINCESA 25 - 33 °C	PUERTO PRINCESA 26 - 34 °C	
METRO DAVAO 26 - 33 °C	METRO DAVAO 25 - 34 °C	METRO DAVAO 26 - 35 °C	BORACAY 24 - 32 °C	BORACAY 24 - 31 °C	BORACAY 25 - 32 °C	

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SABOT NG PANAHON

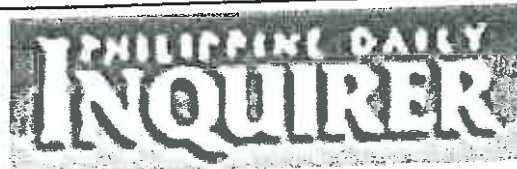
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MVP: Leave business alone

Tycoon says gov't must not meddle too much

By Judy Quiros
Inquirer Mindanao

DAVAO CITY—Get out of the way.

That's how the government can help Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT) succeed in its multibillion-peso digital shift, the company's chair, Manuel V. Pangilinan, said.

Speaking to provincial journalists whom PLDT invited to Makati City for its annual stockholders meeting on Tuesday, Pangilinan said the company's digital shift was likely to succeed if the government would not meddle too much.

Some people, including people from the government, do not understand the implementation of major infrastructure needed to transform PLDT and Smart's services into digital, and they could block the huge

MVP: LEAVE/A2

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project, expected to be operational by 2018, because of lack of understanding of it, Pangilinan said.

He said people from the government could help by not dipping their hands too much into the project.

"The government's share is to get out of the way," he said.

Joint venture with Globe

PLDT is linking up with Globe Telecom to buy Vega Telecom Inc., the telco business of San Miguel Corp. (SMC), for P69.1 billion.

The joint venture will improve the internet services of PLDT and Globe, the two companies said in separate statements announcing the partnership last month.

On Friday, however, the new antitrust body Philippine Competition Commission (PCC) said the PLDT-Globe deal would not be approved until after a comprehensive review.

"A comprehensive review includes a determination of the relevant market, whether there will be substantial changes to the market structure, and the potential impact of the transaction on public welfare," the PCC said in a statement.

'Transitory' guidelines

The regulator's decision could spur PLDT and Globe into taking legal action, as the two telcos consider the transaction approved under the PCC's own "transitory" guidelines.

Under those guidelines, deals closed after the new competition law took effect but before its implementation rules take effect are deemed approved.

The PLDT-Globe deal with SMC was sealed on May 30, four days before the publication of the competition law's implementation rules.

PLDT and Globe said they filed the required transaction notices under the PCC guide-

al average broadband download speed of 23.3 Mbps.

In Asia, the Philippines has the second-slowest internet speed. Among 22 Asian countries studied by Ookla, the Philippines has a download speed just a tad faster than bottom-dweller Afghanistan.

Despite its slowness, internet service in the Philippines is expensive, \$18.19 per Mbps compared with the global average of \$5.21.

No public funds involved

To improve its services, PLDT is pouring billions of pesos for the shift to digital, and Pangilinan, in his speech to provincial journalists on Tuesday, stressed that no government funds were involved in the company's investment.

"Whose money is being spent? It's the private sector's. There is no guarantee from the government, no government fund is involved, so get out of the way, period," Pangilinan said.

lines so the regulator could no longer challenge the deal.

But the PCC said the transitory guidelines did not dilute its authority to review transactions, especially if required by national interest and public policy.

"The review is intended to ensure that the transaction will, in the end, result in sustained gains for the public by not restricting competition," the PCC said.

New competition

The announcement of the PLDT-Globe deal came after President-elect Rodrigo Duterte warned the two companies in May that he would open the Philippines to foreign telcos if they failed to improve their internet services.

With an average household download speed of 3.64 Mbps, the Philippines ranks 176th among 202 countries surveyed last year by internet metrics provider Ookla.

The local download speed is eight times slower than the glob-

"If ever the huge undertaking comes out lousy, it's the company that will suffer the impact, to the delight of its competitors, and not the government," he said.

If private projects fail, he added, "the government will not rescue us."

Given the stiff competition in the digital industry, Pangilinan said, "we are mindful of other guys watching us."

"We have to be on our toes. Somebody is watching us, like a wife, to police [our] ethical standards," he said.

Improving the digital industry's services will take time and lots of money, he said.

Higher capex

"The journey to the digital future will be long and the climb is steep," he said.

"There will be false starts, there will be speed bumps, and there will be mistakes," he said.

For PLDT to achieve its met-

rics, he said, the company has increased its capital expenditure (capex) to P43 billion this year and beyond. This is before the PLDT-Globe deal to acquire the SMC telco, which added some \$100 million to PLDT's capital expenditures, he said.

Pangilinan said the considerable increase in capital expenditure showed the seriousness of the massive effort being taken to transform the PLDT-Smart network into the Philippines' most extensive and data-capable infrastructure.

The undertaking, he said, has also forced PLDT to adjust its financial track for the next three years, like resetting its core income guidance to P30 billion following the partial sale of its shares in power distributor Manila Electric Co.

Pangilinan said he was optimistic that PLDT's P30-billion core income is "(the) new base from which the company will rise."

With a report from Miguel R. Camus

10 June 2016



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Drug arrests, killings up

By CECILLE SUERTE FELIPE

Nearly half of the recorded deaths in police anti-drug operations between Jan. 1 and June 15 this year happened after the May 9 elections when a presidential candidate known for his uncompromising style of fighting drug pushers and syndicates was emerging as the clear winner in the polls.

Chief Supt. Wilben Mayor, spokesman for the Philippine National Police (PNP), said that in their record of 68 individuals with suspected drug links killed by law enforcers during the period, 31 met their end after the election victory of Davao City Mayor Rodrigo Duterte – or an average of one a day.

The number of those killed has gone up to 70 as of yesterday.

More than 17,000 individuals have also been arrested during the period in an intensified PNP anti-illegal drugs campaign, Mayor said.

"The intensity of the operations against illegal drugs, which he (Duterte) is really, really against, has been pushed by the PNP. That's why our

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Drug arrests From Page 1

police are focused on illegal drugs, which is priority No.1 of the incoming president," Mayor added.

He clarified the slain suspected drug traders and pushers were killed in legitimate police operations.

"The reason why those suspects were killed is because there's a shootout between the police and the suspects. They followed operational procedures. There was imminent danger on their part," he added.

Of the 31 slain suspects, 12 were from Central Luzon, eight from Southern Tagalog and five from Central Visayas.

Just yesterday in Brgy. San Antonio, San Pedro City, Laguna, two suspected drug traffickers were killed in a shootout with policemen. The two were declared dead on arrival at the Amante District Hospital.

Mayor revealed Central Luzon (Police Regional Office 3) recorded the most number of suspects killed in encounters, at 25.

He said CALABARZON (Police Regional Office 4A) placed second with 14 drug suspects killed between Jan.1 and June 15.

"With the intensified anti-illegal drugs operations and 'whole-of-government' approach, the PNP has recorded a total of 17,680 neutralized persons from anti-illegal drugs operations nationwide," Mayor added.

Of the 17,680 individuals arrested, Mayor said the largest number or 4,874 was reported in the CALABARZON.

"Next is NCRPO with 3,760 and followed by Central Luzon with 3,004 arrested individuals," he added.

In line with the government policy of zero tolerance for drugs, Mayor said the PNP conducted random drug testing on its men from May 10 to June 8 at the national headquarters and at police regional offices.

Mayor said government employees face dismissal from government service if found to be users of illegal drugs.

Earlier, Chief Supt. and incoming PNP head Ronald dela Rosa said more funds would be given to the Anti-Illegal Drugs Group (AIDG) to help boost its operations against illegal drugs.

Aside from pushing for more funds for the AIDG, Dela Rosa also vowed to initiate a revamp in the leadership of regional,

provincial and district anti-illegal drug units as some officers were allegedly in cahoots with drug syndicates.

"We need to replace some police personnel. I can't remember all of them, I will just let their respective bosses handle them," she pointed out.

Dela Rosa said governors or mayors arrested for illegal drugs could be treated as ordinary criminals and not be given special treatment.

Also in line with the incoming administration's intensified anti-illegal drugs campaign, the Department of Health (DOH) announced it intends to put up one rehabilitation center in each of the 18 regions.

Incoming DOH secretary Auelyn Jean Ubial said there are only 12 rehabilitation centers being run by the agency across the country. Ten others similar facilities are being managed by local government units.

"We really have a big problem now on drugs so we want this addressed immediately. We intend to put up more rehabilitation centers," she told the STAR.

The DOH is also looking at "networking" with every province so there would be facilities at the provincial level.

Ubial said that in getting

people off drug addiction, it is important to have a rehabilitation center near their places of residence to encourage them to undergo treatment procedures.

"We will be studying the financing of this, how it can be sustainable. I cannot say for now if treatment will be for free because drug addiction is different from tuberculosis, for instance. It is not the fault of TB patients if they got TB," she noted.

Ubial added it is better for drug addicts and their families to have some form of "ownership" of their treatment.

Not easy

Meanwhile, Ifugao Rep. Teodoro Baguilat Jr said the Duterte administration will not be able to re-impose the death penalty in three months as it has promised, despite mounting calls for its revival amid the rising drug menace among other heinous crimes.

"I doubt if they can do it within that short timeframe," he told reporters, adding he believes the bill restoring the death penalty would face rough sailing both in the House of Representatives and the Senate.

He said many House members and senators are opposed to the measure, in addition to the Catholic Church and allied

groups.

Baguilat noted even some Duterte allies are against the proposed return of capital punishment.

For one, he said the Makabayan bloc of militant party-list representatives would not support it.

Kabataan Rep. Terry Ridon, who belongs to Makabayan, said their group would oppose the re-imposition of the death penalty.

"I predict a showdown on this issue inside and outside Congress, what with the Catholic Church against the death penalty," he said.

He said other party-list representatives, including Lito Atienza of Buhay, are also opposed to capital punishment.

According to representative-elect Danilo Suarez of Quezon, who met with Duterte and Alvarez last June 7, the re-imposition of the death penalty would be a priority legislative measure of the incoming president.

"He feels that if at least 50 drug lords and other convicts are hanged every month, their execution will deter crime," he said.

He said Duterte intends to certify a capital punishment re-imposition bill as urgent.

Suarez recalled that in the

course of the June 7 meeting, reelected Camarines Sur Rep. Rolando Andaya Jr. suggested that funds could be set aside for the rehabilitation of the death chamber at the New Bilibid Prisons in Muntinlupa, where execution through lethal injection could be carried out.

"But the president-elect declared there was no need for it as he preferred hanging as mode of execution," he said.

He said if Congress enacts a bill lowering the age of criminal responsibility to 15, youth convicted of heinous crimes such as drug trafficking would be covered by the planned re-imposition of the death penalty.

Suarez admitted that drug lords would have to go through the legal process before being convicted and put to death through hanging.

However, he said if suspected drug lords choose to fight law enforcers, they would suffer death just the same.

"In our province, if there is a drug lord in a community and is arrested, he is freed and is back to his illegal activities in a few days because he has bribed the judge and the prosecutor. This does not happen in Davao City," he said. Duterte was Davao City mayor for decades.

- With Jess Diaz

19 June 2016



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Army denies violation in troop deployment

By GERRY LEE GORIT

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY – Army troops deployed in a village in Misamis Oriental will remain in the area until it is declared insurgency-free, a military official said over the weekend.

The deployment came after residents fled from their homes for fear of getting caught in the crossfire between the New People's Army (NPA) guerrillas and government troopers.

"We will not leave until we rid the area of the rebels," Capt. Joe Patrick Martinez, spokesperson for the Army's 4th Infantry Division, said.

Residents of sitios Camansi and Tapol in Barangay Banglay, Lagonglong town fled after soldiers from the Army's 58th Infantry Battalion (IB) arrived in their communities a few days ago.

Nenita Helogon, secretary general of tribal group Tagtabolon, accused the military of violating the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International

Law (CARHRIL), when the troops set up a camp in the village.

Martinez said the presence of military troopers in the area did not violate the CARHRIL, noting they were following their mandate.

Martinez said the military was responding to reports that the NPA was extorting the villagers, prompting it to deploy the troops from the 58th IB.

"Like in the PNP, the military will not enter an area if no crime was happening. We are given the mandate to suppress insurgency," he said referring to the Philippine National Police.

"Once the NPA is suppressed, only then the PNP can go in and enforce the law," he added as he expressed belief that the military did not violate any law and was just performing its duties.

He said any action they conducted was a result of a careful planning and according to the law.

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Pahina. 7

Encounter: 2 NPA rebs todas

Napatay ang dalawang rebeldeng New People's Army (NPA) sa naganap na panibagong bakbakan laban sa militar sa liblib na bahagi sa Lake Sebu, South Cotabato noong Biyernes. Sa ulat ni Col. Benjamin Leander, commander ng Army's 27th Infantry Battalion, bandang alas-7 50 ng umaga nang makasagupa ng mga sundalo ang grupo ng NPA sa Barangay Ned sa nasabing bayan. Tumagal ng 20-minuto ang bakbakan bago napaslang ang dalawa na inaalam pa ang pagkakakilanlan habang nagsitakas naman ang mga kasamahang rebelde. Wala namang iniulat na nasugatan at napatay sa panig ng mga sundalo. Nasamsam sa encounter site ang isang AK 47 rifle, M14 automatic rifle, mga personal na kagamitan at mga subersibong dokumento. **Joy Cantos**

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Military to obey any order to save hostages

By ROEL PAREÑO

ZAMBOANGA CITY – The military is ready to implement any changes in the offensive against the Abu Sayyaf to rescue the remaining hostages held by the bandit group.

Maj. Filemon Tan Jr., spokesman of Western Mindanao Command (Westmincom), said the troops would abide by whatever policy will be adopted in the effort to save the victims.

Tan, however, said they have not been advised of any changes in the military operation in Sulu.

"If there are talks of some changes, as long as we are conducting operations and we are not told to stop, the military is there to conduct focused military operations. (If) there are talks, then it is beyond our control already," Tan added.

"The decision of the national leadership is strategic. If we're told to do something then we will implement," he added.

The Abu Sayyaf on Wednesday threatened to behead another hostage, citing in particular Norwegian Kjartan

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Sekkingstad.

The bandits warned Sekkingstad might face the same fate as fellow captives Canadians John Ridsdel and Robert Hall.

Ridsdel was beheaded in April while Hall was executed last Monday after their government junked the ransom demand of P600 million.

The two Canadians, along with Sekkingstad and Hall's Filipina girlfriend Marites Flor, were snatched from Samal Island resort last September and taken to Jolo island.

President Aquino himself flew to Jolo on Wednesday to check on the military operations to rescue the remaining hostages.

Aquino ordered "refinements" in the military operation against the Abu Sayyaf.

The President though refused to elaborate, citing operational security.

Aquino earlier admitted he was planning to implement extreme measures such as placing Sulu and Basilan under martial law to contain the Abu Sayyaf.

In the last ditch-effort to prevent another beheading, the incoming Cabinet security cluster members of president-elect Rodrigo Duterte had a meeting to help the government solve the worsening hostage crisis.

Duterte himself has a lot of Muslim friends and supporters in Mindanao whom he could count on to help address the problem with the Abu Sayyaf. Duterte met with leaders of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in Davao City on Friday and mentioned the security threat of the Abu Sayyaf.

MILF vice chairman for political affairs Ghadzali Jaafar confirmed Duterte mentioned the problem posed by the Abu Sayyaf during their meeting.

"He (Duterte) mentioned that and it's really a big problem but no details were discussed," Jaafar said.

Asked if the MILF is ready to help in efforts to free kidnap victims Norwegian Kjartan Sekkingstad and Filipina Marites Flor, Jaafar said there are existing mechanisms in the peace process to address threat groups.

"We have an existing agreement with the government. We have the Ad Hoc Joint Action Group (AHJAG)," Jaafar said.

"In the past, we cooperated (with the government) and this resulted in the release of many victims," he added.

AHJAG is a mechanism in the peace negotiations that was formed to isolate and interdict lawless groups and terrorists.

Pressed if the AHJAG would be tapped to secure the release of the remaining hostages, Jaafar said the matter has to be discussed first by negotiators from both sides.

From Page 1

"The MILF is ready to perform its obligations," he said.

Jaafar did not give a categorical statement on whether the MILF would help ensure the safety of the kidnap victims. He, however, said his group backs the incoming administration's campaign against crime and drugs.

Martial law option

Mindanao congressmen urged Duterte to place the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) under martial law so he could effectively run after the Abu Sayyaf.

"He should put the ARMM region, particularly Sulu and Basilan, under martial law so government forces can find, fight and finish off the Abu Sayyaf and other bandit and terrorist groups," Cagayan de Oro City Rep. Rufus Rodriguez said.

He said the incoming administration should try martial rule, since other means of neutralizing the bandits and kidnap-for-ransom groups have failed.

Davao City Rep. Karlo Nograles said it is legally possible for Duterte to place some parts of Mindanao under martial law.

"That is the president's prerogative. I think that was done in 2009 by then president (Gloria Macapagal) Arroyo after the Maguindanao massacre," he said.

But representative-elect Makmod Mending of party-list group Anak Mindanao opposed the imposition of martial law in any part of Mindanao, saying the incoming administration should first use all the available government resources to address the Abu Sayyaf problem.

Mending said he could not accept the proposition that the government, the police and the military, with all their might, cannot neutralize the bandit group that has been operating in Sulu, Basilan and some parts of Mindanao for years.

For his part, ARMM Gov. Mujiv Hataman said the government should just launch an all-out offensive against the Abu Sayyaf.

He warned that imposing martial law could create more problems like human rights violations.

"There are better options that will not trigger human rights abuses. Martial law is not necessary at this time. All we need is well coordinated, intensified and participative operation against the Abu Sayyaf," he said.

He said the civilian government in ARMM could help the police and the military in finding and neutralizing the group of bandits.

Hataman said ARMM could issue an order authorizing its agencies to gather civilians in evacuation centers and attend to their needs while the police and military are flushing out and finishing off the Abu Sayyaf in their communities.

Collusion

Authorities are trying to find a way of containing the Abu Sayyaf despite the heavy presence of government troops in Sulu and Basilan where the bandit group operates.

Aquino noted the Abu Sayyaf is being helped by some locals in Jolo who are benefiting from the kidnapping activities of the bandit group.

Tan also said some residents and relatives living in the island are helping the bandits.

There were reports that some from the military are in collusion with the bandits for ransom money.

Jolo mayor Hussin Amin said the government should investigate some military officers who had supposedly been coddling the Abu Sayyaf and using them

as assets.

Tan denied the reported collusion of some soldiers with the Abu Sayyaf for a cut in the ransom.

Tan challenged Amin to present evidence to initiate an investigation and filing of charges.

Presidential Communications Operations Office Secretary Hierminio Coloma Jr. said the accusations made by Amin were serious and could not be taken hook, line

and sinker because there was no evidence presented.

"Our ready answer is investigation. It is not fair to (make the allegations without proof) because the government has been doing what needs to be done and we are exerting maximum efforts to resolve the (Abu Sayyaf) problem," he said.

- With Aurea Calica, Jess Diaz, Alexis Romero

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Palace, AFP reject 'military connivance with Sayyaf'

By MADEL SABATER-NAMIT

Malacañang yesterday stood by the integrity, honesty and dedication of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) amid the allegations of Jolo, Sulu mayor Hussin Amin that some military officers are allegedly conniving with the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) for ransom money.

Amin had called on the national government to conduct a loyalty check among the military officers and to investigate the possible connivance between some military officers and the ASG.

Presidential Communications Secretary Herminio Coloma Jr. however said it is a serious allegation and is unfair to the Armed Forces who have been working so hard in their pursuit operations against the ASG.

"Medyo mabigat yata 'yung paratang na nakapaloob diyan. Paano naman kung basta-basta na lang natin tatanggapin 'yan. Ang sagot agad natin imbestigasyon. Hindi naman yata makatwiran (That is a very serious allegation. Can we just accept those allegations and answer with a call for an investigation? That does not seem justified)," Coloma said.

The AFP strongly denied reports that some of its officers in Sulu are in cahoots

with the Abu Sayyaf and warned to hold Amin, who made the accusation, accountable if he cannot prove his claims.

Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla, AFP spokesman, also said that such accusation could undermine government efforts against the militant group, which continue to hold two foreign and five local hostages in Sulu.

"Our armed forces and police have been at the forefront of the fight against

all kidnap-for-ransom groups and the ASG for a long time. We have lost so many servicemen in the process. We do not doubt the dedication and commitment of our troops," said Padilla, AFP in a text message to Manila Bulletin.

He stressed that AFP commanders on the ground are in full control of their troops and are focused on the primary mission of getting these criminals and saving the hostages.

W

June 2016

The Manila Times

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Military in cahoots with ASG – mayor

But AFP insists no traitors in its ranks

BY AL JACINTO
SENIOR CORRESPONDENT

DAVAO CITY: Jolo Mayor Hussin Amin accused the military of colluding with the notorious ISIS-linked Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) and said some officers partook of the ransoms paid for the freedom of some of the group's hostages.

Amin claimed that military officials had been using some Abu Sayyaf members as their "assets," a slang to refer to spy or informant.

He asked the government to investigate these officers who are in cahoots with the terrorists and for the Armed Forces of the Philippines to conduct a loyalty check among its ranks.

"Mga scalawags, eh dapat nga huwag na lang patago kung meron imbestigahan, oo na andoon na ang ransom, pero imbestigahan kung sino ba mga ito? Sino ba ang kumikita sa ransom? Hindi naman Abu Sayyaf. Iyan ang mga grupo na sabi iisa lang, ngayon dumadami na dahil may mga andiyan, ay ginagawang asset doon, sinasabing hindi nila asset, alam naman ng military yan (These are scalawags. They should be exposed, investigated. Yes, ransom was paid, but who are making money? It's not the Abu Sayyaf. These are groups, and they are mushrooming because they are the military's assets)," he said in a television interview.

Amin, a former judge, said the Abu Sayyaf may be getting support or information from scalawags within the military.

"These are the people who are in connivance with the scalawags in the military kaya malakas ang loob. Sabihin na ba ang totoo kung mayroon man ransom, dapat alamin kung sino ba ang gumagawa ng ransom. Sino ba ang kumikita sa ransom, dapat dito ikulong (The people asking and receiving ransom, those who made money should be jailed)," Amin said.

Amin, a former congressman, said that a colonel in the military benefited from the ransom paid for the release of Alberio Canda who was kidnapped in Sulu in 2004 and freed a month later. He said a congressional inquiry into the kidnapping showed the alleged involvement of the military officer.

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Army Core Purpose: Serving

Cahoots A2

"It is on the record in Congress, na in-connivance sa chief of Intelligence sa Sulu (the chief of intelligence (division) connived). Nag-conduct kami ng investigation nang kinidnap si Dr. Canda. Kumita ang isang colonel, yung may kahati siya. Nasa Congress yan kaso hindi man lang nila binibigyan ng atensyon. Dapat huwag na lang itago ba (We conducted an investigation when Dr. Canda was kidnapped. A colonel made money, he was a partner. That case is in Congress but lawmakers never gave it much attention. They should not hide that case)," he said.

No traitors

The Armed Forces of the Philip-

pires (AFP) immediately denied the allegations, maintaining that there are no traitors in the military. AFP spokesman Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla said there is no reason to doubt soldiers.

"Our Armed Forces and police have been at the forefront of the fight against all KFRGs (kidnapping-for-ransom groups) and the ASG for a long time. We have lost so many servicemen in the process. We do not doubt the dedication and commitment of our troops," Padilla said.

He said commanders on the ground are in full control of all troops and are focused on their primary mission of getting the Abu Sayyaf rebels and saving their hostages.

"There is also an established sys-

tem to ensure no spies and traitors are in our ranks. There also exists strong measures to deal with those found to have violated their oath," he stressed.

Major Felimon Tan, spokesman of the Western Mindanao Command, dared Amin to prove his allegations.

"He has to prove that. *Kung meron, bakit hindi niya sabihin sa amin? Yan ang mga hindi dapat nangyayari, yung mga ganyan*, within the organization, it makes the organization suffer. *Sundalo ka tapos ganoon ang gagawin mo, napakasakit naman noon* (If there's such a case, why doesn't he inform us? These things should not happen, it makes the organization suffer. You're a soldier and you do this, that is painful)," he said.

The allegations came in the wake of the beheading of Canadian Robert Hall on June 13. Hall was one of the four persons kidnapped in Samal Island in September last year. His fellow Canadian, John Ridsel, was beheaded by the ASG on April 26 after the Philippine and Canadian government snubbed the bandits' demand for P300 million ransom.

Padilla said such accusations can undermine the operations to catch the rebels.

"And we will hold the one who released the statement accountable if he can't substantiate his allegations. Local government officials are at the lead of addressing peace and order in their communities with the police and the AFP as partners," he added.

Padilla said this cooperation is the cornerstone in coming up with a permanent solution to the problem of lawlessness.

"Local officials should also come up with socioeconomic plans that can help the locals veer away from supporting these crime groups masquerading as Robin Hoods when they share the money received from kidnapping. After all, peace and order is their primary responsibility in their respective provinces," he pointed out.

Probe

But despite the military's denial, Malacañang on Saturday called for an investigation on the alleged connivance between certain ranking military officers with the ASG.

In a radio interview, Presidential Communications Secretary Herminio Coloma Jr. said Amin's claim should be investigated be-

cause it may undermine the campaign of the government against the bandit group.

"*Medyo mabigat yata 'yung paratang na nakapaloob diyan* [This claim is a serious matter]," Coloma said in a radio interview.

"*Paano naman kung basta-basta na lang natin tatanggapin 'yan. Ang sagot agad natin imbestigasyon. Hindi naman yata makatwiran 'no dahil nakikita naman natin na isinasagawa ng pamahaalaan ang nararapat at nag-uukol tayo ng puspusang pagsisikap sa pagtugon sa problema* [We cannot just accept the allegations. Our immediate answer is to seek a probe. We do not think it is fair since we have seen the government take the necessary steps and undertake serious efforts to address the problem]," he added.

WITH CATHERINE S. VALENTE AND PNA

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Troops not conspiring with Abu Sayyaf – AFP

The Armed Forces of the Philippines yesterday defended its ranks amid allegations that some uniformed military officers are in cahoots with the Abu Sayyaf group.

"Our Armed Forces and police have been at the forefront of the fight against all KFRGs (kidnapping-for-

ransom groups) and the ASG for a long time. We have lost so many servicemen in the process. We do not doubt the dedication and commitment of our troops," AFP spokesman Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla said.

Also, commanders on the ground are in full control of all troops and

are focused on their primary mission of getting these criminals and saving the hostages, he added.

"There is also an established system to ensure no spies and traitors are in our ranks. There also exists strong measures to deal with those found to have violated their oath,"

Padilla stressed.

Mayor Hussin Amin of Jolo, Sulu has earlier alleged that some scalawags in the military are conniving with the bandit group to collect ransom payment.

According to him, a certain military

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colonel in Sulu benefitted from the ransom paid by former kidnap victim Dr. Alberio Canda who was released by the Abu Sayyaf on Dec. 30, 2004.

Padilla, however, stressed the accusations can undermine government efforts against these criminals.

"And we will hold the one who released the statement accountable if they can't substantiate their allegations. Local government officials are at the lead of addressing peace and order in their communities with the police and the AFP as partners," he added.

The military official said this cooperation is the cornerstone in coming up with a permanent solution to this perennial problem of lawlessness.

"Local officials should also come up with socioeconomic plans that can help the locals veer away from supporting these crime groups

masquerading as Robin Hoods when they share the money received from kidnapping. After all, peace and order is their primary responsibility in their respective provinces," he pointed out.

Malacañang, for its part, said the context of the allegation must be understood because of its repercussions on the members of the military and the ongoing military offensive in Sulu.

Presidential Communications Secretary Herminio Coloma Jr. said it is unfair for a local official to accuse the military of conniving with the enemy without concrete basis.

"Such allegation is not helpful for the members of the military, who are putting their lives on the line, just to maintain peace and ensure that everyone is safe against terrorist organization like the Abu Sayyaf," he said.

But militant group Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) called on the incoming Duterte administration to look into how

state security forces and certain politicians make use of the notorious kidnap-for-ransom bandits for their benefit.

"The next administration should probe if there was collusion at all between state forces and the ASG, especially when it comes to ransom payments," Bayan secretary general Renato Reyes told The Tribune.

"Is the ASG enjoying some kind of protection from state forces and government officials?" he asked.

While admitting that dealing with the ASG is really "complicated," looking into such conspiracy "could be one starting point."

Reyes pointed out the compelling impossibility of eliminating the terrorists despite the military presence along with the cooperation of US troops for more than a decade already.

"The question that should be asked is why, since 2002, despite countless military operations and the involvement of US troops, the

ASG remains operational and able to wreck havoc and kidnap people in Mindanao," he added.

Former Interior Secretary Rafael Alunan, for his part, explained the Abu Sayyaf's way of dealing with its captives.

"Tooth for a tooth. This is what the Abus practice. So, perhaps we should reciprocate. The Abus capture and kill their hostages, helpless and weak, unable to fight for survival," he said in a statement.

According to him, the best way to handle the ASG menace is by military means.

"The best is to meet them in the battlefield and kill them on the spot. But let's send smart, efficient and resourceful troops who will outwit and outfight the enemy even when they're outnumbered," Alunan said.

"Let's get as many of our troops battle-tested and battle-ready for bigger challenges that lie ahead in the not too distant future," he stressed.

Ted Tuvera/PNA

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AFP DENIES COLLUDING WITH ASG KIDNAPPERS

By Sara Susanne D. Fabunan

THE Armed Forces of the Philippines denied on Saturday allegations that some of its officers are colluding with the Abu Sayyaf Group as claimed by Jolo, Sulu Mayor Hussin Amin.

The AFP issued a statement on Amin's allegation as Malacañang said it was unfair to accuse the military of collusion without any proof.

Communications Secretary Herminio Coloma Jr. said in a radio interview that Amin's claims are serious and the mayor should present proof of his allegations.

"Our armed forces and police have been at the forefront of the fight against all [kidnapping-for-ransom groups] and the ASG for a long time. We have

lost so many servicemen in the process. We do not doubt the dedication and commitment of our troops," AFP spokesperson Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla said.

He said commanders on the ground are in full control of all troops and are focused on their primary mission of getting these criminals and saving the hostages.

"There is also an established system to ensure no spies and traitors are in our ranks. There also exists strong measures to

deal with those found to have violated their oath," Padilla stressed.

Amin earlier claimed some military officials in Sulu are colluding with the Abu Sayyaf in exchange for a share of the ransom paid by some victims.

The allegations came in the wake of the beheading of Canadian Robert Hall last June 13. Hall was one of the four persons kidnapped in Samar Island last Sept. 21.

A companion, John Ridsdel, was beheaded last April 26 after the Philippine and Canadian government snubbed the bandits' P300 million ransom demand.

The AFP spokesperson said these accusations can undermine government efforts against these criminals.

"We will hold the one who

released the statement accountable if they can't substantiate their allegations. Local government officials are at the lead of addressing peace and order in their communities with the police and the AFP as partners," he added.

Padilla said this cooperation is the cornerstone in coming up with a permanent solution to this perennial problem of lawlessness.

"Local officials should also come up with socioeconomic plans that can help the locals veer away from supporting these crime groups masquerading as Robin Hoods when they share the money received from kidnapping. After all, peace and order is their primary responsibility in their respective provinces," he pointed out.

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AFP: No officers in cahoots with ASG

By ELENA ABEN

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) strongly denied reports that some military officers in Sulu are in cahoots with the Abu Sayyaf and warned to hold a local official who made the accusation accountable if he can not prove his claims.

Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla, AFP spokesman, also said that such accusation could undermine government efforts against the militant group, which continue to hold two foreign and five local hostages in Sulu.

"Our armed forces and police have been at the forefront of the fight against all kidnap for ransom groups and the ASG for a long time. We have lost so many servicemen in the process. We do not doubt the dedication and commitment of our troops," said Padilla, AFP in a text message to

Manila Bulletin.

He stressed that AFP commanders on the ground are in full control of their troops and are focused on the primary mission of getting these criminals and saving the hostages.

The AFP issued the statement after reports quoted Jolo, Sulu mayor Hussin Amin as saying that some military officers are supporting the ASG and are getting a share of the ransom paid to the bandit group.

"The accusation can undermine government efforts against these criminals and we will hold the one who released the statement accountable if they can't substantiate their allegations," said Padilla.

According to the AFP spokesman, the military has an established system to ensure that there are no spies and traitors are in their ranks.

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Pahina. 2

Malacañang ipinagtanggol ang AFP sa isyu ng ransom

Ipinagtanggol ka-hapon ng Malacanang ang militar sa akusasyon ng mayor ng Jolo, Sulu na ilang opisyal ng AFP ang nakikipagsabwatan sa Abu Sayyaf at nakikinabang sa nakolektang ransom.

Ayon kay Communications Secretary Herminio Coloma Jr., mabigat ang nasabing akusasyon at hindi dapat basta na lamang tanggapin at patulan dahil makakaapekto ito sa kampanya laban sa mga

terorista.

Nauna nang inakusahan ni Jolo, Sulu Mayor Hussin Amin ang ilang opisyal na militar na kasabwat umano ng teroristang Abu Sayyaf at bumabahagi sa ibinabayad na ransom ng kanilang mga kini-kidnap.

Naniniwala si Coloma na dapat magpakita ng ebidensiya para mapatunayan ang alegasyon.

"Kailangan siguro, unawain muna natin

'yung konteksto kasi hindi naman magaan mapakinggan lang 'yung mga ganyang salita ano. Medyo mabigat yata 'yung paratang na nakapaloob diyan," sabi ni Coloma.

Kinatigan rin ni Coloma ang ipinalabas na pahayag ng AFP at sinabi rin nitong hindi pinagdududahan ng Malacanang ang dedikasyon at commitment ng militar sa paglaban sa Abu Sayyaf. (Malou Escudero)

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Help fight Abu Sayyaf, Muslims urged

By Alfred Dalizon

THE Philippine National Police Anti-Kidnaping Group (PNP-AKG) yesterday called on the Muslim faithful to unite and join the government in crushing the notorious Abu Sayyaf Group whose terror acts have been condemned by the whole world.

"Let all Muslims particularly in Sulu unite para ita boy natin ang ASG na nang gugulo at hindi sumasunod sa sinasaad ng Koran. Hindi na makatao ang ginagawang pagpugot ng ASG. This beheading is un-Islamic and inhuman. I appeal to our Muslim brothers to help us put a stop to this senseless beheadings of innocent victims," said PNP-AKG director Senior Superintendent Roberto B. Fajardo.

The official described

the Abu Sayyaf as 'anti-Islamic' whose actions are against the real teaching of Islam when he called on the support of the public regardless of their creed and religion in joining the government's all-out effort to neutralize the terrorists through a "whole of government approach."

"Members of this terror group are un-Islamic, barbaric and inhumane," he said in the wake of the beheading of Canadians John Ridsdel and Robert Hall. "The ASG simply shows that they do not respect and value the human dignity of every individual regardless of race, religion and nationalities," Fajardo said.

"While the entire Islamic World celebrates the long month period of the Holy Ramadan time when Muslims around the world focus on fasting,

praying, giving charity and religious devotion, refraining from violence, anger, greed, envy and lust, the Abu Sayyaf Group kills and behead another hostage in their desire to gain huge amount of money and create terror in the country," Fajardo said.

The PNP-AKG director said the atrocities being committed by the ASG runs contrary to what true Muslim believers do which is to spread peace and love one another.

"Are the Abu Sayyaf real Muslims and practicing real Islam? Muslim is an Arabic word used for a person who does Islam, Muslim are obligated to fast during the entire month of Ramadan to seek a raised level of closeness to God. If you submit to the will of God, then you are called a Muslim. Islam means, "surrender,

submission and complete obedience" to the creator, the God Almighty," Fajardo said as he and his men joined the PNP leadership in expressing sympathy to the family of Hall.

PNP spokesman Chief Supt. Wilben M. Mayor earlier called on netizens not to share the video of the beheading of Hall by the Abu Sayyaf Group last Monday and even asked experts to take them down immediately.

"We're appealing to the public not to patronize this terrorist act. If you have the capability, please delete it, please don't share with others this very unfortunate incident," he said in calling on persons with technical capabilities to help them take the video down and report any information that will help law enforcement agencies trace and arrest the bandits.

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AFP-Abu link claim calls for probe — Palace

THE Palace yesterday said the claim of Jolo Mayor Hussin Amir that the military is conniving with the Abu Sayyaf to collect ransom money is a serious allegation and needs to be investigated since it may undermine the campaign of the government against the bandits.

Jolo's mayor called on the government to investigate alleged involvement of military men in kidnapping for ransom in Sulu.

In his radio interview yesterday, Presidential Communications Office Secretary Herminio Coloma Jr said the context of the allegation must be understood because of its

repercussions on the members of the military and the ongoing military offensive in Sulu.

"Kailangan siguro, Marie 'no, unawain muna natin 'yung konteksto kasi hindi naman magaan mapakinggan lang 'yung mga ganyang salita ano. Medyo mabigat yata 'yung paratang na nakapaloob diyan," Coloma told dzRB Radyo ng Bayan.

"Paano naman kung basta-basta na lang natin tatanggapin 'yan. Ang sagot agad natin imbestigasyon. Hindi naman yata makatwiran 'no dahil nakikita naman natin na isinasagawa ng pamahalaan ang narapat at nag-uukol tayo ng puspusang pagsisikap sa pagtugon

sa problema."

Coloma also cited a recent statement of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, which said it does not doubt the dedication and commitment of its members who are fighting the Abu Sayyaf.

"We do not doubt the dedication and commitment of our troops. In addition, commanders on the ground are in full control of our troops and are focused on their primary mission of getting these criminals and saving the hostages," Coloma quoted the AFP.

"There is also an established system to ensure no spies and traitors are in our ranks. There also exist strong measures to deal

with those who have found to have violated their oath."

According to the armed forces, the accusation can undermine government efforts against the criminals, adding those raising such allegations must substantiate their accusations.

"Local government officials are at the lead of addressing peace and order in their community with the police and the AFP as partners. This cooperation and partnership is the cornerstone in coming up with a permanent solution to this perennial problem of lawlessness in their communities," the AFP said as quoted by Coloma.

Local officials should

also come up with socio-economic plans that can help the citizens veer away from supporting the Abu Sayyaf when they share the money received from kidnapping, the AFP said.

"After all, peace and order is their primary responsibility in their respective provinces," it added.

Coloma said it's unfair for a local official to accuse the military of conniving with the enemy without concrete basis.

Such allegation is not helpful for the members of the military, who are putting their lives on the line, just to maintain peace and ensure that everyone is safe against terrorist organizations like the Abu Sayyaf, he said. **EMontano**

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There's need to probe Jolo mayor's AFP-ASG tieup claim

THE Palace said the allegation of Jolo Mayor Hussin Amin accusing the military of conniving with the Abu Sayyaf to collect ransom money is serious and needs to be investigated since it may undermine the campaign of the government against the bandits.

Earlier, Mayor Amin of Jolo called on the government to investigate alleged involvement of military men in kidnapping for ransom in Sulu.

In his radio interview yesterday, Presidential Communications Office Secretary Herminio Coloma Jr. said the context of the allegation must be understood because of its repercussions on the members of the military and the ongoing military offensive in Sulu.

"Bakalangan siyuro... unawain muna natin 'yung konteksto kasi hindi nauman

magaan mapakinggan lang 'yung mga ganyang salita ano. Medyo mabigat yata 'yung paratang na nakapaloob diyan," Coloma told dzRB Radyo ng Bayan.

"Paano naman kung basta-basta na lang natin tatanggapin 'yan. Ang sagot agad natin imbestigasyon. Hindi naman yata makatwiran 'no dahil nakikita naman natin na isinasagawa ng pamahalaan ang narorapat at nag-uukol tayo ng puspusang pag-sisikap sa pagtugon sa problema."

Coloma also cited a recent statement of the Armed Forces of the Philippines which said it does not doubt the dedication and commitment of its members who are fighting the Abu Sayyaf.

"We do not doubt the dedication and commitment of our troops. In addition, commanders on the ground

are in full control of our troops and are focused on their primary mission of getting these criminals and saving the hostages," Coloma said quoting the AFP.

"There is also an established system to ensure no spies and traitors are in our ranks. There also exist strong measures to deal with those who have been found to have violated their oath."

According to the Armed Forces, the accusation can undermine government efforts against the criminals, adding those raising such allegations must substantiate their accusations.

"Local government officials are at the lead of addressing peace and order in their community with the police and the AFP as partners. This cooperation and partnership is the cornerstone in coming up with a permanent solution to

this perennial problem of lawlessness in their communities," the AFP said as quoted by Coloma.

Local officials should also come up with socio-economic plans that can help the citizens veer away from supporting the Abu Sayyaf when they share the money received from kidnapping, the AFP said.

"After all, peace and order is their primary responsibility in their respective provinces," it added.

Coloma said it's unfair for a local official to accuse the military of conniving with the enemy without concrete basis.

Such allegation is not helpful for the members of the military, who are putting their lives on the line just to maintain peace and ensure that everyone is safe against terrorist organization like the Abu Sayyaf, he said. **Efren Montano**

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Pahina. 4

AFP: Mga kondisyon ng CPP-NPA-NDF sana 'di imposible

SINGURO ng Armed Forces of the Philippines na nakahanda sila na bigyang-daan ang muling usaping pangkayapaan sa pagitan ng gobyerno at Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army-National Democratic Front (CPP-NPA-NDF).

Inihayag ni AFP spokesperson Brig/Gen. Restituto Padilla na sana man lamang ay hindi imposible ang mga kondisyon na ilalatag ng CPP-NPA-NDF.

Paliwanag ni Padilla, kailanman ay hindi sila naging balakid upang makamitan ang pangmatatagalan na kapayapaan na matagal nang ipinagkailang para sa sambayanang Filipino.

Sinabi pa ni Padilla, na ibabatay sana ng komunistang grupo sa mga prinsipyo na mayroong basehan upang hindi mahirapan ang gobyerno na maipatupad ang nais nilang mangyayari.

Sa kasalukuyan, nasa negosasyon na ang incoming government peace negotiating panel. President-elect Rodrigo Duterte sa grupo ni CPP-NPA-NDF founder Jose Maria Sison sa bansang Norway.

MARY ANNE SAPICO

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Pahina. 2

Sabwatan ng sundalo, ASG sa ransom money walang basehan

SINABI ni Press Secretary Sonny Coloma, Jr., na hindi makatwiran na basta na lang paniwalaan ang alegasyon na may mga sundalo na nakiki-pagsabwatan sa Abu Sayyaf Group at nakikihati sa ransom na nakokolekta nito mula sa kidnap victims.

Kailangan aniya na una wain muna ang konteksto ng usaping ito dahil hindi magaan na mapakinggan lang ang mga salita at mabigat na paratang aniya ang nakapaloob dito.

"Paano naman kung basta-basta na lang natin tatanggapin 'yan. Ang sagot agad natin imbestigasyon. Hindi naman yata makatwiran 'no

no ang kanyang alok na tulong kay Duterte sa kahit na anomang paraan na kailangan nito.

Aniya, hindi naman tinanggihan ni Duterte ang inalok niyang tulong dito at sa kanyang administrasyon.

KRIS JOSE

dahil nakikita naman natin na isinasagawa ng pamahalaan ang nararapat at nag-uukol tayo ng puspusang pagsisikap sa pagtugon sa problema," ayon kay Sec. Coloma.

Bukod dito, pinagbasehan din ng tagapagsalita ni outgoing President Benigno Aquino III ang naging posisyon ng Armed Forces of the Philippines sa usaping ito.

Patuloy namang pinangungunahan ng mga opisyal ng lokal na pamahalaan ang pagtugon sa peace and order sa kanilang komunidad katuwang ang kapulisan at mga sundalo.

Ang pagsasanib-puwersa ng mga ito ang nakikitang permanenteng solusyon ng kasalukuyang administrasyon sa napakatagal nang problema ng mga tagapapatupad ng batas sa komunidad.

Kailangan din na gumawa ng socio-economic plans ang mga local government official na maaaring makatu-

long para patigilin ang ilang indibidwal na suportahan ang ilang crime groups at makihati sa pera na makukuhang mula sa kanilang kidnapping activity.

Kaya nga aniya, walang ketwirang basta-basta lang magbibitiw ng mga paratang na tila nagka-cast doubt o naglalagay ng ulap ng agam-agam at tila tinatawaran ang ginagawang pagkilos ng mga sundalo ng bansa.

"Siguro kung merong ganyan, ipagpaalam na lang sa mga awtoridad. Gawan ng kaukulang hakbang at 'wag namang gawin 'yan bilang pagtawad, parang binabawasan 'yung halaga ng puspusang pagsisikap ng mga magigiting na sundalo na inuukol 'yung kanilang husay sa pagtatanggol sa seguridad ng ating bansa.

"Talaga namang tinututukan din ng Sandatahang Lakas ng Pilipinas 'yan at hindi naman sila nagpapabaya sa aspetong 'yan,' pagtatapos na pahayag ni Coloma.

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MNLF, MILF back Duterte

'Brother-to-brother' meeting tackles federalism, kidnapping, illegal drugs

By YAS D. OCAMPO

DAVAO CITY - The Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) have assured incoming President Rodrigo R. Duterte of their support for his plan to shift to federal form of government as well

as his campaign against illegal drugs and kidnap-for-ransom activities

MNLF Chairman Abul Khayr Alonto disclosed this yesterday following a meeting with Duterte and MILF leaders - Chairman Murad Ebrahim and Vice Chairman Ghadzali Jaafar - Friday night at Hotel Elena here.

"The MILF and MNLF are ►4

united with the President-elect," said Alonto, who heads one of the factions of the MNLF, the other being under the leadership of founding chairman Nur Misuari. However, Alonto said his group still needs to reach out to Misuari, who has gone into hiding after charges were filed against him over the 2013 Zamboanga City siege.

The meeting with Duterte was a "brother-to-brother" discussion aimed at ending the decades of conflict, Alonto added.

He said the move for a constitutional convention to push for the shift to federalism was among the topics tackled during the meeting.

"It (federalism) is acceptable to all parties concerned and to all the stakeholders in Mindanao, particularly the Bangsamoro and the national cultural communities," Alonto said, stressing that a "centralized form of government is a dismal failure" as it is "why there is war in Mindanao."

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people," Alonto told reporters.

"A federal system could very well put in place a government of transparency and accountability, and effectively address the peace and order problems, including drug trafficking and kidnap-for-ransom," Alonto said.

"The president-elect has our commitment and our support, hindi sa salita, sa gawa. It's high-time wag na yung mga salita-salita. All of the things we talked about, we have to do it," Alonto added.

While both the MNLF and the MILF have agreed to support the shift to federalism, both camp remain hopeful that the "good aspects of the proposed Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL) will be retained," with the Bangsamoro as a federal state model. The MILF had earlier signed an agreement with President Aquino, but its enabling BBL failed to get the support of Congress.

Presumptive Speaker Pantaleon Alvarez, in an earlier interview, said the incoming supermajority at the House would include among its priorities the shift to a federal form of government.

Asked about the fractious MNLF, Alonto said: "Well, that is our problem. There is only one MNLF. We will be talking about that and hopefully, in the next weeks, we will be talking about that," Alonto said.

"It's not only about reaching out. We were together, we are still together. Without prejudice to the charges filed against Misuari, and we will talk to him in this aspect."

Alonto said the initial consensus was a push for a constitutional convention, after Duterte's initial conferences with allies at the House of Representatives.

"In fact all of us are committed to that... that there will be a change of government through a constitutional convention," he said.

Likewise discussed was the need to address the illegal drugs problem and the kidnap-for-ransom cases.

"The government has to put an end to these. And we have given the assurance of the support of the Bangsamoro

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Rody meets MILF, MNLF leaders

By ALEXIS ROMERO

DAVAO CITY – President-elect Rodrigo Duterte met here with leaders of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) on Friday in what was described as a “meeting of a brother to a brother.”

The two groups agreed to back Duterte’s plan to change the form of government from unitary to federal, one of the Moro leaders who

attended the meeting said.

“A federal system could very well put in place a government of transparency and accountability, and effectively address the peace and order problems, including drug trafficking and kidnap for ransom,” MNLF leader Abul Khayr Alonto told reporters after the meeting held at Hotel Elena.

“In this aspect, the

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Rody From Page 1

MNLF and MILF are united in solidarity with the president-elect,” he added.

Duterte discussed the issue of converging the two Bangsamoro groups.

MILF vice chair for political affairs Ghazali Jaafar said they discussed the proposed merger of the important provisions of the separate agreements made by the MNLF and the MILF with the government.

“The purpose (of the meeting) is to unify the position of the Bangsamoro leaders by way of convergence, to resolve those concerns that have been addressed separately,” Jaafar said.

The matter of uniting the MILF and the MNLF would be discussed further in future meetings, he said.

Alonto, on the other hand, said the discussion also focused on the federal form of government as proposed by Duterte.

He said current presidential form of government has failed to address the problems plaguing Mindanao.

“The centralized form of government has been a dismal failure. That is precisely why you still have war in Mindanao,” he said.

The meeting started past 9 p.m. and lasted for about two hours.

Also seen at the meeting were MILF chairman Al Haj Murad Ebrahim and Jaafar.

“There is no substitute for a brother talking to a brother, with the MILF and the MNLF, and of course with president Duterte,” Alonto said.

When asked if Duterte promised them anything, Alonto replied: “You don’t have to. We were talking brother to brother. You don’t need promises or commitment.”

“It was done in (a) fraternal manner. All of us are committed to that. There will be change of government and most likely through a constitutional convention,” he added.

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Changes

OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUE

no. 1021 045-9555 Local: 5265 5295

The planned shift from unitary to a federal form of government is one of Duterte's priorities, anchoring his presidential campaign on maintaining peace and order and promoting inclusive growth.

Federalism has been implemented in different ways but it basically entails the sharing of powers between the central government and local state governments.

In countries that adopted the system, local state governments can impose taxes, set-up courts, build infrastructure and craft their own business regulations.

Jaafar and Murad also briefed Duterte on what the MILF agreement with the government contains.

"He (Duterte) also reiterated to us his campaign promise that once he becomes president, he will enact into law the BBL," Jaafar said, referring to the proposed Bangsamoro Basic Law.

Jaafar stressed that without the BBL, the concerns of the Bangsamoro people cannot be properly addressed.

In an interview early this week, Jaafar said the MILF wants the BBL to be enacted first before the form of government is changed to federalism.

He believes it may take time before the peace agreement between the MILF and the government is implemented if the creation of the Bangsamoro government is subsumed by efforts to shift to federalism.

Jaafar, however, said the MILF and the MNLF are ready to come up with a united stand on the Bangsamoro government. He said such stance might require improvements in the proposed BBL.

The BBL aims to establish a new Bangsamoro political entity with enhanced autonomy. The measure would implement the final peace agreement forged by the Aquino administration and the MILF in 2014.

The 16th Congress, however, failed to enact the measure, causing disappointment among the MILF and its supporters.

The 2014 peace agreement, however, is not without controversies.

MNLF founding chairman Nur Misuari is opposed to the proposed BBL, saying it goes against the Tripoli Agreement and the 1996 peace deal with the government.

Misuari has been charged with rebellion in relation to the 2013 Zamboanga siege and is now in hiding.

The Tripoli deal was signed in 1976 and led to the establishment of what is now known as the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). - Edith Regalado

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19 June 2016



Pahina. 5

EDITORIAL

PAGSISIYASAT SA KIDNAP FOR RANSOM NG ASG, PALALIMIN

MABIGAT ang akusasyon ni Jolo, Sulu Mayor Hussin Amin na may sangkot na mga opisyal ng Armed Forces of the Philippines sa mga nagaganap na kidnapping for ransom ng grupong Abu Sayyaf.

Sa interbyu sa DZMM, sinabi ni Amin na asset ng militar ang mga nagbibigay ng tip sa Abu Sayyaf para sa kidnapping for ransom at palatandaan ito ng pagkakasangkot ng mga opisyal ng militar sa krimen na dahilan na rin ng hindi paghupa nito.

Binawag halimbawa ni Amin ang pagkakasangkot ng isang colonel ng militar ilang taon na ang nakaraan.

Ayon naman sa source ng pahayagang ito, simula nang nauso ang KFR sa Mindanao, nagsimula ring umagos mula sa ibang lugar patungo sa iba't ibang bahagi rito ang mga mamahaling sasakyan gaya ng may tatak na Land Cruiser.

Nangangahulugan na may iba pang nakikinabang sa kita sa mga KFR at matatagpuan lamang ang mga ito sa mga kabayanan at lungsod sa Mindanao.

Batay sa mga ito, hindi sapat na obligahin ang katulad ni Amin na maglabas ng mga ebidensya ukol sa akusasyon nito, gaya ng gustong mangyari ng Palasyo sa kasalukuyan.

Sa halip, dapat na palalimin ng mga kinauukulan ang sinasabi mismo ni Amin na hindi lang ang miyembro ng Abu Sayyaf ang nakikinabang sa krimen.

Kakambal nito ang pagsisiyasat sa mga pinaghilinaang nakikinabang sa mga kita sa krimen sa anyo ng kanilang pagyaman at pagkakaroon ng mga palatandaan nito gaya ng mga mamahaling sasakyan.

Kung magagawa ito, malaki ang posibilidad na mabawasan nang husto ang krimen at mapahina na rin ang pwersa ng teroristang grupo.

ONLINE NEWS

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

AFP denies links with ASG bandits

By Priam F. Nepomuceno

MANILA, June 18 (PNA) — The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) strongly denied on Saturday allegations that some of its officers are in cahoots with the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) bandits.

"Our armed forces and police have been at the forefront of the fight against all KFRGs (kidnapping-for-ransom groups) and the ASG for a long time. We have lost so many servicemen in the process. We do not doubt the dedication and commitment of our troops," AFP spokesperson Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla said.

In addition, commanders on the ground are in full control of all troops and are focused on their primary mission of getting these criminals and saving the hostages, he added.

"There is also an established system to ensure no spies and traitors are in our ranks. There also exists strong measures to deal with those found to have violated their oath," Padilla stressed.

The allegations came in the wake of the beheading of Canadian Robert Hall last June 13. Hall was one of the four persons kidnapped in Samal Island last Sept. 21.

A companion, John Ridsel, was beheaded last April 26 after the Philippine and Canadian government snubbed the bandits' Php300 million ransom demand.

The AFP spokesperson said these accusations can undermine government efforts against these criminals.

"And we will hold the one who released the statement accountable if they can't substantiate their allegations. Local government officials are at the lead of addressing peace and order in their communities with the police and the AFP as partners," he added.

Padilla said this cooperation is the cornerstone in coming up with a permanent solution to this perennial problem of lawlessness.

"Local officials should also come up with socioeconomic plans that can help the locals veer away from supporting these crime groups masquerading as Robin Hoods when they share the money received from kidnapping. After all, peace and order is their primary responsibility in their respective provinces," he pointed out. (PNA)

SCS/PFN

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AFP: Our men are not conniving with terrorists

By: Nestor Corrales



SULU OFFENSIVE Government soldiers patrol a highway during a search operation for the body of beheaded Canadian hostage Robert Hall in Indanan town, Sulu, on Tuesday. AFP

Amid allegations that some of their men are conspiring with terrorist group Abu Sayyaf, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the police are ensuring that there are no spies and traitors in their ranks. Jolo mayor Hussin Amin has alleged that some military officers in Sulu are conniving with the Abu Sayyaf, getting a share of the ransom paid to the terrorist group.

"There is also an established system to ensure no spies and traitors are in our ranks. There also exist strong measures to deal with those who have found to have violated their oath," the AFP on Saturday said in statement read by Communications Secretary Herminio "Sonny" Coloma Jr. over state-run dzRB radio. The AFP said the accusations hurled against some of its officials could put a dent on government efforts against the Abu Sayyaf.

"The accusation can undermine government efforts against these criminals and we will hold the the ones who released such statements accountable if they can substantiate their allegations," the AFP said.

READ: 10 battalions hunt Abus in Sulu | No stopping operations vs Abu Sayyaf — AFP

Amid these allegations, the AFP said their "commanders on the ground are in full control of our troops and are focused on their primary mission of getting these criminals and saving the hostages."

"Our Armed Forces and police have been at the forefront at the fight against all kidnap-for-ransom groups and the Abu Sayyaf Group for a long time. We have lost so many servicemen in the process. We do not doubt the dedication and commitment of our troops," it said.

AFP said local officials should instead focus on promoting socio-economic programs that could dissuade citizens from supporting these crime groups.

"Local government officials are at the lead of addressing peace and order in their community with the police and the AFP as partners. This cooperation and partnership is the cornerstone in coming up with a permanent solution to this perennial problem of lawlessness in their communities," it said.

"After all, peace and order is their primary responsibility in their respective provinces," it added. **IDL**

<http://retiredanalyst.blogspot.com/>

AFP, Albay gear up for USAF humanitarian mission

From the Philippine News Agency (Jun 18)

The Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Provincial Government of Albay are now readying for the Pacific Partnership humanitarian mission of the United States Armed Forces (USAF) before the end of this month here.

Medics and soldiers of the USAF are coming to Albay for a two-week humanitarian mission across the province.

Army Col. Claudio Yucot, commanding officer of the Army's 901st Infantry Brigade, said a composite team of the US forces will be constructing a school building at the foot of Mayon Volcano.

The facilities can also be used as an evacuation center in the event of disasters, specifically Mayon volcano eruption.

Yucot said at least three classrooms will be built in Daraga town by the USAF in partnership with the AFP soldiers belonging to the engineering battalion.

A state-of-the-art hospital ship of the US Navy will be arriving in Albay next week for a medical mission.

The USAF humanitarian team is composed mostly of medical personnel who will be arriving in Legazpi City port on June 27 through the United States Navy Mercy hospital ship.

This is the first time that a US Navy hospital ship will be visiting Bicol, specifically in Albay province for a Pacific Partnership mission.

Navy Captain Giovanni Carlo J. Bacorbo, commander of Naval Forces Southern Luzon, said the Pacific Partnership is an annual deployment of forces from the Pacific Fleet of the United States Navy (USN) after the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami.

It was conceived to improve the inter-operability of the region's military forces, governments, and humanitarian organizations during disaster relief operations while providing humanitarian, medical, dental, and engineering assistance to nations in the Pacific.

The humanitarian mission also aims to strengthen relationships and security ties between the US and the Philippines.

Earlier, Lt. Rebecca Wolf of the US Navy made a courtesy call on local officials of Albay and the Naval Forces Southern Luzon Command here.

Part of the two-week Pacific Partnership mission, according to Bacorbo, is the humanitarian assistance's disaster response and community health engagement.

The two-week humanitarian mission beginning on June 27 to July 9 is expected to provide medical assistance to Albayanos, covering three congressional districts on the ground and aboard the ship.

"The Naval Forces Southern Luzon Command is part of the inter-agency task force and the medical mission will be done across the province of Albay, in various hospitals and aboard the USS Mercy hospital ship, depending on the diseases," Bacorbo said.

The humanitarian mission is part of the Philippine-US Mutual Defense Agreement.

The US Navy Mercy hospital ship last visited the country in 2013, in Tacloban City, to provide assistance for typhoon-stricken communities after the occurrence of killer-typhoon "Yolanda".

<http://retiredanalyst.blogspot.com/>

AFP: No conspiracy with Abu Sayyaf

From Rappler (Jun 18)

The Armed Forces says in a statement, 'commanders on the ground are in full control of our troops and are focused on their primary mission of getting these criminals and saving the hostages'



TIGHT SECURITY. *Filipino soldiers stand guard at a military checkpoint during Philippine President Benigno Aquino III's trip to the island of Sulu, southern Philippines, on June 15, 2016, after the murder of Canadian national Robert Hall. File photo by Ben Hajan/EPA*

Amid allegations of conspiracy with the terrorist Abu Sayyaf Group, the Armed Forces of the Philippines said in a statement Saturday, June 18, men in uniform remain committed to saving hostages and running after criminals.

"We do not doubt the dedication and commitment of our troops. In addition, commanders on the ground are in full control of our troops and are focused on their primary mission of getting these criminals and saving the hostages," the AFP said via Communications Secretary Hermino "Sonny" Coloma Jr.

On Friday, June 17, the mayor of Jolo Hussin Amin alleged that soldiers are conspiring with the Abu Sayyaf and getting a portion of the ransom collected from the kidnap victims. The Jolo mayor also called on the national government to investigate these military men.

On Monday, June 13, the Abu Sayyaf beheaded Canadian hostage Robert Hall after the deadline they imposed for ransom payment lapsed. The terrorist group demanded P600 million in ransom for 3 foreign hostages that included John Ridsdel who was also killed in April.

Hall's girlfriend Marites Flor and Norwegian resort manager Kjartan Sekkingstad remain in captivity. They were abducted in September 2015 from Samal Island.

In a radio interview on dzRB, Coloma said allegations that tend to cast doubt on efforts of the Armed Forces are baseless. The AFP and police have been at the forefront of the fight against "all kidnap-for-ransom groups and the Abu Sayyaf Group for a long time," Coloma said, reading from the AFP statement. The AFP, Coloma added, has adopted and established a system to protect its ranks from spies and traitors. "There also exist strong measures to deal with those who have found to have violated their oath," The accusation against the AFP "can undermine government efforts against these criminals," the statement said.

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As if addressing Hussin, the same statement said, "Local government officials are at the lead of addressing peace and order in their community with the police and the AFP as partners. This cooperation and partnership is the cornerstone in coming up with a permanent solution to this perennial problem of lawlessness in their communities."

Furthermore, the AFP said local officials "should also come up with socio-economic plans that can help the citizens veer away from supporting these crime groups when they share the money received from kidnapping. After all, peace and order is their primary responsibility in their respective provinces."

Authorities said the Abu Sayyaf terrorist group is still holding more than 20 abducted foreigners, one of them a Dutch bird-watcher kidnapped 4 years ago. In 2014, the group claimed it had been paid more than \$5 million for the release of a German couple.

<http://retiredanalyst.blogspot.com/>

Military officers accused of colluding with Sayyafs

From the Mindanao Examiner (Jun 18)

A southern Philippine town mayor has accused the military of colluding with the notorious ISIS-linked Abu Sayyaf group and said some officers had partaken from ransoms paid for the freedom of some of its hostages.

Mayor Hussin Amin, of Jolo town in the Muslim province of Sulu, also said the military has been using some Abu Sayyaf members as their "assets" a slang to refer to spy or informant.

He asked the government to investigate military officers in cahoots with the enemies and for the Armed Forces of the Philippines to conduct a loyalty check among its ranks.

"Mga scalawags, eh dapat nga huwag na lang patago, kung meron, imbestigahan, oo na andoon na ang ransom, pero imbestigahan kung sino ba ito? Sino ba ang kumikita sa ransom? Hindi naman Abu Sayyaf. Iyan ang mga grupo na sabi iisa lang, ngayon dumadami na dahil may mga andiyan, ay ginagawang asset doon, sinasabing hindi nila asset, alam naman ng military yan," he told television giant ABS-CBN.

Amin, a former judge in Jolo before he became a politician, said the Abu Sayyaf may be getting support or information from scalawags within the military.

"These are the people who are in connivance with the scalawags in the military kaya malakas ang loob. Sabihin na ba ang totoo kung mayroon man ransom, dapat alamin kung sino ba ang gumagawa ng ransom. Sino ba ang kumikita sa ransom, dapat dito ikulong," Amin said.

Amin, a former congressman, also said that a colonel in the military benefited from ransoms paid for the release of Dr. Alberio Canda who was kidnapped in Sulu in 2004 and freed a month later. He said a congressional inquiry into the kidnapping showed the alleged involvement of the military officer.

"It is on the record sa Congress, na in-connivance sa chief of Intelligence sa Sulu, nag-conduct kami ng investigation nang kinidnap si Dr. Canda. Kumita ang isang colonel, yung may kahati siya. Nasa Congress yan kaso hindi man lang nila binibigyan ng atensyon. Dapat huwag na lang itago ba," he said.

The military's Western Mindanao Command quickly denied the accusations and challenged Amin to prove his allegations.

"Well, that's his allegations. He has to prove that. Kung meron, bakit hindi niya sabihin sa amin? Yan ang mga hindi dapat nangyayari, yung mga ganyan, within the organization, it makes the organization suffer. Sundalo ka tapos ganoon ang gagawin mo, napakasakit naman noon," Major Felimon Tan, a military spokesman, told ABS-CBN.

There was no immediate reaction from President Aquino – the Commander-in-Chief – on Amin's allegations or whether the Armed Forces of the Philippines will investigate these accusations.

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2 NPAs killed in South Cotabato firefight

By John Unson



Slain rebels, whose identities remained unknown, belong to the NPA's Front 73. Philstar.com/File photo

SOUTH COTABATO, Philippines - Two New People's Army guerillas were killed Friday by soldiers in a 30-minute firefight in Barangay Ned in Lake Sebu town in South Cotabato province.

The hostilities erupted when a group of marauding NPAs attacked a team of Army combatants patrolling in Sitio Lamtapok in Barangay Ned.

Residents of Sitio Lamtapok have been complaining of excessive taxation by rebels, threatening to harm them if their monetary demands are not met.

Senior Inspector Joven Bagaybay, chief of the Lake Sebu municipal police, said the slain rebels, whose identities remained unknown, belong to the NPA's Front 73.

The group is operating in the hinterlands of the adjoining South Cotabato and Sarangani provinces.

"Soldiers initiated a tactical patrol in Sitio Lamtapok Friday morning after learning that there were NPAs there. They were forced to engage the rebels in a firefight when they were fired upon," Bagaybay said.

Bagaybay said the NPAs scampered away when they were outmaneuvered by the advancing soldiers, leaving their two dead companions behind.

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