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ARMY

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

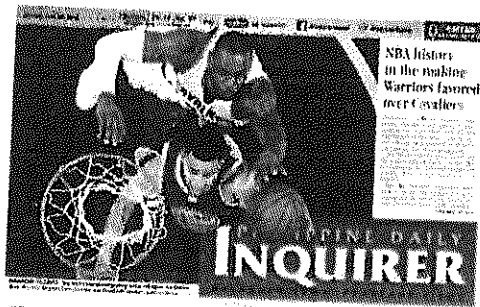
20 June 2016

Monday

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

NEWS HEADLINES

20 June 2016



CHR backs 'full force' against Abu Sayyaf



CHR backs 'full force' against Abu Sayyaf
Duterte media in a test of wills

5,000 soldiers pour into 3 towns in Sulu
Military

12 baring clothes for body
Analisis

What's new
Pork and pork

US aircraft carriers start drills in Phil Sea

No AFP-Sayyaf collusion - Palace

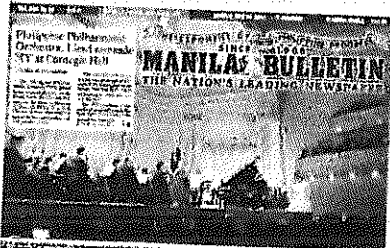


DOLE mulls death for illegal recruiters

Inside Track

MILF: Time to implement DBI

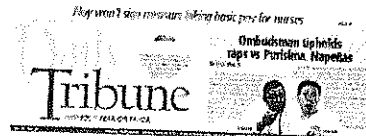
More polls likely to file SOCE late



Duterte faces business sector

10 point socio-economic agenda to be revealed

'Police Avengers' formed to fight big-time drug lords



Congress has conflicting views on powers vs ASG

Gov't, NDF push release of political prisoners, set peace talks for July

Panelist not as spokesman, Abella in



'Malaysians freed for P130M ransom'



Comerlet lowers to LP, War grants SOCE extension

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THE PHILIPPINE STAR
TRUTH SHALL PREVAIL

PANAHON TV
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AIR 21
SABOT NO, PABALA MO!

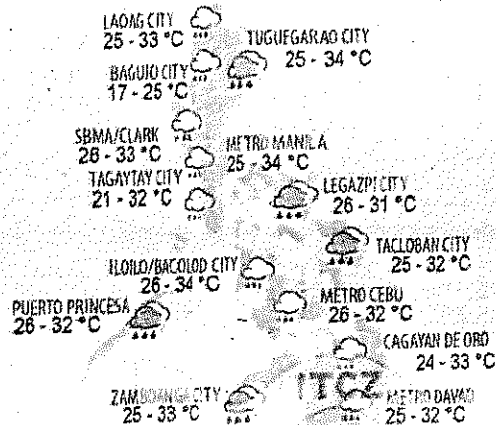
5:00 AM - 5:30 AM
Mondays to Sundays

SUNRISE 5:26 AM
SUNSET 6:27 PM
MOONRISE 6:17 PM
MOONSET 5:10 AM

LOW TIDE 6:48 AM 0.00 Meter
HIGH TIDE 6:34 AM 1.19 Meter

TODAY'S WEATHER FORECAST JUNE 20, 2016 | MONDAY

INTERTROPICAL CONVERGENCE ZONE
AFFECTING MINDANAO
(JUNE 19, 5:00 AM)



EXTENDED WEATHER FORECAST	JUNE 21 TUE	JUNE 22 WED	JUNE 23 THU	EXTENDED WEATHER FORECAST	JUNE 21 TUE	JUNE 22 WED	JUNE 23 THU
METRO MANILA	25 °C 34 °C	26 °C 33 °C	26 °C 33 °C	PUERTO PRINCESA	26 °C 32 °C	25 °C 33 °C	25 °C 33 °C
TUGUEGARAO	25 °C 35 °C	25 °C 35 °C	25 °C 34 °C	ILOILO/BACOLOD	25 °C 34 °C	25 °C 35 °C	25 °C 35 °C
LAOAG	26 °C 32 °C	25 °C 32 °C	25 °C 32 °C	METRO CEBU	26 °C 33 °C	25 °C 33 °C	26 °C 34 °C
BAGUIO	17 °C 25 °C	16 °C 24 °C	16 °C 24 °C	TACLOBAN	25 °C 33 °C	26 °C 32 °C	25 °C 32 °C
SBMA/CLARK	25 °C 33 °C	25 °C 34 °C	25 °C 34 °C	CAGAYAN DE ORO	24 °C 33 °C	25 °C 32 °C	25 °C 33 °C
TAGAYTAY	22 °C 30 °C	22 °C 32 °C	22 °C 32 °C	METRO DAVAO	26 °C 33 °C	26 °C 33 °C	25 °C 34 °C
LEGAZPI	26 °C 30 °C	26 °C 32 °C	25 °C 32 °C	ZAMBOANGA	25 °C 34 °C	24 °C 32 °C	24 °C 32 °C

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

Cloudy skies with rainshowers and/or thunderstorms

20 June 2016

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER

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CHR backs 'full force' against Abu Sayyaf

5,000 soldiers pour into 3 towns in Sulu

By DJ Yap

THE COMMISSION on Human Rights (CHR) on Saturday expressed support for the government's campaign to "apply the full force of the law" against the Abu Sayyaf bandits who beheaded two Canadian hostages in recent weeks.

The CHR deplored the killing of Robert Hall and John Ridsdel by the terrorist group operating in Western Mindanao, joining calls for the immediate arrest and prosecution of their murderers.

"The CHR condemns these killings and other terrorist acts of the [Abu Sayyaf] in the strongest possible terms and reiterates that kidnapping, illegal deten-

CHR BACKS / A18

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From page A1

tion and murder are grave violations of a human's right to life, liberty and security and should not be tolerated in a just, humane and democratic country like ours," the commission said in a statement.

"These despicable acts of the [Abu Sayyaf] have no place in a civilized society," according to the CHR, whose chair Jose Luis Martin Gascon has spoken out against proposals to reinstate the death penalty for heinous crimes.

The CHR said it supported the campaign of the national government to apply the "full force of the law, arrest all perpetrators of these heinous crimes, bring them before the bar of justice, and to ensure accountability."

It also extended its condolences to the families of Hall and Ridsdel, who were beheaded by the Abu Sayyaf after the Canadian government refused to pay ransom of P600 million.

Last Monday, Abu Sayyaf bandits beheaded Hall after they failed to get the P300-mil-

lion ransom they had demanded. Another Canadian, John Ridsdel, suffered the same fate on April 25.

A Filipino, Maritess Flor, and a Norwegian, Kjartan Sekkingstad, are still being held by the Abu Sayyaf. All of the hostages, including the Canadians, were kidnapped from a small marina on Samal Island in Davao del Norte province on Sept. 21 last year.

The CHR voiced concern for Flor and Sekkingstad and urged the government "to exert all efforts to secure their freedom and safety."

In Zamboanga City, Maj. Filemon Tan Jr., spokesperson for the Western Mindanao command, said troops were pursuing the Abu Sayyaf bandits in three municipalities in Sulu but that no encounter had yet taken place.

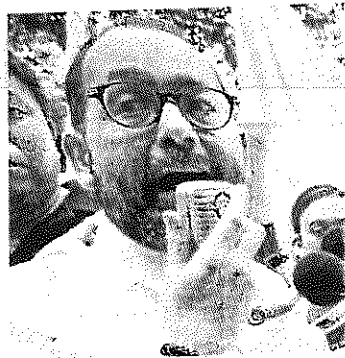
He said one town covered an area of about 40 square kilometers.

Tan admitted that the estimated 5,000 troops involved in the operation might not be enough.

"It's very important that we have solid information. We cannot just conduct an operation that is not focused. It has to be intel-driven, meaning we should know something first before we act," he said.

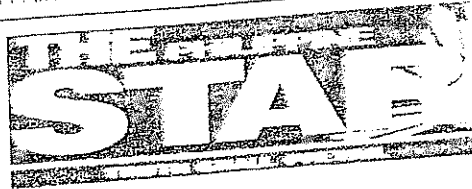
Tan also underscored the importance of cooperation from the local communities or "nothing will happen."

"We are closely monitoring. There might be people who are acting as spies and we are looking into that possibility," he said. *With a report from Julie S. Alipala, Inquirer Mindanao*



GASCON

7 June 2016



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No AFP-Sayyaf collusion - Palace

By DELON PORCALLA

The accusation is not new, but Malacañang has branded as unfair and baseless the claim that some members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) have conspired with the Abu Sayyaf in several kidnappings in Mindanao. Presidential Communications Operations Of-

fice Secretary Herminio Coloma Jr. said over the weekend that the allegation of the mayor of Jolo, Sulu is a serious one and could undermine the government's campaign against the bandits.

Similar allegations were hurled in previous ransom kidnapping

Turn to Page 16

cases involving the Abu Sayyaf, with a congressional investigation launched after the raid on the Dos Palmas island resort in Palawan. No AFP officer was indicted in the case.

Other reports in the past have raised suspicion about the collusion of local government officials in Sulu and Basilan in ransom kidnappings in the two provinces.

Coloma said such allegations are unfair to members of the military who are putting their lives on the line to maintain peace and order and ensure that everyone is safe against terrorist organizations like the Abu Sayyaf.

The mayor urged the government to investigate the alleged involvement of soldiers in kidnappings in Sulu, but

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

In a radio interview, Coloma said the context of the allegation must be understood because of its repercussions on the military and the ongoing offensive in Sulu.

Coloma also cited a recent statement of the AFP, which stated that the military does not doubt the dedication and commitment of its members

who are going after the Abu Sayyaf.

"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 that there are no spies and traitors in our ranks. There also exist strong measures to deal with those who are found to have violated

their oath," the AFP leadership added.

According to the military, the accusation could undermine government efforts against the criminals, adding that these must be substantiated.

"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 declared, as quoted by Coloma.

Local officials should also draw socio-economic plans to help citizens and prevent them from supporting the Abu Sayyaf bandits who share part of the ransom with their supporters, the AFP said.

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

www.internet.net

Army colonel shot dead in Zamboanga City

By: Julie S. Alipala

01:13 AM June 20th, 2016

ZAMBOANGA CITY — An Army colonel was shot and killed here on Sunday night.

Lieutenant Colonel Cristobal Julian Paolo "Tiny" Perez, 46, was shot around 9:20 p.m. Sunday, in his residence in Buenbrazo Drive, Barangay (village) Guiwan here.

"He was declared dead at 10:45 p.m. at the Zamboanga Peninsula Hospital," said Supt. Luisito Magnaye, city police chief.

Perez was the G1 commander of the 1st Tabak Infantry Division in Pulacan, Zamboanga del Sur. He came here to celebrate Father's Day with his wife May.

Perez was a graduate of PMA Class 1993. **SFM**

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June 2016

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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Probe of soldiers' camp in civilian areas set

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—A group of peace advocates is looking into allegations that government soldiers violated a human rights deal between the government and the communist movement by camping out near civilian communities in a village in Misamis Oriental.

According to residents of Barangay Banglay, Lagonglong town, soldiers from the 58th Infantry Battalion of the Philippine Army's 4th Infantry Division entered their neighborhood and stayed there for a few days.

Leaders of the residents said the Army encampment violated the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Law (Carhriil) a deal struck by the Philip-

pine government with the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP).

No violation

But Capt. Joe Patrick Martinez, 4th ID spokesperson, said in an interview that the military did not violate the Carhriil or any law.

He said the soldiers were simply carrying out provisions of another law that put the military at the forefront of the counterinsurgency campaign.

According to Martinez, soldiers would be deployed to wherever communist guerrillas are.

"I believe we did not violate any law but we are just performing our mandate," said Martinez.

Carhriil, which both the communist movement and

government accused each other of violating, prohibits blockades, bombings, use of land mines and acts that would lead to forced evacuations, according to the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (Opapp).

Nenita Helogon, secretary general of the tribal group Tagtabolon, said residents of Barangay Banglay had to flee their homes four times for fear of getting caught in the crossfire between members of the New People's Army, the armed component of the Communist Party of the Philippines, and government soldiers.

At least 218 individuals are now staying at the Lagonglong munic-

ipal gymnasium, leaving their homes, livestock and crops behind in Barangay Banglay.

Census

Helogon said the last time the villagers fled was on June 5 when soldiers arrived purportedly to conduct a census. The villagers, however, said the soldiers were fully armed.

Bishop Felixberto Calang, of the Iglesia Filipino Independiente (IFI) and co-convenor of the Philippine Ecumenical Peace Platform (PEPP), said his group would conduct an investigation.

PEPP is at the forefront of efforts to free soldiers and policemen being held captive by the NPA and is one of the groups actively involved in efforts to bring peace talks between the government and communist guerrillas back on track.

En Christopher Ablon, secretary-general of the

RESIDENTS of a village in Lagonglong town, Misamis Oriental province, flee to the provincial capitol grounds after soldiers camped out in their communities as part of the government's counterinsurgency campaign.

human rights group, Karapatan, in Northern Mindanao, said its group would also seek a dialogue with the military for the pullout of soldiers in rural communities.

Helogon recalled a commit-

ment made by the military, during a dialogue last year with provincial officials of Misamis Oriental, to keep a distance from civilian populations. Jigger J. Jerusalem, *Inquirer Mindanao*

June 2016

MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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Gruesome fate for lumad family on Mt. Katalawan

By MIKE U. CRISMUNDO

BUTUAN CITY — The attack on the Bocalas family was swift and brutal.

Father Lando Bocalas, his five-month pregnant wife Julina, and his brother Mancolobe were gunned down by still unidentified lawless elements in Mount Katalawan, Barangay Binicalan in San Luis, Agusan del Sur last June 5.

Three of Bocalas' children — Rosalyn, 8; Bahanan, 6; and Bayubasan, 4 — have been reported missing.

This tragic tale was relayed by Lando's eldest son who was able to hide after the initial volley of shots that ambushed the Talaandig family at Taguikan Creek.

The 10-year-old boy, whose name was withheld by authorities, trekked across Mount Katalawan for several days and was able to make it back across the border to Bukidnon where he was able to recount his family's fate at the Caban-

glasen municipal police station.

From what the boy told them, police authorities gathered that last June 5, the Bocalas family left their home at Purok 3, Barangay Freedom, Cabanglasan, Bukidnon on their way to Mount Katalawan.

It was while they were traversing Taguikan Creek when they were attacked by the heavily armed men.

Based on the boy's account, a rescue and retrieval operations were conducted by both the military and police in the area.

"It took almost four days of hike in the mountainous area just to reach Taguikan Creek where the bodies of the victims were retrieved," said First Lieutenant Karl Jan S. Devaras, Public Information Officer (PIO) of 4th Civil-Military Operations (Kasaligan) Battalion (4th CMOB).

The bodies of Lando, Julina and Mancolobe were found by the soldiers and policemen in shallow graves at 8

a.m. on June 9. The three children were not to be found.

"The initial investigation conducted by the combined ground troops of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), Philippine National Police (PNP) and local authorities showed that the perpetrators of this barbaric incident were Armed Lawless Groups (ALGs) operating in the area," the 4th CMOB officer said, in a phone interview with Manila Bulletin yesterday.

After the recovery of the bodies of the slain Bocalas family members, troops from the Eighth Infantry Battalion (8th IB), the PNP and local authorities started hot pursuit operations against the ALGs operating in the area.

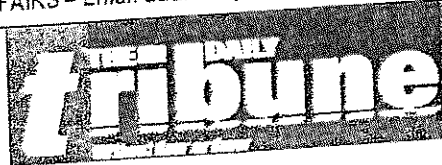
Top mission for the pursuing troops would be to recover the Bocalas children, according to Devaras.

Motive for the killing has yet to be determined by the police investigating team in San Luis town, he added.



BRUTAL KILLING — Government authorities dig through loose soil on the slopes of Taguikan Creek in Barangay Binicalan, San Luis, Agusan del Sur where a lumad man, his wife and his brother were hastily buried in a shallow grave by unidentified attackers last June 5. The man's three children remain missing even as his 10-year-old son was able to survive the massacre and pinpoint to lawmen the place where his parents and uncle were killed. (Photo courtesy of 4th CMOB)

20 June 2016



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Military yet to recover body of beheaded Canadian hostage

By Mario J. Mallari

Government authorities have yet to recover the body of Canadian Robert Hall – one week after he was beheaded by his Abu Sayyaf captors in Sulu.

Maj. Filemon Tan Jr., spokesman for the military's Western Mindanao Command (Wesmincom), said that troops continued to scour areas where Hall could have been killed by the Abu Sayyaf but the efforts yielded negative results.

"We have negative results as of now. Our operations are continuing but we have not found the body of Hall," Tan said.

Hall was beheaded last June 13 after the 3 p.m. deadline for the payment of P600-million ransom expired.

Hall's head was found hours after the deadline lapsed in the vicinity of Mt. Carmel Cathedral in Jolo.

"We are doing our best to recover the body," Tan added.

Hall is the second Canadian captive beheaded by the bandit group this year after his compatriot John Ridsdel was also mutilated last April 25 after he failed to pay P300-million ransom.

Ridsdel's head was found in front of the Jolo town hall hours after he was beheaded while his body was recovered in the jungles of Sulu days later.

Hall and Ridsdel were among the four hostages taken by the terrorists during a raid at the posh Oceanview Resort on Samal Island last September.

The two remaining Samal hostages – Filipino Marites Flor and Norwegian Kjartan Sekkingstad, are still being kept by the Abu Sayyaf in Sulu.

The Abu Sayyaf threatened to behead Sekkingstad if their P600 million demand is not met.

Aside from Flor and Sekkingstad, the military said the Abu Sayyaf Group is still holding five captives.

20 June 2016

The Manila Times

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'Militarization' of Lumad refugee center hit

AGAYAN DE ORO CITY: Some 200 inter-ly displaced persons (IDPs) from the Higaonon tribe have encamped the Vicente Lara Park fronting the Provincial Capitol here after a dialogue with the military did not push through last Friday.

The IDPs from Sitio Camansi and Tapul in Barangay Banglay, Lagonglong town, 65 kilometers west of Cagayan de Oro, had sought refuge at the town gymnasium two weeks ago and soldiers from the 8th Infantry Battalion (IB) pitched "bayanihan" team activities (BTA) tent in front of it.

The military begged off from the dialogue and asked for postponement, saying they are not prepared to sit down with the Lumads yet.

The Lumad have called for an agreement to free their village from military and rebel incursions as they

expressed fear that they might be caught in a cross fire with the setting up of the BTA in their evacuation center since June 5.

Also, about 52 schoolchildren among the IDPs missed the opening of school year last June 13 as they were forced to abandon their community.

The Lumads stressed the need to end militarization of their village and evacuation centers, adding that the troops' immediate presence is against the International Humanitarian Law (IHL), of which the Philippines is a signatory.

This is the fourth time in three years that residents of Sitios Camansi and Tapul have evacuated from their village, about 30 kilometers from the poblacion, as the military sent troops to set up the BTA.

The residents said they are afraid of being caught in the crossfire if the

military and rebels would clash. "To evacuate was a preventive move on our part. If the soldiers stay within the village, we also become targets if the rebels would fight the soldiers in our midst," explained Nenita Hilogon, spokesperson of the village organization Tagtabulon (Rise Up).

But the military also followed them at the evacuation site.

"The IHL explicitly prohibits any armed group to encamp near communities, more so an evacuation camp," explained Christopher Ablon, of the rights group Karapatan, during a media conference this week.

The IHL is the law on armed conflict, and the protection of civilians and those who are not involved in the hostilities are its cornerstone. This protection extends particularly to IDPs, women and children.

But the military insists the BTA is

a legitimate mandate of the armed forces under "Oplan Bayanihan," the six-year internal peace and security plan of the Aquino administration.

First Lt. Janelle Diaz, spokesman of the battalion stationed in Umagos, Lagonglong said the BTA is intended to "serve as a bridge, to bring the government services to [rebel] infiltrated areas, or hinterland villages, wherever social workers have difficulties in reaching out as the villages are far and only horses or carabaos are the means of transportation."

Asked why a platoon was stationed in the heart of town, barely five meters from the IDP encampment and across the offices of the service agencies, Diaz said that BTA are also held to secure communities from the threats posed by communist rebels. **LINA SAGARAL REYES**

20 June 2016



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MORE NEWS

CAFGU man binaril habang nakaluhod

LAGAWE, Ifugao – Isang miyembro ng Civilian Armed Forces Geographical Unit (CAFGU) ang pinatay ng mga armadong kalalakihan na pinaniniwalaang miyembro ng New People's Army (NPA) sa daan ng Tinoc, Ifugao. Kinilala ng pulisya ang biktima na si Agustin Bugtong Andres, 34, miyembro ng Tinoc Patrol Base Alpha Company ng 77th Infantry Battalion ng Philippine Army na naka-base sa Ifugao. Base sa imbestigasyon, nakasakay ang biktima sa bubong ng jeepney na minamaneho kanyang kapatid na si Rico papuntang Nueva Viscaya noong ika-2 ng hapon ng Biyernes nang huminto ang sasakyan dahil sa nakaharang na bato sa daan. Ilang sandali pa, biglang lumitaw ang tatlong lalaki mula sa isang tent at pinababa si Andres mula sa bubong ng jeep. Nang makababa na siya, isang pang CAFGU member ang pinababa ng mga armadong lalaki mula sa kanyang motorsiklo. Kinuha rin ng mga suspek ang cellphones at CAA ID ng dalawa. Matapos nito, inutusan ng mga suspek and driver ng jeep na paandarin na ang sasakyan. "Umuna kayon, ibatiyo paylang dagitoy awan metlang dakes a mangyari kenyada, urayen mi lang kapitan gumhang ken ni mayor ta agtutongtong kami." (You may proceed, the two will be left, nothing bad will happen to them for we will just wait for the barangay vaptain of Gumhang and the municipal Mayor for us to talk.), sabi ng isa sa mga suspek. Makaraan ng ilang minutong pagtatanong, pinawalan ng mga salarin ang pangalawang CAFGU member at binaril naman si Andres nang nakaluhod. (Zaldy Comanda)

June 2016

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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SEARCH MISSION Soldiers patrol a highway during an operation to recover the body of beheaded Canadian hostage Robert Hall in Indanan town, Sulu province.

AFP

||

70 June 2016

THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER
MANILA BULLETIN

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BREAKING DAWN - Members of the Philippine Marines march to the Rizal Monument before the start of the wreath-laying ceremony in celebration of the 155th birth anniversary of National Hero Dr. Jose P. Rizal Sunday at the Rizal Park. (All Vicoy)

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June 2016

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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No PH-China talks on sea row in 2 yrs

By Estrella Torres

FORMER Foreign Secretary Albert del Rosario on Friday said President-elect Rodrigo Duterte had given assurance that there would be no bilateral talks with China to resolve the territorial dispute in the South China Sea in the next two years.

on the territorial dispute between China and the Philippines in the South China Sea, was an observer in the proceedings.

The Philippines has asked the UN tribunal to invalidate China's claim to almost all of the 3.5-million-square-kilometer South China Sea and demanded its right to exploit resources in waters within its 370-km exclusive economic zone, recognized

Supreme Court Associate Justice Antonio Carpio also said the Philippine panel in the arbitration proceedings against China had received the same assurance from Duterte.

Del Rosario led the Philippine panel that argued the country's case against China in the United Nations Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague.

Carpio, who has done an extensive study

under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, be respected.

China has refused to take part in the proceedings, saying it will not abide by any ruling of the court.

The court is expected to hand down its decision by July 7.

In a television interview on June 10, incoming Foreign Secretary Perfecto Yasay said bilateral negotiations with China were necessary, as the UN court had no powers to enforce its rulings.

"We feel that the ruling will require bilateral talks with China, then by all means let's pursue that. Let's not drop that possibility," Yasay said.

In an interview with the INQUIRER on June 3, Yasay said bilateral negotiations were "always the way to go in so far as resolving this conflict is concerned."

"Even if we get a favorable judgment from the arbitral tribunal, there might be some questions of enforcement or implementation of this decision, [because] the court does not have an enforcement capability," he said.

The arbitration panel has asked the incoming administration to wait for the tribunal's decision before moving for talks with China.

"I don't think [Duterte] would go bilateral," Del Rosario said in an interview after attending the Trident Defense and Security Forum at Solaire Resorts in Pasay City on Friday.

"We talked already and the [incoming] President said he [would] wait for developments over a two-year period and, if nothing happens, he would go bilateral," Del Rosario said.

Carpio, a guest speaker at the forum, said the Philippines had "convinced the world to support us that the arbitration is the way to go."

"So we will wait for the tribunal and we will decide [what measures to take to have the ruling enforced]," he said.

In his presentation at the security forum, Carpio said the Philippines would need to take legal and diplomatic tacks, including elevating the case to the United Nations itself, to have the ruling enforced.

"There is no world policeman to enforce the ruling of the arbitration [court], but we are not helpless," he said.

Once China moved a gas platform to Recto Bank (Reed Bank), a reef in the Spratly archipelago claimed by the Philippines, Carpio said Manila could file a lawsuit against Beijing where the Chinese have assets, like Canada and the United States.

With a favorable ruling from the arbitration court, the Philippines can win the suit in Canada and seize the assets of China's national oil company in Canada as payment for the gas that China will get from Recto Bank, he said.

26 June 2016



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MILF: Time to implement BBL

DAVAO CITY - Consultations on the proposed Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL) have been sufficient and it's time to implement the deal, according to the Moro Islamic Libera-

tion Front (MILF).
The MILF issued the statement on its website amid reports that the Duterte administration

wanted further discussions on the peace process roadmap.

The MILF said the peace process should now be in the

Turn to Page 9

"implementation mode" since the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro (CAB), which the group believes would address the Mindanao problem, has been signed.

The CAB, signed by the Aquino administration and the MILF in 2014, will serve as the basis of the BBL, which aims to create a new Bangsamoro region with enhanced autonomy.

"Consultations for this proposed law have already been virtually over. All that should be done is to revisit or use the inputs of these consultations or hearings, in the case of Congress, to fast-track the legislative roadmap or process," the MILF said in an editorial posted on luwaran.com.

Earlier, Davao del Norte representative-elect Pantaleon Alvarez, Duterte's choice for House speaker, said the talks with the Moros are back to "square one" and that there is no need to tackle the BBL because it would be subsumed by the planned shift to federalism.

Jesus Dureza, former peace adviser during the Arroyo administration and who will be returning to the post when Duterte assumes office, told *MindaNews* that "wider consultations" on how to craft the Bangsamoro peace roadmap would be conducted.

The MILF said the peace negotiators from both sides, civil society, religious, educational and business groups have conducted 625 consultation meetings throughout the country from 2014 to 2015.

"Many of the provisions of the BBL were culled from inputs from these consultations. The Senate and Lower House of Congress have also conducted numerous hearings. The BBL had been with them for more than a year when it was formally submitted to them during a ceremony in Malacañang Palace on September 10, 2014," the group said.

The MILF said any consultation asking the same people or repeating the same issues would only slow down, if not stifle, the legislative process.

"More seriously, if those to be asked are those who harbor strong anti-Moro prejudices, biases, hatred, the outcome is already predicted," it added.

The MILF, however, clarified that it is not expecting president-elect Rodrigo Duterte and his designated peace adviser Dureza to delay the enactment of BBL.

"Duterte had solemnly pledged during the presidential campaign in May this year that he would solve the 'legitimate grievances' of the Bangsamoro people and 'nothing,' he said further, 'can satisfy them except passing the BBL,'" the MILF said.

"We hold on to this promise as sacred, and we believe in him. All his close friends for years whom we talked to attested to his loyalty to friendship, and once he commits, he fulfills (his commitment)."

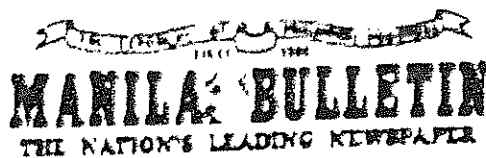
One of the priority measures of the outgoing Aquino administration, the BBL was bypassed by the 16th Congress. The MILF noted that under the CAB, the decommissioning of its weapons and combatants would not be realized if the BBL does not move in the legislature.

In a meeting with Duterte here last Friday, MILF leaders informed the incoming president that they would want to see the BBL enacted first before the form of government is changed from unitary to federal. The group said it would take time before the CAB is implemented if the creation of the Bangsamoro government is subsumed by efforts to push for federalism.

"We told him (Duterte) that we are not against federalism per se but we believe we can be more of help to the federal government of the Philippines if the Bangsamoro (government) is implemented first. He listened to our explanation," MILF vice chairman for political affairs Ghadzali Jaafar told The STAR in a phone interview.

The group is open to refining the draft BBL to ensure its early passage in Congress.

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Jolo mayor asks AFP to probe 'unholy alliance' with ASG

ZAMBOANGA CITY — Jolo, Sulu Mayor Hussin Amin yesterday accused the military of a cover-up in the alleged involvement of some scalawag officials and soldiers, who have been accused of maintaining an "unholy alliance" with the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG).

Amin said top officials of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) should first conduct a discrete "evaluation and validation" of claims made by some camps in the province that some of the military assigned in Sulu province were in cahoots with the ASG.

"These are scalawags in the organization and should be investigated and dismissed from the service," he said.

The mayor also clarified an earlier report that he was accusing the military

of conniving with the ASG, saying that it was a "misleading" information.

"I am not accusing the military of having an unholy alliance with the ASG. I only echoed the reports my office have been receiving from the people in the province so the military can start from there (about any) investigation on the claims of the Suluanos," Amin said.

He emphasized that he only wanted the military "to validate and confirm" the veracity of these reports.

He said that there are even local residents of Sulu who have posted such claims on social media, which should have been "a good signal for the military in Manila to conduct an impartial investigation (on the accusations)."

Amin lamented that military leaders

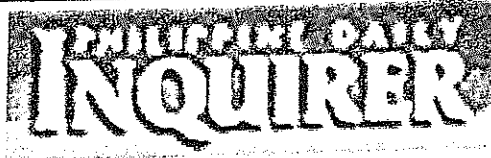
should not blame him for his revelation, but instead check the report and not just exonerate the military organization outright of any malicious allegations against them.

A source close to the Manila Bulletin said the reports reaching Amin were all true and were happening in the province for many years now.

According to the same source, while the ASG was asking for ransoms below ₱100,000 in the past, these have been jacked up to as much as ₱600 million of late "because part of the ransom had to be shared with some senior officials in Sulu."

The ASG also shared part of the ransom with the people in the village where they usually keep the victims until payment of ransom is made. (Nonoy E. Lacson)

10 June 2016



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Drills start on US aircraft carriers

TWO US aircraft carriers have started exercises in the Philippine Sea, defense officials said on Sunday, as Washington's close ally Manila faces growing pressure from Beijing in the South China Sea.

The US Pacific Command said the USS John C. Stennis and the USS Ronald Reagan, among the world's largest warships, began conducting air defense drills, sea surveillance, and long range strikes on Saturday.

The command said the operations marked America's continued presence in the Asia-Pacific region as China expands its maritime strength and engages in massive island-building activities in the South China Sea.

"No other navy can concentrate this much combat power on one sea ... It was truly impressive," said US Rear Adm. Marcus Hitchcock, carrier strike group commander.

US Defense Secretary Ashton Carter visited the Stennis in April as it sailed off the Philippines near the disputed Spratly islands where China has expanded islets and reefs into islands capable of supporting airfields and other installations.

Treaty allies

The Philippines has been upgrading its defense ties with the United States, its long-time treaty ally, to help boost the ability of one of Asia's weakest armed forces.

The US exercises synchronized the activities of more than 12,000 sailors, 140 aircraft, six combatants and the two carriers, Hitchcock said.

The command said the drills were meant to promote freedom of navigation and overflight in the region's airspace and waters.

"[This] has been a great opportunity for us to train on how we would operate multiple carrier strike groups in a contested environment," said US Rear Adm. John Alexander, another carrier strike group commander.

AFP

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Gov't-NDF peace talks bring glimmer of hope

By ARTEMIO DURLAO

BAGUIO CITY – Human rights advocates expressed hope that peace might finally come to the country if the National Democratic Front (NDF) and the incoming Duterte administration nail down an agreement to start negotiations in July.

Karapatan secretary general Cristina Palabay said the agreement between the NDF and Duterte's representatives coincided with the release of political prisoners Sharon Cabusao and Isidro de Lima from the Taguig City Jail and the Special Intensive Care Unit-1 at Camp Bagong Diwa.

"We welcome the Joint Statement of the NDF and the peace panel of the incoming Duterte government. We fully support the efforts to finally address the roots of the ongoing civil war through the peace talks, which the Aquino regime had intentionally bungled in the last five years," Palabay said.

The joint statement said the July peace talks would also tackle the amnesty proclamation for all political prisoners.

"We hope that all political prisoners – victims of illegal arrest, torture and detention because of their activism and political beliefs – will be immediately released, as the GPH's obligations under the Comprehensive Agreement on the Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law and the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity

Guarantees," she added.

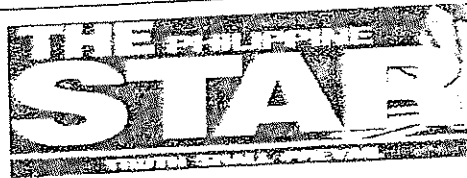
There are more than 500 political prisoners in various jails in the country, 18 of them allegedly NDF consultants in the peace talks.

According to Karapatan, the fabricated charge of illegal possession of firearms and explosives against Cabusao, De Lima and NDF peace consultant Adelberto Silva was dismissed by the Bacoor, Cavite Regional Trial Court Branch 19. The court granted Silva's motion to dismiss, saying that the search and seizure conducted during their arrest is "unreasonable." The court also deemed the purported evidence as the "proverbial fruit of a poisonous tree."

Palabay said the court decision is similar to the basis for the withdrawal of charges against the 43 health workers or the "Morong 43." The arrest and detention of the 43 health workers, like those of Cabusao, De Lima, Silva and all political prisoners, is illegal because the charges against them were "fabricated and planted and their right to due process was grossly violated in the conduct of the illegal search and seizure."

"At least 297 out of 509 political prisoners (as of May 31) were illegally arrested under Aquino. Almost all of the 509 were slapped with trumped-up criminal charges to hide the political nature of their arrest," Palabay said.

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US aircraft carriers start drills in Phl Sea

Two US aircraft carriers have started exercises in the Philippine Sea, defense officials said yesterday, as Washington's close ally Manila faces growing pressure from Beijing in the South China Sea.

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"(This) has been a great opportunity for us to train on how we would operate multiple carrier strike groups in a contested environment," said US Rear Admiral John Alexander, another carrier strike group commander.

The US Navy said it has been conducting dual carrier

operations marked America's continued presence in the Asia-Pacific as China expands its maritime strength and engages in massive island building activities in disputed waters.

"No other Navy can concentrate this much combat power on one sea... It was truly impressive," said US Rear Admiral Marcus Hitchcock, carrier strike group commander.

US Defense Secretary Ashton Carter visited the *Stennis* in April as it sailed off the Philip-

strike group operations for several years in the Philippine Sea, the South China Sea and the East China Sea, where China has a separate dispute with Japan over small islands.

Philippine defense department spokesman Peter Galvez said the exercises showed that the US was "resolute" in fulfilling its often repeated "ironclad commitment" to defend the Philippines.

"We welcome the strong co-operation and partnership we

have with our friends and allies ... in light of (the dispute) where our legitimate rights have been overstepped," he told AFP.

The Philippines has been improving its defense ties with the US, its longtime treaty ally and former colonial ruler, to help boost the ability of one of Asia's weakest armed forces.

The US exercises synchronized the activities of over 12,000 sailors, 140 aircraft, six combatants and the two carriers,

have with our friends and allies ... in light of (the dispute) where our legitimate rights have been overstepped," he told AFP.

The Philippines is awaiting a ruling from an international arbitration tribunal against China's claims to most of the South China Sea.

Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan also have overlapping claims to the strategic waterway, through which pass some of the world's most active shipping lanes.

— AFP

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JV vows close watch on AFP procurements

BY JP LOPEZ

SEN. JV Ejercito yesterday said he would keep an eye on the military's procurement program to ensure the controversial P1.2 billion acquisition of second-hand helicopters by the Department of National Defense and the Armed Forces won't be repeated.

Ejercito issued the statement in the wake of the failure of the Senate Blue Ribbon Committee headed by outgoing Sen. Teofisto Guingona III to finish the hearings on the controversial deal and file a committee report.

Ejercito said he doesn't want a repeat of the controversial chopper deal entered into by the DND and the joint venture of Rice Aircraft Services Inc. (RASI) and Eagle Copters Ltd., adding he wants to ensure that the DND and the AFP would prioritize brand-new over refurbished or second hand equipment.

Rhodora Alvarez alias "Joey," the whistleblower in the questionable procurement of 21 refurbished UH-1 helicopters, filed last March plunder and graft charges against Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin and several other Defense officials.

RASI president Robert Rice Jr., Matthew Rice, Phil Kemp, and Michael O'Reilly, president of Eagle Copters Ltd., were also charged.

Alvarez claimed the DND and Air Force officials colluded in violating rules on procurement to benefit RASI, which bagged the negotiated contract worth P1.25 billion in December 2013 for the supply of 21 refurbished combat Huey UH-1 helicopters on the condition that they will be delivered within 180 days.

Gazmin scrapped the helicopter deal after the controversy was revealed and blacklisted the joint venture of RASI and Eagle Copter Ltd of Canada.

Alvarez said that of the 21 UH-1 units, the DND only accepted eight units that were also defective.

Ejercito said instead of buying brand new items as stated under the AFP modernization program, the DND opted to buy second hand equipment that most countries consider as "unfit" for their soldiers and asked the Blue Ribbon Committee to probe the deal.

Despite Guingona's failure to finish the investigation, Ejercito said the efforts of individuals who helped bring out the truth behind the chopper deal controversy were not put to waste because the senate inquiry somehow prevented the DND from proceeding with the deal.

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West Philippine Sea: Beyond Sound Bites

BY TESS BACALLA

AS the Philippines heads into a new political dispensation, much of the country is how President-elect Rodrigo Duterte will sooner or later deal with the issue of China's aggressive intrusion into the West Philippine Sea (or areas of the South China Sea lying within the country's exclusive economic zone prescribed by international law).

By this time, thanks or no thanks to a media feeding frenzy over the maverick presidential winner from the south, who hasn't heard or read Duterte's public statements (or watched him on television) on the country's territorial conflict with China?

His pronouncements have sent mixed, nay, contradictory, signals on where he stands or sits amid this simmering maritime flash-point in Philippine-Sino ties. This, against a backdrop of the much anticipated ruling of The Hague tribunal, where the Philippines, taking the path of international arbitration under outgoing President Benigno 'Noy' Aquino III's watch, has lodged its case against China.

Such declarations easily lend themselves to sound bite-riddled, "he said/she said", media reports, the better to dumb down important issues and public discourse. That they have generated more media hype is best viewed in light of the fact that they come no less from the country's recently proclaimed president, who has

earned a global reputation not only for his foul mouth bent on spewing out invective-laden rants each time he speaks, but also for his predictable yet no less disturbing off-the-cuff comments even on a highly volatile issue that is the West Philippine Sea.

Duterte is known to have said he would seek multilateral talks with other claimant states to the South China Sea and major Philippine allies like the United States, favored a joint exploration with China in the resource-rich, strategic waterway, and, perhaps tongue-in-cheek, that he would jet-ski to the Panatag (Scarborough) Shoal to plant a Philippine flag on the disputed island.

The 71-year-old soon-to-be erstwhile Davao City mayor's every declaration, however facetious or mind-boggling to some, and clearly a sharp departure from the Aquino administration's posture on the West Philippine Sea, has merited prominent print space and airtime.

But whether extensive media coverage of the country's territorial tensions with China, conveniently alongside Duterte's propensity to flip-flop on the maritime wrangling in the West Philippine Sea, has led to more nuanced and expansive understanding among Filipinos of the relevant issues involved is entirely another matter.

To date much of the narrative on the escalating territorial quarrel between the two Asian neighbors tends to pit the states involved against one other - China vs the

Philippines and other regional claimants, and China vs the US as well as Japan as major global powers keen to assert freedom of navigation in the contested waters of the South China Sea, and push for regional peace and stability in the face of China's bluster.

There is no gainsaying the polarizing impact of the South China Sea disputes, which involve other Southeast Asian neighbors. Yet such discords carry more complexities than what the Philippine media may have cared to examine and bring to the forefront of public discussion. Are there other frames besides conflict through which the South China Sea issue - and how it impacts a smaller country like the Philippines - must be seen and reported by the press? Surely there are, such as the economic and historical sides of the dispute.

What are the dominant narratives driving public discussions on the West Philippine Sea? What issues are being glossed over or have merited little, if any, media attention? Is there adequate context and background in media coverage of the ongoing maritime standoff between China and the Philippines? To what extent have the media, citing carefully researched pieces of evidence presented by experts including Associate Justice Antonio Carpio, challenged China's extensive territorial claims, moored in the historically dubious nine-dash line that covers practically the entire West Philippine Sea?

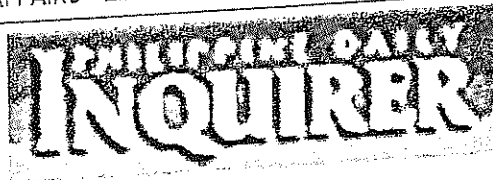
Media's role in fostering public understanding of important issues - not least of which are the dark clouds hovering over the West Philippine Sea - cannot be underscored enough.

This is true not only at the national level but also across communities that are far removed from the center of foreign policy-making in the Philippines. Interestingly enough, it is in these areas where impoverished and marginalized sectors such as fisherfolk have been feeling the brunt of China's bellicose actions, enough to send alarm bells ringing and crisis shockwaves reverberating across the country. But this kind of scenario is perhaps best left to the imagination.

It appears that the tides of public opinion on the West Philippine Sea have yet to rise in unison with the frenzied efforts of the government to wrest back control of the contested islands.

Suffice it to say that public engagement and dialogue around the West Philippine Sea vary at best - and it behooves the media to report on the country's claims in the disputed waters with increased sharpness, nuance, background and context.

To do otherwise is to leave the public wading helplessly in the murky waters of the disputed islands - amid a sea of shallow reports on competing maritime claims, not to mention Duterte's controversial pronouncements that conveniently offer sensationalist grist for media mills.



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WINNING SHOT This photo, titled "Holy Cow," by INQUIRER photographer Marianne Bermudez (left), won the Sopa Award for Excellence in News Photography.



NINO ISULUS ORBETA

PDI photographer bags Sopa excellence award

By TJ Burgonio

A GREAT shot.

A photo of a tethered cow leaping over Philippine Marines during live-fire exercises won for INQUIRER photographer Marianne Bermudez her first award from the prestigious The Society of Publish-

ers in Asia (Sopa).

Bermudez copped Sopa's Award for Excellence in News Photography (Group, B) in 2016 during the annual awards gala in Hong Kong on Wednesday night, besting other publications' pictures of a rally in Malaysia and of home-

PDI PHOTOGRAPHER/AI8

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EXCELLENCE IN PHOTOGRAPHY
INQUIRER photographer Marianne Bermudez shows off the Award for Excellence in News Photography given by The Society of Publishers in Asia in Hong Kong.

NIÑO JESUS ORBETA

From page A1

less people in China and Hong Kong.
The Malaysiakini's photo of the Bersih 4 rally, a series of rallies mounted by a coalition seeking electoral reforms in Malaysia, won honorable mention.

The Sopa Awards for Editorial Excellence serve as the world-class benchmark for quality journalism in Asia, according to the nonprofit organization.

In Sopa's online announcement of the 2016 winners, a judge made this comment on Bermudez's photo: "A great shot."

The winning photo, titled "Holy Cow," was the INQUIRER's front-page wallpaper in its Oct. 10, 2015, issue.

Picture perfect

But for Bermudez, 35, it was just a "lucky shot."

While on the road to cover the joint exercises of Filipino troops and their American counterparts in the former US naval base in San Antonio, Zambales, a province north of Manila, she already had a "photo in mind," she said.

The Associated Press, Reuters and Chinese dailies, and being the only Filipinos there we were kind of just felt our way around," she said.

"I have more appreciation for the Sopa awards this year, with the former Taiwanese President Ma Ying-jeou giving a very supportive speech on a video recording, with all-out support for freedom of the press, especially in Southeast Asia," she said.

Ma, who stepped down on May 20 after an eight-year term as Taiwan's president, was banned by the new government from traveling to Hong Kong over concerns about his personal safety and a possible leak of state secrets.

"I didn't know that Hong Kong was such a dangerous city," Ma said in the video-taped keynote speech. "Ladies and gentlemen, you better watch out."

Biggest honors

In the same speech, Ma also said: "Freedom of the press and standards of professional journalism have always indicated the cultural level of modern societies, and also reflect core values that Taiwan and Hong Kong share and uphold."

After all, it was her second time to cover the exercises at the naval base.

"The photo of the Philippine Marines with the jumping cow, however, was a surprise. It was not planned at all. The area where the live firing was held was filled with about two dozen grazing cows. And when the American and Philippine Marines began firing, the cows just went wild," she said.

If at all, it was just a "very lucky shot," Bermudez said.

"I was not even framing for the cow. I was focused on the soldiers on the ground when one of the cows just jumped into the frame. I got very lucky," she said.

It was a back-to-back win for the INQUIRER. Last year, the newspaper's multi-awarded photographer Edwin Bacasmas also won the Award for Excellence in the same category for his photo, titled "Home Street Home."

Bermudez said winning the award was a "humbling experience" given that her photo was up against excellent pictures.

"Even the nominees at our table during the awarding ceremony were from

In 2003, the news story "Abadilla 5: Story out of martial law pages" won the Sopa Excellence in Specialized Reporting award in Category B, the award for local newspapers.

The five-part series, which came out on Dec. 10-14, 2002, was written by reporters Stella Ruth O. Gonzales, Juliet Labog-Javellana and Nancy Carvajal.

Last year, Carvajal was the biggest winner when she was named Sopa's Journalist of the Year.

Carvajal bested two other finalists—Jonah M. Kessel of the International New York Times and Hannah Beech of Time—for the prestigious award.

Over the years, the INQUIRER has received several awards from the Sopa, among them: Best Opinion Piece; Best Opinion Writing; Local Journalist Award; Certificate of Excellence in the Scoop Category; Honorable Mention in Excellence in Reporting of Breaking News, Feature Writing and Investigative Reporting; and citations for Environmental Reporting and Editorial Cartooning. *With a report from Inquirer Research*

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Balita
ANG NANGUNGUNANG PAHAYAGANG TAGALOG SA BANSÀ P8.00

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VIDEO NG PAMUMUGOT KAY HALL, 'WAG IKALAT Muslim sa Basilan, Sulu, dapat magkaisa vs Abu Sayyaf—PNP

NI AARON RECUENCO

Hinimok ng Philippine National Police (PNP) ang lahat ng Muslim, partikular sa Basilan at Sulu, na magkaisa sa pagtataboy sa mga miyembro ng kilabot na teroristang grupo ng Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) sa kani-kanilang komunidad.

Kasabay nito, hinikayat ng pamunuan ng PNP ang publiko na huwag i-share o ikalat pa sa social media ang video na sinasabing inilabas ng Abu Sayyaf at nagpapakita sa aktuwal na pagpugot sa Canadian na bihag na si Robert Hall nitong Hunyo 13.

Sinabi ni Senior Supt. Robert Fajardo, hepe ng Anti-Kidnapping Group (AKG) ng PNP, na lubhang hindi katanggap-tanggap ang ginawa ng Abu Sayyaf kay Hall, sa kasagsagan ng paggunita sa banal na buwan ng Ramadan.

"This is the time when Moslems around the world focus on fasting, praying, giving charity, and religious devotion, refraining from violence, anger, greed, envy and lust," sabi ni Fajardo.

Dahil sa ginawang pamumugot, sinabi ni Fajardo na pinatunayan lang ng ASG na gumagawa ito ng mga hakbanging kontra sa turo ng Islam, kaya dapat lang na kondenahin.

"Let all Muslim, particularly in Sulu, to unite para itaboy natin ang ASG na nanggugulo at hindi sumusunod sa isinasaad ng Koran. Hindi na makatao

ang ginagawang pagpugot ng ASG," giit ni Fajardo. "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."

Mayroon nang mga panukala para isailalim ang Sulu at Basilan sa batas militar upang tuluyan nang matuldukan ang matinding problema ng bansa sa Abu Sayyaf, partikular sa pagdukot at pambibihag ng mga ito.

Sa kanyang panig, sinabi naman ni PNP Spokesman Chief Supt. Wilben

Mayor na ang video ng pamumugot kay Hall ay hindi tamang ikalat o pagpasapasan ng mga netizen.

"Don't patronize, share barbaric videos of ASG. We would appreciate if the netizens would share with us any information about the spreading of this video. But again, these terroristic acts shouldn't be spread or patronized," diin ni Mayor.

Aniya, pinag-iisipan na ng Anti-Cybercrime Group (ACG) ang posibilidad na i-delete na ang nasabing video upang hindi na kumalat pa.



RITUWAL ALA-MUMBAKI Sabay-sabay na uminom ng alak ang mga mumbaki (katutubong pari) ng Ifugao para sa rituwal ng pasasalamat sa Lumikha dahil sa maginhawang buhay at pagbibigay ng proteksiyon sa Rice Terraces, kasabay ng selebrasyon ng ika-50 anibersaryo ng pagkakatatag ng lalawigan nitong Sabado.

RIZALDY COMANDA

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Pahina. 4

AFP: seryoso kami sa papel namin!

MARILING sinabi ng pamunuan ng Armed Forces of the Philippines na seryoso sila sa kanilang papel laban sa bandidong grupong Abu Sayyaf.

Mariling itinanggi ni Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla, tagapagsalita ng AFP, ang paratang sa militar at sinabing inalay nila ang kanilang sarili para masugpo ang bandidong grupo.

Marami na aniya sa kanilang hanay ang nasawi dahil sa dedikasyon at pagmamahal sa trabaho para lang magtagumpay sa hangarin na pigilan ang Abu Sayyaf.

Nabatid na iminungkahi ng alkalde ng Jolo, Sulu na may ilang opisyal sa hanay ng militar ang sumusuporta sa Abu Sayyaf at nakikibang pa umano sa binabayaranang ransom money.

Lumutang ang paratang na ito matapos na muling pugutan ng ulo ang isa pang bihag ng ASG na si Robert Hall, Canadian national,

noong Hunyo 13.

Una na ring itinanggi ng AFP sa Western Mindanao ang nasabing alegasyon sa pagsasabi na walang ganitong impormasyong nakarating sa kanila.

Ayon kay Maj. Filemon Tan Jr., hindi siya naniniwala na magagawa ito ng kanilang kasamahan.

Kaugnay nito, nagpatupad na rin ng 'refinements' sa opensiba para masagip ang mga bihag ng Sayyaf, kung saan bukas ang hanay ng militar sa mga adjustment sa kanilang opensiba laban sa bandidong grupo na ASG.

Ito ang tiniyak ni Maj. Filemon Tan Jr., tagapagsalita ng Western Mindanao Command para matiyak lamang ang kaligtasan at kailayan ng dalawang natitirang bihag ng grupo.

Matatandaan na nagbantay ang ASG na pupugutan nila ang natitirang bihag, partikular ang Norwegian na si Kjartan Sekkingstad. MARY S

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POLICE FILES

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Sulu mayor at AFP official nagpatutisadahan sa ransom sa Abu Sayyaf

PINABULAANAN ng Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) sa Western Mindanao ang alegasyon ng alkalde ng Jolo sa lalawigan ng Sulu na ilang opisyal sa hanay ng militar ang sumusuporta sa Abu Sayyaf group (ASG) at nakikinabang pa umano sa binabayaranang ransom money.

Ayon kay Major Filemon Tan, tagapagsalita ng Western Mindanao Command (WestMinCom), walang ganitong impormasyong nakarating sa kanila at hindi siya naniniwala na magagawa ito ng kanilang kasamahan.

Una rito, isiniwalat ni Jolo Mayor Hussin Amin na mayroon ilang opisyal ng militar na nakabase sa Sulu ang nagbibigay ng suporta sa Abu Sayyaf at ang kapalit umano nito ay nakikinabang sila ibinabayad na ransom money para sa pagpapalaya ng mga biktima ng kidnapping.

Ani Hussin, ito rin umano ang dahilan kung bakit ilang dekada na rin at hindi matapos-tapos ang problema ng Abu Sayyaf sa Sulu.

Ang pahayag ni Hussin ay kasunod ng panibagong pamumugot ng ulo ng Abu Sayyaf sa isa pang biktima ng Samal Island kidnapping, ang Canadian national na si Robert Hall kung saan una na ring pinugutan ang isa pang niyang kababayan na si John Ridsdel.

Kasunod nito, hinamon ni Tan ang opisyal na pagpapalabas ng pruwera sa kanyang alegasyon para malaman ang katotohanan kung totoo man na may nangyayaring ganito para mapanagot ang mga posibleng sangkot dito.

"That is his allegation and he has to prove that. Kung meron, bakit hindi niya sabihin sa amin. Hindi ko po alam kasi no ransom policy kami tapos I cannot confirm yang sinasabi niyang ransom na meron dumating tapos may nakikinabang. If they have reports of that alam naman natin na bawal yang pong binihingi natin if you know something then ilabas po natin para maimbestigahan," pahayag pa ni Tan.

Inihayag ni Tan na hindi maaaring may nangyayaring ganito sa kanilang hanay dahil ito ang magpapahirap at magpapadumi sa kanilang organisasyon.

"Yan ang mga hindi dapat nangyayari, yung mga ganyan within the organization, which the organization really suffer. Sundalo ka tapos ganoon ang gagawin mo? Napakasakit naman non," dagdag pa ni Tan.

Sa kabilang dako naman, bumuwelta rin si Tan na patuloy din nilang bineberipika ngayon ang ilang lumalabas na impormasyon na posibeng mayroon din sa mga elected official sa Sulu ang sumusuporta at nakikinabang sa ginagawa ng Abu Sayyaf kaya hindi nila maresolba ang problema ng kidnapping at iba pang mga kriminalidad na ginagawa ng mga bandido.

Pero kagaya ng alegasyon ni Mayor Hussin, sinabi ni Tan na wala ring hinahawakang matibay na ebidensya sa kasalukuyan ang militar na makapagtuturo kung sino sa mga lokal official sa Sulu ang nagsisilbing supporter ng Abu Sayyaf.

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Pahina. 2

AFP yuko sa 'refinement order' ni PNoy

Handang sumunod ang pamunuan ng Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) sa ibinabang kautusan ni outgoing President Benigno 'Noynoy' Aquino III na magkaroon ng tinatawag na 'refinements' sa operasyon laban sa Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG).

Ayon kay Maj. Felimon Tan Jr., spokesperson ng Western Mindanao Command (WestMinCom) bukas ang hanay ng militar sa mga pagbabago o adjustments sa kanilang opensiba laban sa bandido.

"Susundin namin ang direktiba ni Pangulong Aquino, hindi dahil siya ang commander in chief kundi ay para matiyak lamang ang kaligtasan at kalayaan ng dalawang natitirang bihag ng ASG," wika ni Tan.

Una nang iniutos ng Pangulong Aquino sa Jolo, Sulu na magkaroon ng "refinements" sa operasyon ng militar laban sa mga bandido.

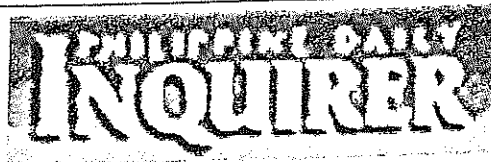
Sinabi ni Tan na igi-nagalang nila ang "strategic" decision ng national leadership na kailangan nilang maipatupad.

Matapos ang pagpugot sa dalawang Canadian national na bihag na sina John Ridsel at Robert Hall, muling nagbanta ang ASG na may pupugutan muli sila sa dalawang natitirang bihag, partikular ang Norweigan na si Kjartan Sekkingstad.

Bihag din ng ASG ang Pinay girlfriend ni Hall na si Marites Flor.

Samantala, hanggang sa ngayon ay bigo pa rin ang militar at pulisya na hindi makita ang bangkay ni Hall, na pinugutan noong Hunyo 14 matapos hindi magbayad ng P300 milyon ransom kung saan nakita ang pugot na ulo nito sa malapit sa Carmelite Cathedral sa Sanchez St., Jolo, Sulu bandang alas-nuwebe ng gabi na nakabalot sa isang plastic bag. (Betchai Julian)

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Incoming defense chief Gen. Delfin Lorenzana

IN A recent article on US-Philippine relations, Ernest Bower, a senior adviser for the Southeast Asia Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, was quoted as saying that President-elect Rodrigo Duterte's "seemingly warming up to China" is not a cause for any concern ("US closely 'watching' Duterte, says expert," Front Page, 6/8/16). "What we are watching is who he selects to be in his Cabinet." The article concludes by saying that "retired General Delfin Lorenzana's designation as the next defense chief is considered to be a silver lining in what is apparently a shallow bench in the security cluster of the Duterte Cabinet."

REVEILLE

*Ramon
J. Farolan*



Among the incoming Cabinet members of the new administration, Lorenzana is probably one of the least known. Many of the other nominees held high profile positions in the past—Ben Diokno at budget, Leonor Briones at treasury, Sonny Dominguez at agriculture, Art Tugade at the Clark Development Corp., and Perfecto Yasay at the Securities and Exchange Commission. In the case of Lorenzana, he spent more than 10 years abroad serving as defense attaché, and presidential representative and head of the Office of Veterans Affairs at the Philippine Embassy in Washington, DC.

In his first interview with the media since the announcement of his designation, Lorenzana traced his roots to the Ilocos Region where his grandparents come from. Both mother and father are natives of Pangasinan. In 1936, they migrated to Mindanao, settling down in Cotabato (now Maguindanao) where Delfin was born. He grew up in Parang, attending Notre Dame High School, and later finished two years of college at Notre Dame University in Cotabato City before entering the Philippine Military Academy in 1969. After graduation from the academy in 1973, he joined the Philippine Army although his first choice of branch of service was the Air Force. An accident during his senior year resulted in vision problems bringing to an end his dreams of flying airplanes.

In 1998, as brigade commander of the 601st Infantry Brigade, 6th Division of the Philippine Army, he was responsible for the capture of kidnap for ransom leader, Tahir Alonto and his group with the safe recovery of several hostages. During the all-out Armed Forces of the Philippines offensive against the Moro Islamic Liberation Front from 1998 to 2000, he led operations resulting in the fall of three MILF camps aside from Camp Abubakar, and continued to maintain peace and order in his area of responsibility, enabling local and national government offices to pursue development projects without interference from lawless elements.

One of his more remarkable accomplishments took place in May 2001 when he served as commander of the Light Armored Brigade and concurrent ground commander of Task Force Libra. With three battalions of troops and assisted by Philippine National Police anti-riot elements, he prevented the capture and occupation of Malacñang by pro-Erap forces attempting to unseat newly-installed President Gloria Arroyo. The slightest miscalculation or poorly coordinated reaction to aggressive moves by the Erap mob could have easily resulted in bloodshed and violence. Lorenzana's cool and mature handling of the delicate situation saved the day for the nation.

Where is the Duterte connection?

In 1987, as head of the 2nd Scout Ranger Battalion stationed in Davao City, he supported newly-elected Mayor Rodrigo Duterte in clearing the city of insurgents, sparrow units, and criminal syndicates. This close relationship has persisted through the years even when Lorenzana was no longer operating in the Davao area. An early working association with the mayor appears to be a common thread that runs through his appointees, particularly in the field of security and police operations.

Among the advocacies I have pursued in recent years is that of providing the chief of staff of the AFP and its service commanders with fixed terms of office in order to provide strength and stability in command for leaders of the organization. A fixed term of office would not preclude the commander in chief from terminating their services should they be found incompetent or corrupt. The revolving door policy of past presidents has damaged the institution more than anything else. General Lorenzana fully agrees with these ideas and will work to have this system in place in a Duterte administration.

In this regard, there are reports of a possible change of leadership in the AFP come June 30. General Lorenzana's position is that there is nothing official from President-elect Duterte on this matter. If we are to make changes simply for the sake of change, we cannot expect positive results. We only add one more picture to hang on the wall reserved for AFP chiefs of staff at the GHQ building in Camp Aguinaldo.

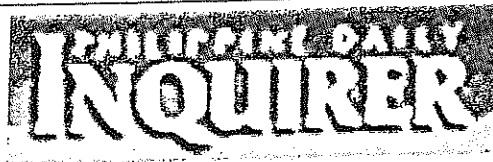
Lorenzana's immediate concern is the Abu Sayyaf problem in Basilan and Sulu. The beheading of the second Canadian national has been portrayed as a slap on the face of the incoming President, daring him to prove his toughness. Unless drastic action is taken we may not be able to save another foreign hostage from beheading. This time the victim is a Norwegian.

The presence of 10 battalions consisting of over 5,000 troops in the area is not going to change matters. Past experience has shown that pouring more troops into the battlefield makes for great headlines, but they have never produced the desired results. If we cannot solve the problem of kidnap-for-ransom activities being carried out in our backyard, how do we expect to confront the big bully in the neighborhood? In the eyes of the world, we have failed miserably against some 300 or more so-called bandits.

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General Lorenzana has a golden opportunity to set things right. From what I see, the President-elect tends to allow his appointees the widest leeway in running their respective departments. With his military background, his negotiating skills and experience, plus graduate work in operations research at Ateneo, strategic studies at Australian National University in Canberra, and in business economics at the University of Asia and the Pacific, Lorenzana should be able to provide new directions and encourage fresh ideas and initiatives that would enable the department to better confront the challenges we now face as a nation.

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How Joma can help to win peace



WE THANK Jose Maria Sison for being more open on the issues and proposals of the National Democratic Front (NDF) online.

At the very least, it shows that he may now be ready to agree to the conduct of an open, participatory and comprehensive peace process, even as he still insists that this be conducted outside the country, primarily because of his deeply held concerns for his and his peace negotiators/consultants' personal security and safety. This is understandable: Those fighting a war would rather enjoy its fruits than be counted among those who have sacrificed their lives in the name of national democracy.

Joma's declaration that "The changes we wanted to happen in our country are very doable if the Duterte government is determined, together with the NDF, to have fundamental change, genuine freedom, and development," is—on the surface—very laudable and worth pursuing.

However, it raises many questions. Exactly what does he mean by that declaration? Can't Joma state his ideas simply—not in "motherhood forms"—so that they would be easily understood by the people? Does he honestly believe that his "motherhood ideas" can be clearly defined for us only by the government and NDF negotiators meeting halfway across

the world? How can peace talks—held outside of the country and facilitated by foreigners speaking a language that causes most Filipinos "nosebleeds," so to speak—ever solve national issues that need every Filipino's attention?

For the past three decades, the government—in its desire to set in place an era of a just, comprehensive and lasting peace—has consistently acceded to Joma's "demand" that the peace negotiations be held in the Netherlands, with unquestionably sincere Dutchmen mediating the process. And yet, all through these years, nothing substantial has been agreed upon. To this day, not a single doable agreement on how to go about bringing social change has been reached. Apparently, even supposedly simple procedural matters on facilitating the peace negotiations could not be agreed upon.

Maybe it is time we seriously gave the NDF position on the negotiating table a re-think. Perhaps it is time we listened to the sentiments of 95.3 percent of Filipinos who—based on results of the peace education and advocacy phrase of "YES FOR PEACE Bayanihan para sa IJJS" (Kapayapaan, Kaunlaran at Kasapahanan)—would rather see the peace talks held here instead of abroad. Joma may want to seriously consider the University of the Philippines as a

venue and as a facilitator in the peace negotiations as resolved by the UP Board of Regents in 1992.

Also, Joma may want to livestream and post in real-time the formal proceedings of the peace talks and/or joint statements to openly show the Filipino people that, indeed, he represents our interests and not only his own.

After all, "Sovereignty resides in the people and all government authority emanates from them." Therefore, we, the people, need to know what Joma is claiming on our behalf.

By accepting the foregoing propositions, he can enjoy as much propaganda mileage as the government and the ruling elite, while enabling the negotiators to focus on the job at hand—crafting a peace agreement that will breeze through Congress and not suffer the same fate as the proposed Bangsamoro Basic Law—with carefully considered inputs from the Filipino people.

Of course, his security and safety as well as those of his peace negotiators and consultants will have to be guaranteed by the government for all these to happen.

—ERNESTO ANGELES ALCANZARE,
organizer, Yes For Peace,
yes4peace@gmail.com

ONLINE NEWS

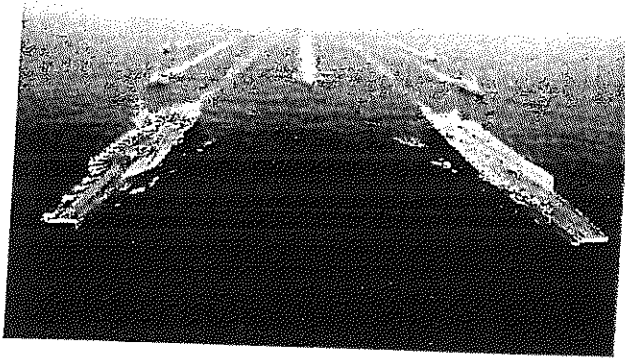
20 JUNE 2016

www.inquirer.net

US aircraft carriers start drills off Philippines

Agence France-Presse

03:59 PM June 19th, 2016



COORDINATED OPERATIONS The Nimitz-class aircraft carriers USS John C. Stennis and USS Ronald Reagan conduct dual carrier flight operations in support of security and stability in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region. The activities mark the US Navy's continued presence throughout the area of responsibility. US NAVY PHOTO

MANILA, Philippines — Two US aircraft carriers have started exercises in the Philippine Sea, defense officials said Sunday, as Washington's close ally Manila faces growing pressure from Beijing in the South China Sea.

The US Pacific Command said the USS John C. Stennis and USS Ronald Reagan, among the world's largest warships, began conducting air defense drills, sea surveillance, and long range strikes on Saturday.

READ: US superforce patrolling PH Sea

The command said the operations marked America's continued presence in the Asia-Pacific as China expands its maritime strength and engages in massive island building activities in disputed waters.

"No other Navy can concentrate this much combat power on one sea... It was truly impressive," said US Rear Admiral Marcus Hitchcock, carrier strike group commander.

US Defense Secretary Ashton Carter visited the Stennis in April as it sailed off the Philippines near the disputed area where China has expanded islets and reefs into islands capable of supporting airfields and other installations.

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

The Philippines has been upgrading its defense ties with the United States, its longtime treaty ally, to help boost the ability of one of Asia's weakest armed forces

The US exercises synchronized the activities of more than 12,000 sailors, 140 aircraft, six combatants and the two carriers, Hitchcock said.

The command said the drills were meant to promote freedom of navigation and overflight in the region's airspace and waters.

"[This] has been a great opportunity for us to train on how we would operate multiple carrier strike groups in a contested environment," said US Rear Adm. John Alexander, another carrier strike group commander. **AFP**

www.philstar.com

MILF: Past consultations on BBL already sufficient

[R. Alessa Romero](#) (philstar.com) | Updated June 19, 2016 - 4:30pm



MILF chairman Al Haj Murad Ebrahim (left of Duterte) and MNLF leader Datu Abul Khayr Alonto (right of Duterte) shake hands in this June 17, 2016 file photo. Photo from Duterte camp

DAVAO CITY, Philippines – The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) maintained that there have been enough consultations on the proposed Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL) after reports quoted people aligned with the incoming administration as saying that the peace process road map would require further discussion.

The MILF said the peace process should now be in the "implementation mode" since the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro (CAB), which the group believes would address the Mindanao problem, has already been signed.

The CAB, which was signed by the Aquino administration and the MILF in 2014, will serve as the basis of the BBL, which aims to create a new Bangsamoro region with enhanced autonomy.

"Consultations for this proposed law have already been virtually over. All what should be done is to revisit or use the inputs of these consultations or hearings, in the case of Congress, to fast-track the legislative roadmap or process," the MILF said in an editorial posted on luwaran.com.

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Earlier, Davac del Norte Rep. Pantaleon Alvarez, Duterte's choice for House Speaker, said the talks with the Moro group are back to 'square one' and that there is no need to tackle the BBL because it would be subsumed by the planned shift to federalism.

Jesus Dureza, who served as peace adviser during the Arroyo administration and who will be returning to the post when Duterte assumes office, was quoted in a MindaNews report as saying "wider consultations" on how to craft the Bangsamoro peace roadmap would be conducted.

The MILF said the peace negotiators from both sides, civil society, religious, educational and business groups have conducted a total of 625 consultations throughout the country from 2014 to 2015.

"Many of the provisions of the BBL were culled from inputs from these consultations. The Senate and Lower House of Congress have also conducted numerous hearings. The BBL had been with them for more than a year when it was formally submitted to them during a ceremony in Malacañan Palace on September 10, 2014," the group said.

The MILF said any consultation asking the same people or repeating the same issues would only slow down, if not stifle, the legislative process.

"More seriously, if those to be asked are those who harbor strong anti-Moro prejudices, biases, hatred, the outcome is already predicted," it added.

'Duterte will not delay peace process'

The MILF however, clarified that it is not expecting President-elect Rodrigo Duterte or Dureza to delay the enactment of the BBL.

"Duterte had solemnly pledged during the presidential campaign in May this year that he would solve the 'legitimate grievances' of the Bangsamoro people; and 'nothing,' he said further 'can satisfy them except by passing the BBL,'" the MILF said.

"We hold on to this promise, as sacred, and we believe in him! All his close friends for years whom we talked to attested to his loyalty to friendship and once he commits, he fulfils."

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

The BBL is one of the priority measures of the outgoing Aquino administration but it was bypassed by the 16th Congress. The MILF noted that under the CAB, the decommissioning of its weapons and combatants would not move if the BBL does not move in the legislature.

In a meeting with Duterte here last Friday, MILF leaders informed the incoming president that they would want to see the BBL enacted first before the form of government is changed to a federal system. The group said it would take time before the CAB is implemented if the creation of the Bangsamoro government is subsumed by efforts to push for federalism.

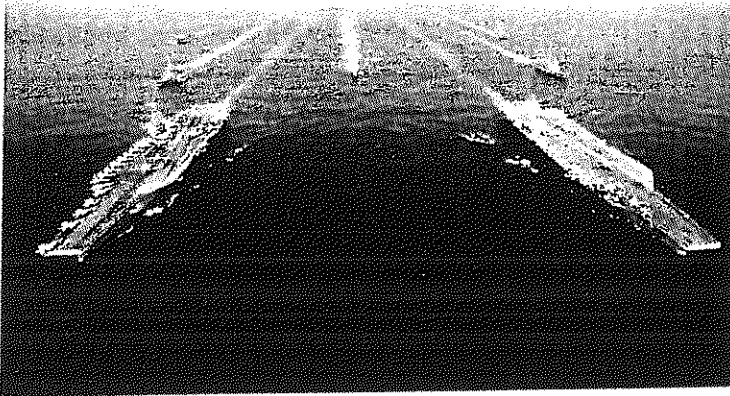
"We told him (Duterte) that we are not against federalism per se but we believe we can be more of help to the federal government of the Philippines if the Bangsamoro (government) is implemented first. He listened to our explanation," MILF vice chairman for political affairs Ghadzali Jaafar told The STAR in a phone interview.

The group, nevertheless, is open to refining the draft BBL to ensure its early passage in Congress.

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Drills start on US aircraft carriers

02:16 AM June 20th, 2016



COORDINATED OPERATIONS The Nimitz-class aircraft carriers USS John C. Stennis and USS Ronald Reagan conduct dual carrier flight operations in support of security and stability in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region. The activities mark the US Navy's continued presence throughout the area of responsibility. US NAVY PHOTO

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Treaty allies

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The US Navy said it has been conducting dual carrier strike group operations for several years in the Philippine Sea, the South China Sea and the East China Sea, where China has a separate dispute with Japan over small islands.

Philippine defense department spokesman Peter Galvez said the exercises showed that the US was "resolute" in fulfilling its often repeated "ironclad commitment" to defend the Philippines.

"We welcome the strong cooperation and partnership we have with our friends and allies ... in light of (the dispute) where our legitimate rights have been overstepped," he told AFP.

The Philippines is awaiting a ruling from an international arbitration tribunal against China's claims to most of the South China Sea.

Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan also have overlapping claims to the strategic waterway, through which pass some of the world's most active shipping lanes.

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