



ARMY

Serving the people. Securing the land.

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OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS NEWS CLIPPINGS

02 May 2016

Monday

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

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

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24-HOUR PUBLIC WEATHER FORECAST

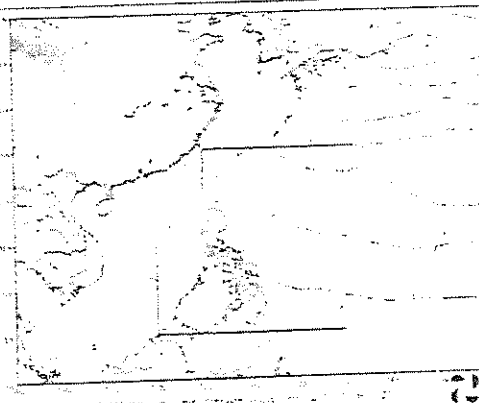
ISSUED AT: 5:00 PM 01 MAY 2016

VALID BEGINNING: 5:00 PM TODAY UNTIL 5:00 PM TOMORROW

SYNOPSIS: RIDGE OF HIGH PRESSURE AREA (HPA) AFFECTING NORTHERN AND CENTRAL LUZON. EASTERLIES AFFECTING THE EASTERN SECTION OF SOUTHERN LUZON, VISAYAS AND MINDANAO.

FORECAST: PARTLY CLOUDY TO CLOUDY SKIES WITH ISOLATED RAINSHOWERS OR THUNDERSTORMS WILL PREVAIL OVER METRO MANILA AND THE REST OF THE COUNTRY.

LIGHT TO MODERATE WINDS BLOWING FROM THE EAST TO SOUTHEAST WILL PREVAIL OVER NORTHERN AND CENTRAL LUZON AND COMING FROM THE EAST OVER THE REST OF THE COUNTRY. THE COASTAL WATERS THROUGHOUT THE ARCHIPELAGO WILL BE SLIGHT TO MODERATE.



PAGTAYA: BAHAGYANG MAULAP HANGGANG SA MAULAP NA KALANGITAN NA MAY PJULUPULONG MGA PAG-ULAN O PAGKIDLAT-PAGKULOG ANG IIRAL SA KAMAYNILAAN AT SA NALALABING BAHAGI NG BANSA.

MAHINA HANGGANG SA KATAMTAMANG HANGIN MULA SA SILANGAN HANGGANG SA TIMOG-SILANGAN ANG IIRAL SA HILAGA AT GITNANG LUZON AT MULA NAMAN SA SILANGAN SA NALALABING BAHAGI NG BANSA. ANG MGA BAYBAYING-DAGAT SA BUONG KAPULUAN AY MAGIGING BANAYAD HANGGANG SA KATAMTAMAN ANG PAG-ALON.

EXTREMES OF TEMPERATURE AND RELATIVE HUMIDITY FOR THE 24-HR PERIOD ENDING AT 4:00 PM TODAY AND RECORDED AT PAGASA WEATHER STATION, SCIENCE GARDEN, DILIMAN, QUEZON CITY:

MAXIMUM TEMPERATURE: 3:00 PM TODAY — 36.4°C
MAXIMUM RELATIVE HUMIDITY: 6:00 AM TODAY — 88 %

MINIMUM TEMPERATURE: 6:00 AM TODAY — 25.0°C
MINIMUM RELATIVE HUMIDITY: 3:00 PM TODAY — 40 %

TIDAL PREDICTIONS ALONG MANILA BAY
(Courtesy of NAMRIA)

OVER METRO MANILA:

LOW TIDE TOMORROW:
12:41 AM -0.01 METER

SUNRISE / SUNSET

MOONRISE / MOONSET
AND ILLUMINATION

HIGH TIDE TOMORROW:
8:36 AM 0.52 METER

SUNSET TODAY:

MOONRISE TOMORROW:

LOW TIDE TOMORROW:
12:41 AM 0.52 METER

SUNRISE TOMORROW:

MOONSET TOMORROW:

SUNSET TOMORROW:
6:13 PM

ILLUMINATION TOMORROW:
30%

For more information and queries, please call at telephone numbers 927-1335 and 927-2877 or log on to www.pagasa.dost.gov.ph.

PREPARED BY: SFD

CHECKED BY: RBB



Republic of the Philippines
Department of Science and Technology
PHILIPPINE ATMOSPHERIC, GEOPHYSICAL AND ASTRONOMICAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION (PAGASA)
Weather Forecasting Section, Weather Division
WFFC Bldg., BIR Road, Davao, Quezon City 1100

WFS-02
Rev 0/05-11-2015

24-Hour Weather Forecast and Extended Weather Outlook for Selected Cities:

ISSUED AT: 5:00 PM 01 MAY 2016

VALID BEGINNING: 5:00 PM TODAY UNTIL 5:00 PM TOMORROW

CITIES	24-Hr Weather, Winds and Sea Condition Forecast <i>from 5PM today until 5PM tomorrow</i>			Extended Weather Outlook <i>Duration: 5PM until 5PM of the following day</i>					
	01 MAY			02 MAY	03 MAY	04 MAY	05 MAY		
Metro Manila		25°C 35°C	Light to Moderate: East Manila Bay: Slight to Moderate		26°C 32°C		25°C 35°C		25°C 35°C
Tuguegarao City		26°C 36°C	Moderate: East-Southeast		26°C 36°C		26°C 37°C		25°C 38°C
Laoag City		25°C 34°C	Light to Moderate: East-Southeast Coastal Waters: Slight to Moderate		25°C 34°C		25°C 33°C		24°C 33°C
Baguio City		17°C 26°C	Light to Moderate: East-Southeast		17°C 27°C		16°C 26°C		16°C 27°C
SBMA (Olongapo) / Clark Zone (Angeles City)		26°C 35°C	Light to Moderate: East Subic Bay: Slight to Moderate		26°C 35°C		25°C 35°C		24°C 36°C
Tagaytay City		22°C 32°C	Light to Moderate: East		22°C 33°C		23°C 33°C		23°C 32°C
Lipa City		24°C 34°C	Light to Moderate: East		25°C 34°C		25°C 35°C		24°C 34°C
Legazpi City		27°C 34°C	Moderate: East Coastal Waters: Moderate		27°C 34°C		26°C 34°C		26°C 34°C
Puerto Princesa City		26°C 34°C	Light to Moderate: East Coastal Waters: Slight to Moderate		26°C 34°C		26°C 34°C		25°C 34°C
Iloilo City / Bacolod City		27°C 34°C	Light to Moderate: East Coastal Waters: Slight to Moderate		26°C 33°C		26°C 33°C		25°C 34°C
Metro Cebu		27°C 34°C	Light to Moderate: East Coastal Waters: Slight to Moderate		27°C 34°C		25°C 34°C		26°C 34°C
Tacloban City		27°C 32°C	Moderate: East Coastal Waters: Moderate		26°C 32°C		25°C 31°C		25°C 32°C
Cagayan de Oro City		25°C 33°C	Light to Moderate: East Coastal Waters: Slight to Moderate		25°C 33°C		24°C 32°C		25°C 33°C
Valencia City		20°C 33°C	Light to Moderate: East		20°C 32°C		19°C 31°C		19°C 31°C
Metro Davao		25°C 34°C	Light to Moderate: East Coastal Waters: Slight to Moderate		25°C 34°C		25°C 35°C		25°C 34°C
Zamboanga City		25°C 34°C	Light to Moderate: East Coastal Waters: Slight to Moderate		25°C 35°C		25°C 34°C		25°C 34°C

LEGEND:

	Clear skies		Partly Cloudy to at times Cloudy with Rainshowers and/or Thunderstorms		Occasional Rains		Rains with Gusty Winds
	Partly Cloudy Skies		Cloudy skies with Rainshowers and/or Thunderstorms		Monsoon Rains / Rains		Stormy
	Partly Cloudy to at times Cloudy with Rainshowers		Light Rains				

END OF FORECAST

PREPARED BY: SFD

CHECKED BY: RBB

02 May 2016

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER

Page: A1

Abus free 10 Indonesians

P50-M ransom paid, says source

By Julie S. Alipala
Inquirer Mindanao

ZAMBOANGA CITY—
Ten Indonesian sailors
abducted by Abu
Sayyaf bandits were
freed on Jolo island on
Sunday after five weeks
in captivity, police said.

Unknown men dropped off
the 10 tugboat crewmen at the
home of Sulu Gov. Abdusakur
Tan Jr. during a heavy midday
downpour, Supt. Junpikar Sitin,
Jolo police chief, told Agence
France-Presse (AFP) by tele-
phone.

"The report [of their release]
is confirmed. They were there. I
saw them," Sitin added.

The provincial police chief,
Senior Supt. Wilfredo Cayat,
confirmed the release of the
Indonesians, but he declined to
give any details to AFP.

Cayat told the **INQUIRER** that
Tan had turned over the
Indonesians to the police.

"We are preparing now to
ABUS/A17

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Army Core Purpose

om – Tel no. (02) 845-9555 Local: 5285, 5295

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From page A1

bring the 10 to Zamboanga and turn them over to their consular official," he said by phone.

Police identified the Indonesians as Peter Tonson, Julian Philip, Alvian Elvis Peti, Mahmud, Surian Syah, Surianto, Wawan Saputria, Bayu Iktavianto, Reynaldi and Wendi Raknadian.

The condition of the freed hostages was not immediately known, though Sitin said the group ate lunch at the governor's home.

They were abducted on March 26 by gunmen described by Philippine authorities as members of the Abu Sayyaf, a small group of bandits based on Jolo and nearby Basilan Island who are accused of kidnappings, beheadings and deadly bombings.

According to the Indonesian foreign ministry, the sailors, crew members of the tugboat Brahman 12, were transporting coal from Borneo to the Philippines when speedboat-riding gunmen hijacked their vessel.

P50-M ransom

In a video posted on a Facebook page linked to the Abu Sayyaf, the bandits threatened to kill the sailors unless P50 million in ransom was paid by April 8.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines refused to deal with the bandits, invoking the government's no-ransom policy.

Sitin said he was unaware that any ransom had been paid. The Abu Sayyaf does not normally free hostages unless a ransom is paid.

Jolo's mayor, Hussin Amin, welcomed the release of the Indonesians, but said he was unaware whether a ransom had been paid.

"If this big release came in exchange for money, those who paid are supporting the Abu Sayyaf," Amin said.

"This money will be used to buy more firearms and will be utilized as mobilization funds by these criminals," he added.

But a source, who requested anonymity because he was not authorized to speak about the matter, said the P50-million ransom was paid.

Maj. Filemon Tan Jr., spokesperson for the military's Western Mindanao Command, earlier said intelligence reports had it that the Indonesians were being held by an Abu Sayyaf band led by Alhabshi Misaya.

A Philippine Army officer who has been helping to deal with kidnappings by the Abu Sayyaf said a rebel commander from the Moro National Liberation Front, which has signed a peace deal with the government, helped negotiate with the Abu Sayyaf for the release of the Indonesians.

The hostages were escorted down from a jungle encampment in Sulu and left outside the home of the governor, who fed the freed captives, said the Army officer, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to talk to reporters.

When asked whether ransom was paid, the Army officer said he was unaware of any ransom payment, but added that it was hard to imagine the Abu Sayyaf freeing hostages without receiving money.

The Indonesians were freed six days after Abu Sayyaf bandits beheaded a Canadian hostage, John Ridsdel.

Ridsdel, 68, a former mining executive, was executed on April 25 after a deadline for a P300-million ransom expired.

President Aquino on April 27 vowed to "neutralize" the Abu Sayyaf after Ridsdel's severed head was left outside a government building on Jolo.

Other hostages

The authorities said the bandits were still holding 11 other foreign hostages—four Indonesians, four Malaysians, another Canadian, a Norwegian and a Dutchman—and at least one Filipino.

The Canadian, Robert Hall, the Norwegian, Kjartan Sekkingstad, and the Filipino, Marites Flor, were seized from yachts in a beach resort on Samal Island, Davao del Sur province, in September last year.

The four Indonesians were snatched by speedboat-riding gunmen, who shot another Indonesian sailor as they intercepted two tugboats in waters between Tawi-Tawi and Sabah on April 15.

According to the Indonesian foreign ministry, the four Indonesians were taken captive after the gunmen attacked the TB Henry and the TB Cristy, which were sailing to Kalimantan from Cebu.

Six other sailors were left behind in one of the tugboats.

The fate of the four Indonesian captives was unknown. The Indonesian foreign ministry was still trying to confirm Sunday's release of the 10 sailors.

A consular official at the Indonesian Embassy in Manila, who gave his name as Tody, told AFP: "We cannot tell you any detail as of now. It's confidential."

Brutal bandit group

The Abu Sayyaf, a brutal bandit group, is an offshoot of a Moro separatist insurgency in Mindanao that has claimed more than 150,000 lives since the 1970s.

It is believed to have just a few hundred members but has withstood repeated US-backed military offensives against it, surviving by using the mountainous, jungle terrain of Jolo and nearby islands to its advantage.

Abu Sayyaf gangs have earned many millions of dollars from kidnapping foreigners and locals since the early 1990s.

Although the group's leaders have pledged allegiance to the Islamic State (IS) jihadi group in Syria and Iraq, analysts say they are more focused on lucrative kidnappings for ransom than setting up an Islamic caliphate in southern Philippines.

The surge of kidnappings has sparked calls by Indonesia for joint military patrols with Malaysia and the Philippines in the high seas where the Malaysian and Indonesian sailors were seized.

Jakarta announced last week it planned to host a meeting of foreign ministers and military commanders from the three neighbors on the issue on Thursday. *With reports from AFP, AP, Reuters and Inquirer Research*

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Abus free 10 Indonesians

OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIR

02 May 2016

MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

Page: 1

ASG releases 10 Indonesians

ZAMBOANGA CITY (AFP) — Ten Indonesian sailors abducted by Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) bandits were freed in Jolo, Sulu, yesterday after five weeks in captivity, the Philippine National Police (PNP) said.

Unknown men dropped off the 10 tugboat crewmen at the home of Sulu Governor Abdusakur Tan Jr. on the remote island of Jolo, during a heavy midday downpour, Jolo police chief Junpikar Sitin told the Agence France-Presse (AFP) by telephone.

"The report (of their release) is confirmed. They were there. I saw them," Superintendent Sitin added.

The condition of the former captives was not immediately known, though Sitin said the group ate lunch at the governor's home.

They were abducted on March 26 by gunmen described by Philippine authorities as members: ►13

ASG releases 10...

◀1

of the Abu Sayyaf, a small group of militants based in Jolo and nearby Basilan island which is accused of kidnappings and deadly bombings.

The militants are reported to have sought a ransom, but Sitin said he was unaware that any had been paid. Abu Sayyaf does not normally free hostages unless a ransom is paid.

The Indonesians were freed six days after Abu Sayyaf members beheaded a

Canadian hostage, John Ridsdel.

President Aquino vowed last Wednesday to neutralize the Islamic militants after Ridsdel's decapitated head was left outside a government building on Jolo.

The authorities said the group is still holding 11 other foreign hostages — four Indonesians, four Malaysians, another Canadian, a Norwegian, and a Dutchman.



FREE MEAL
— This photo provided by the office of Sulu Governor Abdusakur A. Tan II (at the head of the table) shows the 10 Indonesian tugboat crewmen released by the Abu Sayyaf Group yesterday having a meal at the governor's residence in Jolo, Sulu. (Courtesy of the Office of the Sulu Governor/AP)

02 May 2016



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PA deploys new officers in various field units

The Philippine Army (PA) started the deployment of 158 newly graduated second lieutenants to various field units last week.

PA spokesman Col Benjamin Hao said the measure is part of the Army's regular deployment program of new officers.

More or less 30 percent of the new officers will go to field units in Mindanao while the rest will be distributed to the Army field units in Luzon, Visayas and the Army's special and support units such as Special Operations Command and armor units.

The 158 new officers who recently completed their career orientation conducted by the Army Personnel Management Center were members of the Officer Preparatory Course Class-64-2015, Officer Candidate Course Class-45-2015 and Philippine Military Academy Class of 2016.

PNA

12 May 2016



Page: 3

Troops deployed in Maguindanao town following school bombings

SULTAN MASTURA, Maguindanao – Police and military personnel have been deployed in this town eight days before the national and local elections following a series of bomb attack on seven public elementary schools to be used on election day.

Col. Earl Badio, commander of the Army's 603rd Infantry Brigade, said a company size soldiers from the 37th Infantry Battalion backed by Provincial Public Safety Battalion have been deployed in Sultan Mastura's 13 villages to ensure next monday's election would be peaceful and orderly.

Unidentified men fired rifle grenades, lobbed hand grenades and strafed school buildings in seven barangays of Sultan Mastura, a town not included in the Commission on Elections as hot spot areas.

"We are securing the villages, our mandate is to ensure the areas are safe for voters to exercise their rights of surffrage," Badio told reporters.

On Wednesday dawn, unidentified armed men fired rifle grenades toward six elementary schools in Sultan Mastura that the poll body will use as voting centers in next month's national and local elections.

The seventh school subjected to grenade attack at about 10:00 p.m. was Tambo Elementary School in Barangay Tambo. The school building's ceiling and concrete walls have been destroyed.

As in previous attacks, nobody was hurt in the Tambo Elementary School attack, according to Senior Inspector Wendylyn Eanico, chief of the Sultan Mastura municipal police.

Badio said he has ordered the deployment of more troops as peacekeepers to ensure the election will push through.

Kurais Dali, Sultan Mastura election officer, said no declaration yet as to whether or

not the town will be placed under Comelec control.

"Not all schools buildings were bombed, there are still other schools that can be used on election day," she said.

Senior Insp. Ronald de Leon, speaking for the police in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (PNP-ARMM), said investigation showed that an armed group wanted the town to be under Comelec control so that voting precincts will be clustered.

"The suspects apparently do not trust the teachers because they were identified with the current town administration," De Leon said. He did not elaborate as police investigation was still on going.

He said the group supports one of the mayoral aspirants.

So far, no group has claimed responsibility for the grenade attacks and strafing. Four candidates are aspiring for the mayoralty post.

Bombed were elementary schools in Barangays Tuka, Dugurungan, Darping, Simuay Seashore, Tariken and Tariken Day Care Center. The latest was in Barangay Tambo.

"The school is clearly apolitical and it should not be destroyed due to politics because it will affect the future of pupils," Dr. John Magno, ARMM education regional secretary, said even as he condemned the bombings.

He also appealed to all stakeholders in the coming elections to spare the teachers who are only performing their duties as mandated by law.

"I appeal to all parties in this coming election, please spare our teachers from violence," Magno said.

The town election officer said she will call for a meeting of all candidates to ensure they will not use violence to advance their candidacy.

"We are calling for peace covenant signing," election officer Dali said.

PNA

02 May 2016

The Manila Times

Page: 45

Troops deployed to Maguindanao town

SULTAN MASTURA, Maguindanao: Police and military personnel have been deployed to this town eight days before the national and local elections following a series of bomb attacks on seven public elementary schools last week.

The Philippine Army's 603rd Infantry Brigade commander, Col. Earl Badio, said a company-sized group of soldiers from the 37th Infantry Battalion backed by the Provincial Public Safety Battalion (PPSB) have been deployed in Sultan Mastura's 13 villages to ensure that

next Monday's synchronized elections would be peaceful and orderly.

On Wednesday last week, unidentified men fired rifle grenades and strafed seven elementary schools in Sultan Mastura that the poll body will use as voting centers on May 9.

These schools are Tambo Elem. School, Tapayan Central School, Dagurungan Elem. School, Tuka Elem. School, Darping Elem. School, Tareken Primary, and Simuay Seashore Elem. School, all located southwest of Sultan Mastura.

No one was hurt in the attacks in Sultan Mastura, a town not considered by the Commission on Elections (Comelec) as an area of concern.

"We are securing the villages, our mandate is to ensure the areas are safe for voters to exercise their rights of suffrage," Badio

told reporters.

Badio said he has ordered the deployment of more troops as peacekeepers to ensure the election will push through.

Kurais Dali, Sultan Mastura election officer, said there is no order so far whether the town will be placed under Comelec control.

"Not all schools buildings were bombed, there are still other schools that can be used on election day," she said.

ARMM's education regional secretary, Dr. John Magno, appealed to all stakeholders to spare the teachers who are

only performing their duties as mandated by law.

"The school is clearly apolitical and should not be destroyed due to politics because it will affect the future of the pupils. I appeal to all parties in this coming election, please spare our teachers from violence," Magno said.

Meanwhile, Senior Insp. Ronald de Leon, speaking for the police in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (PNP-ARMM), said an investigation showed that an armed group wanted the town to be

under Comelec control so that voting precincts will be clustered.

"The suspects apparently do not trust the teachers because they were identified with the current town administration," de Leon said. He did not elaborate as the police investigation was still ongoing.

He said the group supports one of the mayoral aspirants.

No group has claimed responsibility for the grenade attacks and strafing. Four candidates are aspiring for the mayoralty post.

PNA

02 May 2016

The
Standard
DEFINING THE NEWS

Page: 42

10 Indonesian sailors freed by Abu Sayyaf

TEN Indonesian sailors abducted by Abu Sayyaf bandits were freed Sunday after five weeks in captivity, police said Sunday.

Unknown men dropped off the 10 tug-boat crewmen at the home of Sulu Gov. Abdusakur Tan II on the remote island of Jolo during a heavy midday downpour, Jolo police chief Junpikar Sitin said.

"The report [of their release] is confirmed. They were there. I saw them," Sitin added.

The condition of the former captives was not immediately known, though Sitin said the group ate lunch at the governor's home.

They were abducted on March 26 by gunmen described as members of the Abu Sayyaf, a gang of bandits based in Jolo and nearby Basilan island that has been involved in kidnappings and deadly bombings.

The bandits are reported to have sought a ransom, but Sitin said he was unaware that any had been paid. Abu Sayyaf does not normally free hostages unless a ransom is paid.

The Indonesians were freed six days af-

ter Abu Sayyaf members beheaded a Canadian hostage, John Ridsdel.

President Benigno Aquino III vowed Wednesday to neutralize the bandits after Ridsdel's decapitated head was left outside a government building in Jolo.

The authorities said the group is still holding 11 other foreign hostages—four Indonesians, four Malaysians, another Canadian, a Norwegian, and a Dutchman.

Military officials said they had no information about the release of the Indonesians.

"It's better if you talk to the local police," said Armed Forces spokesman Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla.

"That was a local government effort. We don't have any information," said public affairs officer Col. Noel Detoyato.

On the ground, Western Mindanao Command spokesman Maj. Felimon Tan Jr. said he had no details either. "Our attention has been focused on ongoing military operations," he said.

Abu Sayyaf is a radical offshoot of a Muslim separatist insurgency.

It is believed to have just a few hundred militants but has withstood repeated US-backed military offensives against it, surviving by using the mountainous, jungle terrain of Jolo and nearby islands to its

advantage.

Abu Sayyaf gangs have earned many millions of dollars from kidnapping foreigners and locals since the early 1990s.

Although Abu Sayyaf's leaders have pledged allegiance to Islamic State, analysts say they are more focused on lucrative kidnappings-for-ransom than setting up an Islamic caliphate.

Police on Thursday raided a hideout of the Ansar Khilafa Philippines group in the coastal town of Maasim, killing two fighters, a police report said Saturday.

The commandos recovered a cache of weapons including a sniper rifle, two carbines, rocket-propelled grenades, materials for making improvised bombs and a black flag of the IS group.

However, the target of the raid, the group's leader, Mohammad Jaafar Maguid, escaped, the report added.

The AKP is one of several militant Muslim groups in Mindanao that have pledged allegiance to the Islamic State.

Authorities have said these groups have no direct link to IS and are merely using its name to gain prestige locally and in the hope of gaining the international jihadi group's support and funding. **Florante S. Solmerin, AFP**

02 May 2016



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Abus release 10 Indonesian hostages

By ROEL PAREÑO

ZAMBOANGA CITY – Ten Indonesian sailors kidnapped by the Abu Sayyaf were freed yesterday after five weeks in captivity.

Officials said emissaries dropped off the 10 tugboat crewmen at the home of Sulu Gov. Abdusakur Tan Jr. in Jolo during a heavy midday downpour.

"The report (of their release) is confirmed. They were there. I saw them," Jolo police director Supt. Junpikar Sitin said.

"They appeared tired but were in high spirits," he added.

Sitin said the group ate lunch at the governor's home.

Sources said a huge ransom was paid in exchange for the freedom of the hostages but the military refused to provide information about the release.

Sitin also could not confirm if indeed ransom was paid.

Sitin added the 10 Indonesians were later brought to a hospital in Camp Teodulfo Bautista for medical check up.

The Abu Sayyaf intercepted the Taiwanese-owned tugboat *MB Brama* off Sabah and seized

the 10 Indonesians while they were en route to Manila on March 26.

The militants are reported to have sought a P50-million ransom, but Sitin said he was unaware that any money had been paid. The Abu Sayyaf does not normally free hostages unless a ransom is paid.

The Indonesians were freed six days after the Abu Sayyaf beheaded Canadian John Ridsdel.

President Aquino vowed Wednesday to devote all his energy to crushing the group before he steps down in two months.

Authorities said the bandits are still holding 11 other foreign hostages – four Indonesians, four Malaysians, another Canadian, a Norwegian, a Dutchman and six locals.

The four Indonesians were separately taken by the Abu Sayyaf on April 15.

The Abu Sayyaf is a radical offshoot of a Muslim separatist insurgency in Mindanao that has claimed more than 100,000 lives since the 1970s.

It is believed to have just a

Turn to Page 9

From Page 8

The lucrative kidnapping business has allowed Abu

Foreign ministers of the Philippines, Indonesia and Malaysia are due to meet in Jakarta this week to discuss ways to work together to secure key shipping routes in the waters between the three countries. — **With Cecille Suerte Felipe, AFP, Reuters**



Photo provided by the office of Sulu Gov. Abdusakur Tan Jr. (center) shows 10 Indonesian sailors having a meal after they were released by the Abu Sayyaf in Jolo, Sulu yesterday. AP

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BMReports *Extra*

Are PHL airports ready for Brussels-type attack?



IN this January 3, 2013, file photo, thousands of Moro National Liberation Front members, who signed a peace agreement with the Philippine government in 1996, display their weapons during a rally on the volatile island of Jolo in southern Philippines. AP

BY RECTO MERCENE [@rectomercene](#)

First of three parts

BECAUSE of social media and overseas Filipinos, many have heard of the bombing at Brussels airport last month. But very few have heard of the antiterrorism law, or Republic Act (RA) 9372.

RA 9372 created the Philippine Anti-Terrorism Council (PATC), requiring membership of

the secretaries of justice, foreign affairs, national defense, interior and local government and finance. Also a member is the national security adviser. It is currently headed by Executive Secretary Paquito N. Ochoa Jr.

The National Intelligence Coordinating Agency (Nica) is the council's secretariat. Its support agencies, among others, are the Bureau of Immigration, Office of Civil Defense,

Anti-Money Laundering Council, Philippine Center on Transnational Crime and the Philippine National Police (PNP).

When any terrorist-related activities arise anywhere in the nation, it is usually the PNP that gives face to the country's antiterrorism response, with the Armed Forces (AFP) in a supporting role. If the airports were attacked by terrorists, then

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OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS – Email add: oacpa.army2012@gmail.com – Tel no. (02) 845-9555 Local: 5285, 5295

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

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the PNP's Aviation Security Group (Avsegroup) goes into action.

Within the Avsegroup is a special forces unit whose members are armed to the teeth to confront any terrorist group.

The country's major airports seem vulnerable to terrorist attacks because of the many individuals who have access to these facilities. How then can citizens be assured that an attack, similar to the Brussels airport bombing, will not happen at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia)?

"We have preventive measures in coordination with other agencies at the airport," Chief Supt. Francisco Balagtas, Avsegroup commander, said. Aside from the Naia, Balagtas said his men are present in all the other major airports in the country. However, far-flung airports that are among the 80 other airports in the country are manned not by Balagtas's men but personnel from the Civil

Aviation Authority of the Philippines (Caap).

These community airports are used by general aviation or charter airlines and are maintained by the Caap. Commercial airlines could have access to these airports in cases of emergency.

"Before anything else, negotiation should be the first move," Balagtas said, adding that there's a special team in place, trained abroad to handle negotiations.

He said his men are also working with their counterparts in other countries to provide assistance in terms of negotiating with terrorists.

Balagtas said the Avsegroup is in close coordination with the Manila International Airport Authority (Miaa), the Mactan-Cebu International Airport Authority, Clark Airport Authority, Metropolitan Subic Bay Authority and the Caap.

He said if something serious occurs in any of these agencies or far-flung airports like in Mindanao, aviation security-trained troopers

of the PNP Special Action Force could be airlifted by the Air Force.

Balagtas said that, aside from the Avsegroup, the Naia has also its own police department, while the 40-member Airline Operators Council have their own privately hired contractors.

"The Avsegroup, in partnership with them, has already in place security measures to address threats of terrorism," he said. He added that the other major airports, headed by their own terminal managers, have their own emergency services to address security issues.

"What's important is coordination among different agencies, Balagtas said.

He pointed out that at the Naia complex, they focus on three major points—called the "landside"—where passengers and visitors come. These areas are where passengers, visitors and their belongings are subjected to various security checks. Even their cars are subjected to cursory scrutiny.

Since there are too many visi-

tors and passengers going to the premier airport, not all of them could be personally managed.

"That's why policemen, sometimes clad in black tactical clothes and armed to the teeth, provide the high visibility necessary for deterrence."

He said having left the landside and enter terminal, the visitors and passengers go into the "airside" section where they are subjected to body check and another round of security measures.

He said passengers undergo several body checks before reaching the airplane, whose carriers have their own security procedure.

"When the airplane has taken off, you can be assured that all the occupants have been cleared and a passenger can relax," Balagtas said.

The aerodrome side is the airport complex where aircraft, aerobridges, luggage area, and the nooks and crannies are secured by airline private guards, according to Balagtas.

The Avsegroup, composed of armed men in all-matte black uni-

form, is also part of the agencies that monitor them. Some of them could be seen boarding vehicles, sometimes with a K-9 team in tow to sniff out bombs.

"Our most powerful equipment is our trained personnel from the aircraft operations department and our K-9s," Balagtas said.

Meanwhile, the general aviation area, located somewhere in the airport complex, is manned by the Caap agents, starting at the gates and supported by the Avsegroup.

He said the Avsegroup is working on a plan to have his men deputized by the Caap to secure the General Aviation areas, as well. "There's no such thing as complete manpower for determined terrorists," Balagtas said.

"Our strength against terrorists is enough to address any threats, in coordination with other law-enforcement agencies."

Balagtas, however, prefers to add more into the current roster of the Avsegroup.

He also rues that the Avsegroup

is not in control of the hundreds of closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras at the Naia complex. Some 700 are installed and spread out at the four passenger terminals.

It is the Miaa's Office of Transportation Security that is tasked with monitoring the CCTV images.

"We have no control over the CCTV, at the moment, but we are requesting the Miaa and the Caap to allow us access by allowing some of my men to monitor them."

Balagtas explained it is the OTS that monitors the CCTV and the x-ray machines at the Naia. The Avsegroup only coordinates with the agency. "If we have access to the CCTV [network], perhaps, we can determine if there's someone planting bullets."

It is only the CCTV that can tell us where this incident happened and who are the people involved.

"It's a big help" both to the passengers and to us who ensure their security, according to Balagtas.

To be continued

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Palace vows peaceful elections

By DELON PORCALLA

Malacanang assured the public yesterday that the military and police are committed to ensuring a peaceful election on May 9, amid the recent school bombings and ambush of politicians.

Presidential Communications and Operations Office Secretary Herminio Coloma Jr. said the Philippine National Police (PNP) and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) would also make use of "augmentation forces from their own operating units" to provide protection to public school teachers comprising the Board of Election Inspectors.

Joint security assistance desks will be set up in all polling precincts nationwide, he said.

He told state-run radio station *dzRB* that the PNP and AFP are continuing the preparations for the coming elections.

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THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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PNP on highest alert for polls; AFP to boost security – Palace

By **AARON B. RECUNCO**
and **GENALYN D. KABILING**

The Philippine National Police (PNP) has placed all its units through-

out the country under the highest security alert status with only a week before the local and national elections on May 9, as mobilization of even military forces to secure polling precincts were

boosted following last week's bombings at six schools in Maguindanao.

Chief Superintendent Wilben Mayor, PNP spokesman, said the full alert status was hoisted on ►13

PNP on highest alert... ◀1

Saturday to maximize all its personnel and resources for the polls on Monday next week. It will be in effect until the situation normalizes at least through declaration of winners for both local and national elections.

"Your Philippine National Police is ready. We have long prepared for this, we've been doing election duties for several times already so we are confident of realizing the objective of making the election peace and credible," said Mayor.

In Malacañang, Presidential Communications Operations Secretary Herminio Coloma, Jr. assured that the police and military are determined to ensure the safety and protection of the public, including teachers with poll duties, during the election period.

"Tinitiyak natin sa ating mga kababayan na sapat ang kakayahan at kapabilidad ng AFP at PNP upang supilin at pigilan ang lahat ng grupo at indibidwal na maaaring maghasik ng karahasan patungkol sa pambansang eleksyon (We would like to assure the public that the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police have adequate capability to thwart any individual or group that may sow violence during the national elections)," Coloma said

over state-run DZRB.

Unidentified men launched bombing attacks on six school buildings in Sultan Mastura, Maguindanao on Wednesday, Friday and Saturday, last week. No one was reported killed or hurt when the grenades were thrown at the buildings that were supposed to be used by the Commission on Elections (Comelec) as voting centers.

Apart from territorial units, Coloma said the AFP and PNP have deployed augmentation forces to provide protection for teachers with poll duties and other people going to the voting precincts on Election Day.

A joint security assistance desk has also been established in polling centers across the country.

"Kaya tuloy-tuloy ang paghahanda ng PNP at AFP upang matiyak 'yung pagdaraos ng matiwasay at maayos na halalan na kung saan ay mayroong mahalagang bahagi ang ating mga guro at mga kawani ng pamahalaan (AFP and PNP preparations are ongoing to ensure peaceful and orderly elections where our teachers and other government personnel play important roles)," Coloma added.

The PNP started the preparations for the May 9 polls as soon as Director

General Ricardo Marquez was appointed as the PNP chief last year.

Mayor called on the public to help establish the trust and confidence with the PNP, even as he stressed that public cooperation and vigilance are also essential element in accomplishing the objective of making the May 9 elections one of the most peace and honest one.

"The trust of the public to the PNP, their cooperation and their vigilance will always be important. We may have prepared for this but the people's cooperation is equally important for our election security," said Mayor.

As of April 20, Coloma said around 3,500 persons have been arrested in violation of the election gun ban.

At least 2,800 assorted weapons and 31,200 deadly ammunition and bombing devices have been seized by the police under the Secure and Fair Elections (SAFE) program.

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PNP, AFP ready

THE Palace reassured yesterday the preparedness of the Philippine National Police (PNP) and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) to maintain the peaceful and orderly conduct of the May 9 elections.

Presidential Communications Operations Office Secretary Sonny Coloma

Jr. said that authorities are also focused in protecting the election workers notably our teachers who will serve as Board of Election Inspectors (BEI).

He added that the PNP and the AFP remain on top of ensuring the security especially of watch list or critical areas and so-called election hotspots in the country.

These include the provinces of Pangasinan, Masbate, Negros Oriental, Samar, Maguindanao and Lanao del Sur which the PNP have identified in the list of election hotspots, whose number may still vary depending on the assessment of the PNP.

To prevent bloodshed in areas with intense political rivalry, Mayor said the police, military and Commission on Elections (Comelec) advocate mediation between contending parties.

The PNP and Armed Forces of the Philippines had been deputized by the Comelec to ensure peaceful and orderly conduct of the May 2016 polls.

Efren Montano

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MILF also slams ASG for Canadian's beheading

BY VICTOR REYES

THE Moro Islamic Liberation Front yesterday denounced as a "cold-blooded murder" the Abu Sayyaf's recent beheading of Canadian John Ridsdel, one of four persons the bandit group seized from a resort in Davao del Norte in September last year.

"Woe to the beheader of John Ridsdel," the MILF said in its website, adding that "mutilating the body of dead person, even if he is an enemy, is against the teachings of Islam."

Ridsdel was beheaded on Monday last week after authorities failed to deliver the demanded ransom of P300 million each for Ridsdel, fellow Canadian Robert Hall, Norwegian Kjartan Sekkingstad, and Filipina Marites Flor.

Ridsdel's head was thrown in front of the Jolo town hall last Monday night. Two days later, a headless body was found at a creek in Talipao town. Tests are being conducted to determine if the body is that of Ridsdel.

The MILF said Canadians "are not our enemy" as they are "helping resolve the conflict in Mindanao in many ways and means including giving of grants for various projects or programs in the region."

The MILF said Canadians headed an Independent Commission on Policing which served as one of the references in the crafting of the proposed Bangsamoro Basic Law which will establish a new political entity in the South.

Incidentally, MILF rebels have been linked to beheading incidents in the past, including

that of 10 of 14 Marines they ambushed and killed in Al Barka, Basilan in October 2011, together with the Abu Sayyaf.

"Kidnapping will never lead anyone to nowhere. It might be rewarding momentarily, courtesy of the ransom paid, but in the long run, ultimate justice will prevail over what is unjust and immoral. It is the nature of things that evil acts have limit and good deeds have no bound. When the limit of evil acts is crossed, God Almighty will decree that retribution shall take its way," it also said.

The MILF said it is now time for the government "to be more tactful and prudent in addressing the kidnapping in Sulu." The Abu Sayyaf is still keeping a number of foreign and Filipino hostages in Sulu.

"It seems everything it tried does not produce encouraging results. Using brute force is oftentimes counter-productive; paying ransom encourages kidnappers to step up their evil trade," it said.

"Is there a middle ground that is not yet tested? We do not know and we are not suggesting any," it said.

On many occasions, the MILF said the government had branded the ASG as a spent force. Military estimates placed the strength of the Abu Sayyaf at about 300 to 400 men, mostly in Sulu and Basilan.

"But each time that claim is made, the ASG sprung up from the demise tag and returned to their base in Sulu with fresh kidnap victims. It appeared then and today that such statements are only for media blowout or mileage," the MILF said.

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3 cops, 2 soldiers could be released by NPA before May 9

By **MIKE U. CRISMUNDO**

BUTUAN CITY – Third party facilitators, together with officials of four local government units (LGUs), are confident that negotiations for the safe release of three policemen and two soldiers being held by the New People's Army (NPA) will succeed without any hitch.

The leaders of the Iglesia Filipina Independiente (IFI), the Philippine Ecumenical Peace Platform (PEPP) and officials of the Agusan provinces, Misamis Oriental and Bukidnon are now closely coordinating with each other in an effort to ensure that the release will proceed smoothly as planned.

They were confident that SPO1 Warren Conales, PO3 Edwin Castor, SPO4 Rene Rombo, Private First Class Glenn Austia and Diven Tawide, will be released soon by the NPA's custodial force.

Bishop Felixberto Calang of the IFI and

co-convenor of the PEPP said they were in close coordination with the concerned stakeholders to ensure that the release will go smoothly hopefully before May 9.

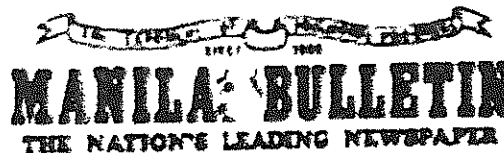
All the governors in Agusan del Norte, Agusan del Sur, Misamis Oriental and Bukidnon have already assured the third-party facilitators that their request for field unit commanders of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and Philippine National Police (PNP) to implement a selective suspension of operations, in the place where the NPA custodial team will turn over the captives, will be followed.

"Our local officials in mentioned provinces have pledged that they will request the AFP and PNP field commanders for the suspension of operations in selected areas," Calang told newsmen.

In a recent statement, National Democratic Front (NDF) spokesperson Cesar Renerio said military and police operations suspension (SOMO and SOPO) should start midnight of May 2 until midnight of May 8 in selected cities of Agusan del Norte and Agusan del Sur.

In that same statement, the NDF said the SOMO and SOPO should be enforced in the municipalities of Buenavista and Las Nieves, both in Agusan del Norte and the west part of Butuan City and the towns of Esperanza, San Luis, Talacogon, and La Paz, all in Agusan del Sur.

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Anti-EDCA laborers, cops clash near US embassy

By ARGYLL CYRUS B. GEDUCOS

Militant labor groups pressing for a minimum wage increase and opposing the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Treaty (EDCA) clashed with the police near the United States ►13

Anti-EDCA laborers...

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embassy during a Labor Day protest action yesterday.

Around 3,000 activists who were pushing for a minimum wage increase earlier gave President Aquino a warm send-off party as they burned the ten-foot effigy of the chief executive at Mendiola bridge in the morning.

The protester later marched to the United States Embassy along Roxas Boulevard and aired their anti-EDCA

sentiments.

The police and a team from the Bureau of Fire Protection were later forced to use water cannons to prevent the militants from breaking through barriers positioned a safe distance away from the embassy.

The protesters retreated to the corner of Roxas Boulevard and United Nations Avenue where they continued their anti-EDCA program, under the watchful eyes of the police.

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PH asserts sovereignty over northernmost island

By ELENA L. ABEN

MAVULIS ISLAND, Batanes — At exactly noon last Saturday, a three-star general of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) led soldiers, fisherfolk, and other stakeholders in hoisting the Philippine flag on top of Hill 200 of this island, also known as “Y’ami,” to assert the country’s sovereignty in the northernmost island of the country.

Located some 20 nautical miles north of the municipal proper of Itbayat, Batanes, Mavulis is a rich fishing ground threatened by incursions from foreign poachers.

“We raised the Philippine flag at exactly 12 noon when the sun (is) at its brightest, April 30, 2016. We assert our sovereignty on this northern frontier of

our nation. This is Mavulis island,” said Lt. Gen. Romeo T. Tanalgo, commander, AFP Northern Luzon Command (Nolcom) after the singing of the national anthem and prayer that followed the hoisting of the flag.

A total of 82 people, including Capt. Albert Mogul, commander, Naval Forces Northern Luzon (NAVFORNOL); Col. Ferdinand Barandon, NOLCOM force protection officer; AFP chaplain Lt. Col. Ruel Tungolh, soldiers, local policemen, fisherfolk and other members of the community, and a few members of the media crossed choppy seas and climbed Hill 200

for the historic event.

Troops on board BRP Ramon Alcaraz (PF 16) docked 1.1 kilometers off Mavulis island, also stood in attention and sang the national anthem.

Tanalgo said that with the hoisting of the Philippine flag on the island, “hopefully it would prevent” a similar case as that of the Panatag (Scarborough) Shoal, which has been cordoned off by the Chinese, from happening in Mavulis island.

“The purpose of putting up this flag is to assert our sovereignty, to let all the people know that this is (part of) our country,” stressed Tanalgo.

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China trains 'fishing militia'

BAIMAJING – The fishing fleet based in this tiny port town on Hainan island is getting everything from military training and subsidies to even fuel and ice as China creates an increasingly sophisticated fishing militia to sail into the disputed South China Sea.

The training and support includes exercises at sea and requests to fishermen to gather information on foreign vessels, provincial government officials, regional diplomats and fishing company executives said in recent interviews.

"The maritime militia is expanding because of the country's need for it, and because of the desire of the fishermen to engage in national service, protecting our country's interests," said an advisor to the Hainan government who did not want to be named.

But the fishing militia also raises the risk of conflict with foreign navies in the strategic waterway through which \$5 trillion of trade passes each year, diplomats and naval experts say.

The United States has been conducting sea and air patrols near artificial islands China is building in the disputed Spratlys archipelago, including by two B-52 strategic bombers in November. Washington said in February it would increase the "freedom of navigation" sail-bys around the disputed sea.

Basic military training

The city-level branches of the People's Armed Forces Department provide basic military training to fishermen, said the Hainan government advisor. The branches are overseen by both the military and local Communist Party authorities in charge of militia operations nationwide.

The training encompasses search and rescue operations, contending with disasters at sea and "safeguarding Chinese sovereignty," said the advisor who focuses on the South China Sea.

The training, which includes exercises at sea, takes place between May and August and the government pays fishermen for participating, he said.

Government subsidies encourage fishermen to use heavier vessels with steel – as opposed to wooden – hulls.

The government has also provided Global Positioning Satellite equipment for at least 50,000 vessels, enabling them to contact the Chinese coast guard in maritime emergencies, including encounters with foreign ships, industry executives said.

Several Hainan fishermen and diplomats told Reuters some vessels have small arms.

When "a particular mission in safeguarding sovereignty" comes up, government authorities will coordinate with the fishing militia, the advisor said, asking them to gather information on the activities of foreign vessels at sea.

Row with Indonesia

That coordination was evident in March, when Indonesia attempted to detain a Chinese fishing vessel for fishing near its Natuna Islands in the South China Sea. A Chinese coast guard vessel quickly intervened to prevent the Indonesian Navy from towing away the fishing boat, setting off a diplomatic row.

Beijing does not claim the Natunas but said the boats were in "traditional Chinese fishing grounds."

China claims almost all of the South China Sea. The Philippines, Malaysia, Vietnam, Taiwan and Brunei also have conflicting claims over the islets and atolls that constitute the Spratly Archipelago and its rich fishing grounds.

State-controlled fishing companies dominate the fleets that go regularly to the Spratlys and are recipients of much of the militia training and subsidies, industry sources said.

China has by far the world's biggest fish industry, but depleted fishery resources close to China's shores have made fishing in disputed waters an economic necessity, fishermen and industry executives say.

State-owned Hainan South China Sea Modern Fishery Group Company says on its website it is "both military and commercial, both soldiers and civilians." One of its aims, the company says, is to let the "Chinese flag fly" over the Spratlys.

"Defending sovereignty is primarily the government's concern," said Ye Ning, the company's general manager, in an interview at his office in Haikou. "But of course, regular folks being able to fish in their own countries' waters should be the norm. That goes for us too."

The company provides fishermen who sail to the Spratlys with fuel, water and ice, and then purchases fish from them when they return, according to a written introduction to the company's work executives provided to Reuters.

–Reuters

Local: 5285, 5295

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Church workers urge peace talks with Reds, Moro rebels

BAGUIO CITY— Methodist church workers have urged the presidential candidates to pursue peace talks with the communists and other insurgent groups in a manifesto issued during the 33rd National Biennial Assembly of

the Women's Society in Christian Service (WSCS) held here on Saturday.

The WSCS, composed of mothers and lay church workers from various regions of the country, said it was alarmed that peace negotiations with the Communist

Party of the Philippines and the New People's Army, as well as with Moro rebels like the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, continued to suffer intermittent breakdowns and suspensions.

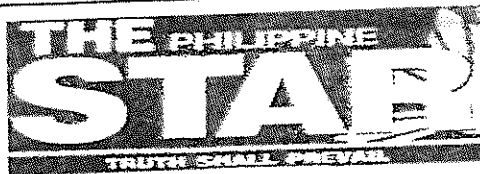
"We pray the incoming administration [would] strongly work for the reopening of peace negotiations [at the] earliest time possible," the group said, "because hostilities claim lives, breed human rights violations, disrupt livelihood and worsen the economic difficulties of communities affected by armed conflict."

The call was raised after the local representative of International Alert (IA), a nongovernment group focused on peace-building, warned of "a surge of discontent" in the Philippines given the failure to pass the Bangsamoro Basic Law, among other factors.

Dr. Franciso Lara Jr., country director of the London-based IA, who spoke at the assembly, said conflict in the Philippines would continue to be an undulating wave that ebbs and flows because of the severe nature of ongoing civil wars.

Vincent Cabreza, Inquirer Northern Luzon

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FOOTBALL FOR PEACE 2016: Meralco's social development arm One Meralco Foundation and football club Loyola Meralco Sparks Football Club have teamed up once again with the Philippine Marine Corps (PMC) for the annual Football for Peace Festival happening in Metro Manila from April 23 to May 1, 2016.

In photo during the sports event kick-off attended by members of the Philippine Sportswriters Association are One Meralco Foundation President Jeffrey Tarayao (center) with (from left) PMC Capt. Ryan Lacuesta, PMC Capt. Ryan Gandeza, Football for Peace co-founder Rookie Nagtalon, Loyola Meralco Sparks Coach Simon McMenemy, Team Captain James Younghusband and Goalkeeper Ricardo Padilla.

The advocacy, which was started by PMC in 2011 in Sulu, utilizes football as a tool to instill peace-loving values of sportsmanship, camaraderie, teamwork and discipline in the minds of young athletes, especially those living in conflict areas in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao.

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Mudslinging in US politics

MY LAST column, "Six years in office, seven AFP chiefs," triggered a number of phone calls to let me know that I had forgotten Gen. Hernando DCA Iriberri in my listing of Armed Forces chiefs of staff during P-Noy's term as Commander in Chief. Iriberri, who served for 10 months, took over in July 2015 from Gen. Gregorio Catapang. He was succeeded by Gen. Glorioso Miranda.

REVEILLE

Ramon J. Farolan



AFP Chief of Staff	Length of service as AFP Chief
Ricardo David	8 months
Eduardo Oban	10 months
Jessie Delloso	13 months
Emmanuel Bautista	18 months
Gregorio Pio Catapang	12 months
Hernando DCA Iriberri	10 months
Glorioso Miranda	2 months, 10 days

Corrected tabulation. Long-term goals, short-term leaders

The next commander in chief must take a hard look at this situation and institute reforms that will provide fixed terms of office for the AFP chief of staff and the service commanders, and allow longer tours of duty for critical area commands. If the lowly barangay captain has a fixed term of three years set by law, it is outrageous that the AFP chief of staff is replaced almost on a yearly basis. The "revolving door" arrangement has been a failure.

Here's another complaint from a senior citizen.

Last week, retired admiral Ramon Punzalan drove up to Purple Oven, a bakeshop on Temple Drive across from the Mormon Temple near Camp Aguinaldo. He presented his senior citizen ID in order to purchase some pastries. When the bill came, he noted that the brownies cost P520 with a senior citizen discount of P10. Purple Oven must be awfully poor in math. Punzalan was entitled to 20-percent discount plus exemption from VAT, as called for in the Expanded Senior Citizen Act of 2010.

Section 3 (f) of the law reads: "The 20 percent discount shall apply to Take-Out/Take-Home/Drive-Thru orders as long as the senior citizen is himself present and personally ordering and showing a valid senior citizen ID card."

We need to amend the law so that the elderly can expect speedy action on their complaints as well as punishment for business firms not complying with the law.

And more on problems besetting overseas voting.

Fr. Mariano "Junjun" Agruda, a Carmelite priest assigned in Rome, sent this message regarding his experience with the Philippine embassy in Italy:

"I registered to vote last October, as directed. They photocopied my passport and made me fill out a form. I was told this would suffice. Now, they are telling me I am not on the list of qualified voters. There is no trace of my name anywhere. They blame Comelec. They do not even give me the courtesy of a reply to my email regarding this situation. I want to exercise my obligation of suffrage but these people frustrate my basic rights."

I have brought the matter to the attention of Foreign Affairs Undersecretary Rafael Seguis, who is in charge of overseas voting. With timely intervention, hopefully Father Junjun will still be able to vote on May 9.

Father Junjun used to serve as parish priest at the National Shrine of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Quezon City

A lot of folks were upset, unhappy, outraged and, among his supporters, saddened, by Davao Mayor Rodrigo Duterte's brand of humor. But if it will temper emotions, here are samplings of the insults and mudslinging going on in the US presidential race.

From Donald Trump, frontrunner for the GOP (Republican) presidential nomination:

- On Carly Fiorina, former CEO of Hewlett Packard, early contender for the GOP nomination and now the choice of his opponent Sen. Ted Cruz as his running mate if he wins the nomination—"Look at that face. Would anyone vote for that? Can you imagine that, the face of our next president!"

- On Megyn Kelly, Fox News talk show host—"She had blood coming out of her wherever" (a reference to the menstrual period) when she was grilling him on his history of insulting women.

- On women in general, including Rosie O'Donnell—"Fat pigs and slob."

Trump was not joking when he made those remarks. Also, he posted online an unflattering picture of Cruz's wife Heidi alongside a glamorous photo of his wife Melania, with the line "The images are worth a thousand words."

It should come as no surprise that recent CNN polls show that 73 percent of American women have a negative view of Trump. The same holds true for African-Americans, Latinos, and young voters.

Former US House Speaker John Boehner referred to Cruz as "the devil incarnate," "Lucifer in the flesh," and "a jack-ass." Boehner also said: "I have never worked with a more miserable son of a b*tch in my life."

Sen. John McCain called Cruz a "wacko bird."

Cruz is hoping that Trump does not get the 1,237 delegate votes needed to win the nomination outright. A second or third vote on the convention floor will give him a fighting chance. Unfortunately, he is intensely disliked by the GOP establishment, as seen from the comments of some leading members of his own party.

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Incidentally, just last week former US House Speaker Dennis Hastert was sentenced to 15 months in prison for sexual abuse of minors under his care and responsibility during his stint as a high school athletic coach. Hastert is one of the highest, if not the highest, US government official to be sent to prison in recent years. Three Illinois governors were sent to prison for various offenses committed during their time in office.

How many of our government officials already convicted by the Sandiganbayan are serving time in jail? Often, motions for reconsideration and appeals keep them out of jail and, after a while, the cases are forgotten or maybe important documents get lost. An inventory of former government officials in jail should be worth the effort. If certain prisoners in the national penitentiary can enjoy all kinds of special privileges, it would not be surprising if former high-ranking government officials are also enjoying those privileges because of past favors and connections.

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02 May 2016

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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The surge of Bongbong Marcos

LAST APRIL 14, some 200 retired generals and colonels gathered in a restaurant in Greenbelt, Makati, for dinner with an honored guest, Sen. Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr., son of the strongman who proclaimed martial law with his officers led by Gen. Romeo Espino and service commanders in September 1972, or 44 years ago. Times have changed, and the Armed Forces marches on. Adaptability is the basic element of its strength.

Only Fortunato Abat, Fidel Ramos, and the shadowy Jose Almonte remain as survivors of the Marcos apparatus. Each passing day brings them closer to Fate. (In 1975 at UP Diliman’s Philippine Center for Advanced Studies, or PCAS, Almonte hailed the strongman as “philosopher-king,” only to be fired as dean by its chair, Adrian Cristobal, for supposedly sowing intrigue. Thenceforth, Cristobal abolished the PCAS. Many years later Almonte claimed in his memoir, “Endless Journey,” to have been a cofounder of the Reform the Armed Forces Movement, or RAM, but was rebuffed by Gregorio Honasan, the original coup plotter who conspired against Marcos with overt US support.)

The retired officers present at the dinner were led by Benjamin Defensor of Iloilo, former commanding general of the Air Force and subsequent AFP chief of staff, ambassador on counterterrorism, and Apec chair. The other notables were Roy Cimatu of Ilocos, Alexander Yano of Zamboanga, Victor Ibrado of Negros, Paterno Labiano of Baguio, Jaime delos Santos of NCR, Reynaldo Mapagu of Cagayan, Reynaldo Gopilan of Bulacan, Robert Morales of Agusan, Josue Geverza of Iloilo, and undersecretary Antonio Santos.

The former Army Special Forces chief, Benjamin Samonte of Ilocos, was on hand with two T-shirts marked “2nd Lt Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr., Cl 21-A-1979.” At 21, Bongbong trained as a cadre in the jungle of Tanay bordering the Sierra Madre in Rizal.

As the crème de la crème of the officer corps, the retired officers rose through the ranks by sheer merit and dedication to duty. Harangued to join Edsa I by Ramos and company, they dutifully

COMMENTARY

Reynaldo V. Silvestre

shifted their allegiance to the political regime established by the people they passionately served.

The camaraderie perturbed a martial memory from their hearts with the “Martial Law Citation Badge” they wore proudly on their uniform as junior officers, over the “February ’86 Revolution Ribbon” awarded by Corazon Aquino when they were senior officers 30 years ago. And what gives?

Utterly lacking a revolutionary program of political and social change, Edsa I deposed Ferdinand Marcos but restored oligarchic rule. The Lopez empire got back ABS-CBN for a song. Vested interests in land and commerce undermined public policy earlier enshrined for the common good. Human rights violations persisted with stronger force amid mass agitation for an equitable distribution of the good life. Unbridled corruption betrayed the spirit of people power with its politics of expedience, popularity and deceit.

Today, a generation of millennials confronts a modern state, with a high level of expectation to be at par with our regional neighbors. Its battlefield transcends land, sea and sky—the “battlespace” consists in winning the people’s allegiance to a government that truly represents them. A feudal society with a democratic veneer, where the elite of 0.5 percent controls the national wealth, is simply untenable. Electoral politics, if it subverts the people’s hope for national salvation, is a farce.

Benigno Aquino III fared no better—an accidental president because Cory died in an election year. Income taxes are patently regressive. Agriculture is half-heartedly encouraged. Public transport and railroads are a mess for daily commuters, labor policies are contractual, crime rates have dramatically risen, induced by poverty and lawlessness, and *tanim-bala* and *laglag-kisame* at the airport are a national shame, nourished by

incompetence and chicanery.

Vice presidential candidate Bongbong Marcos spoke with the vigor of youth and the maturity of experience. With paced diction and focused mind, he offered 20 years of public service to which none of his rivals can lay claim. The position he seeks is not an entry-level job or a spare tire. Should destiny call, profound qualities of leadership are crucially demanded.

The guests mulled over his legislative record: It was praiseworthy. They recalled a full-page ad in the *INQUIRER* on Sept. 15, 2015, where their Association of Generals and Flag Officers (Agfo) warned the nation that the House of Representatives' version of the Bangsamoro Basic Law was fraught with constitutional infirmities. The BBL created a substate; the republic was close to dismemberment and would be one of the victims of Mamasapano. It is acceptable only if the political leadership can cross over their line of bayonets.

It took a Bongbong to stop the proposed law from being bulldozed through Congress with a substitute bill: This nation cannot endure as one unless we reconcile the tribes to each other—Christian, non-Christian, Muslim or non-believer—and make them live as brothers under one roof. But Agfo's impertinence exacted a heavy toll: The proposed increase in the retirement benefits of uniformed services was vetoed by P.Noy.

Bongbong concluded with a plea for national unity. The life and vitality of a nation lie not in its boundaries of geography or race, but in the consciousness of its citizens to share a common destiny. It is union that makes organizations effective, so it is union that makes a nation strong.

The evening galvanized a fraternal bond for the mobilization of energies toward a national purpose, inspired by a competent and promising leadership.

Reynaldo V. Silvestre, former chief, Office of Strategic and Special Studies of the Armed Forces, a retired Army colonel, bemedalled officer and multiawarded writer, was teaching political science at UP Manila when called to active duty as first lieutenant in 1975.

12 May 2016

THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER
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THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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MERRY-GO-ROUND

Abu Sayyaf are bandits

By **FLORO MERCENE**

WHICH is more fearsome of these Muslim terrorists – the ISIS/ISIL or the Abu Sayyaf? Pick your choice.

The Islamic State in Iraq and Syria or the Levant (ISIS/ ISIL), but more appropriately the Daesh, kills without remorse, just like the Abu Sayyaf.

But Daesh does not choose their victims. They kill everyone, men, women, and child, and any innocent persons who could be nearby when their home-bombs explodes, usually strapped to their bodies.

Daesh are motivated by their hatred of the infidels, meaning anyone who is not Muslim or one who does not believe in the prophet Mohammed.

The Abu Sayyaf, on the other hand, choose their victims, usually individuals who could be ransomed for a high fee.

So, unlike in the US, the UK, Brussels, or anywhere Daesh and Daesh followers are active, the Philippines is relatively safe from random bombings.

Daesh terrorists are commonly suicide bombers who do not value life. They kill because of religious intolerance against those who do not share

their beliefs.

"They love death more than life," says author and journalist Thomas Friedman.

The Abu Sayyaf, on the other hand, would not die by their own hands.

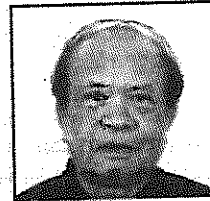
They are after cash or material gains. They are safe in their locality because the citizens are much too afraid to squeal on them.

The Abu Sayyaf is one of the smallest, but strongest, of the Islamist separatist groups in the Philippines. Some Abu Sayyaf members have studied or worked in Saudi Arabia and developed ties to mujahideen while fighting and training in the war against the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

Abu Sayyaf proclaimed themselves as mujahideen and freedom fighters. They are not supported by many people in the Philippines, including its Muslim clerics. They blackmail the families of their victims by showing videos of their loved ones being threatened with beheading.

They killed the Canadian mining executive because his family refused to cough up the P300 million (\$6.5 million) being asked as ransom.

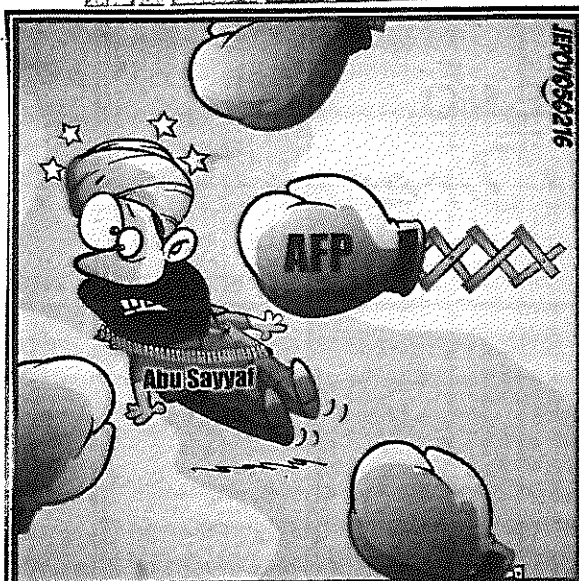
There's one rule to avoid getting kidnapped by the Abu Sayyaf. Don't go to where they are known to roam.



02 May 2016

NGAYON
Mga pangyayari sa kasalukuyan

Pahina. 4



Editorial

Todong opensiba vs. Abu Sayyaf!

WALA nang ibang paraan pa para malipol ang Abu Sayyaf kundi ang puspusang opensiba. Walang puknat na pagsalakay ang gawin. Gamitan ng eroplano para maging mabilis ang pagpuksa. Kung hindi ganito karahas ang gagawin, marami pa silang kikidnapin at papatayin gaya ng ginawa sa Canadian tourist na si John Ridsdel.

Pinugutan ng ulo si Ridsdel at inilagay sa isang plastic at iniwan sa isang kalye sa Jolo. Noong Miyerkules natagpuan na ang katawan ng Canadian sa Bgy. Gata, Talipao, Sulu. Dinala ang katawan ni Ridsdel sa Canadian Embassy matapos awtop-siyahin. Kinondena ng Canada ang karumal-dumal na pagpatay kay Ridsdel. Naghihinaggis naman ang kaanak ni Ridsdel sa nangyari.

Kinidnap si Ridsdel noong Setyembre 2015 kasama ang tatlong iba pa sa Samal Island. Umano'y hindi naibigay ang hinihinging ransom kaya pinugutan ang dayuhan. Ang tatlo pang hostages ay ang Canadian na si Robert Hall, Norwegian Kjartan Sikkenstad at ang Pinay na si Maritess Flor. Bukod sa mga nabanggit, bihag din ng Abu Sayyaf ang 14 na Indonesian crewmen at apat na Malaysian seamen.

Noong Huwebes, isang araw makaraang matagpuan ang katawan ni Ridsdel, nireport ng Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) na 14 na Abu Sayyaf ang napatay sa walang puknat na operasyon. Ipinagutos ni President Noyoy Aquino ang all-out war sa Abu Sayyaf. Lipulin ang Abu Sayyaf! Agad nagsagawa ng air strike ang AFP sa kuta ng mga bandido at 14 agad ang napatay sa unang bugso ng opensiba.

Hindi na dapat tantanan ang mga bandido. Ngayong naumpisahan na, ituluy-tuloy na hanggang sa walang matira. Kapag itinigil ang pagsalakay, muli na namang babangon ang mga bandido at magsasagawa ng pangangidnap. Inamin din ng Malacañang na balak palang kidnapin ng Abu Sayyaf si Presidential sister at actress Kris Aquino ganundin si boxing idol Manny Pacquiao.

Tapusin na ang masamang gawain ng Abu Sayyaf. Patunayan ng AFP na mas malakas sila kaysa Abu Sayyaf. Ipakita na kaya nilang lupigin ang mga barbaro.

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02 May 2016

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BELOW THE LINE

Tigtigan, Terakan king Air Force City

By JOSE ABETO ZAIDE

TRANSLATION: Music and Dance at Air Force City

KGIF The commanding general of the Philippine Air Force 1st Division, Maj. Gen. Raul del Rosario, hosted a memorable let-your-hair down evening last Friday.

No stars, rank or uniform, but a KGIF at the 505th Hagar of Clark Air Base to thank all the partners of the command – Clark Development Corporation (CDC), Clark International Airport Corporation (CIAC), Philippine International Hot Air Balloon Festival (PIHABF), etc. – for an outstanding year.

It must be one of the best annual reports of an Air Force command.

Gen. Banayat, vice president of CDC, and Noemi Garcia (tourism promotions) represented Clark Development Corporation. (CDC CEO Atty. Arthur Tugade is on high gear campaign for his presidential candidate Davao Mayor Rodrigo Duterte.) CIAC was represented by a strong complement of senior officials.

Capt. Joy Roa and his doughty Air Safari crew and hot air balloon volunteers made the two-hour drive from Manila.

Apropos yesterday's May 1 Labor Day, Gen. Gel Rosario harped on his motto "Work Hard, Play Hard." He especially cited the 20th Hot Air Balloon festival, which broke the previous record attendance. He said that PHI-HABF did not just provide just "hot air" but introduces the best tourism event in the region and puts the Philippine Air Force's best foot forward. By definition, he said, the PAF and Capt. Roa's hot air balloon event are natural partners, tied to each other, like two mountaineers scaling summits.

WORK HARD. The video presentation was a virtual annual report: Highlights of four days of the Hot Air Balloon Festival (11-14 February 2016), from soup to nuts; the Visiting Forces activity, the Balikatan (with 2,700 allied partners); the hosting of APEC events at the Air Base; the CMO outreach of medical services; the earthquake drill (where the command transfers to Clark Air Base in a scenario where disaster strikes at the heart of Metro Manila), etc

PLAY HARD. Filipinos are said to be able "to sing before they could talk, dance before they could walk," and six contingents from the First Division competed at confirming the reputation.

The only fly in the ointment, if at all, of a perfect evening were the

amateur emcees who would habitually slide into their off-color banter. (Is it true that in the barracks men in uniform do not know of ten jokes w/o sex?)

One of the best lines (not requiring parental guidance) said by one to the other:

Host: "Salamin ka ba?" (Are you a mirror?)

Fall guy: "Bakit?" (Why?)

Host: "Kasi basag ka." (Because you are cracked/smashed.)

Capt. Joy Roa, moved by the talent show, put together an on-the-spot committee to vote the best act among performers; and he awarded prize money to the three top acts.

Drinks flowed and Air Force grub buffet was open all night. But because we had to make the two-hour drive through sleet and rain back to Manila, we passed up tripping the light fantastic with the 5 DJs.

This has been one of the best partnerships between the PAF and the Hot Air Balloon enthusiasts.

When Gen. Del Rosario is promoted upstairs, his successor will find him a very hard act to follow.

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ONLINE NEWS

02 MAY 2016

Bombardments continue vs Abu Sayyaf terrorists in Sulu

From the Zamboanga Today Online (May 1): **Bombardments continue vs Abu Sayyaf terrorists in Sulu**

Government forces have continued to attack Daesh-linked Abu Sayyaf militants in a mountainous area in Sulu, the military reported Friday afternoon.

"Result of indirect fire weapons (105mm howitzers) and reports are coming from civilians," Maj. Filemon Tan Jr., spokesperson of the Armed Forces of the Philippines' Western Mindanao Command, said in a text message.

Earlier, the military reported 14 Abu Sayyaf bandits were killed in air strikes in the vicinity of Mt. Sinumaan in Patikul, Sulu, four days after the beheading of a Canadian hostage, John Ridsel.

The report said government forces rained artillery fire on the Abu Sayyaf gunmen as planes and helicopters flew low over the jungle terrain dropping bombs on the militants believed to be holding 20 foreign hostages.

"But these figures are for further validation and confirmation," Tan said. "What is important here is that operations are continuing and gaining headway."

President Benigno Aquino III on Wednesday vowed to "neutralize" the bandits, who have declared allegiance to the Islamic State (IS) group, a day after the severed head of Ridsel was dumped near Jolo's City Hall.

Military spokesperson Col. Noel Detoyato told reporters at Camp Aguinaldo in Queszon City that as a result of the bombardments, troops were able to occupy the former places occupied by the Abu Sayyaf.

According to him, the offensive, which began last Saturday and targeted at veteran one-armed Abu Sayyaf commander Radullan Sahiron, was proving a success.

Security officials on Wednesday said the hostages, including a Canadian, a Norwegian and a Filipino woman abducted with Ridsel from yachts at a beach resort on Samal Island, Davao del Sur province, seven months ago, were being held by Sahiron on Jolo.

The militants are also holding 18 Indonesian and Malaysian sailors kidnapped from waters south of the Philippines over the past month, as well as a Dutch bird watcher abducted in 2012.

Since 1991, the group -- armed with mostly improvised explosive devices, mortars and automatic rifles -- has carried out bombings, kidnappings, assassinations and extortions in a self-determined fight for an independent Islamic province in the Philippines.

It is notorious for beheading victims after ransoms have failed to be paid for their release.

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