

Army Vision: By 2038, a world-class Army that is a source of national pride



TEAM ARMY

Serving the people. Securing the land.

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OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS
NEWS CLIPPINGS

05 May 2016

Thursday

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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The Manila Times

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The Manila Times

PANAHON TV

TODAY'S WEATHER FORECAST

MAY 5, 2016 | THURSDAY

EASTERLIES
AFFECTING THE EASTERN SECTION
OF THE COUNTRY
(MAY 4, 5:00 PM)

SUNRISE

SUNSET

5:32 AM

6:14 PM

MOONRISE

MOONSET

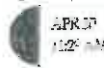


4:05 AM

4:44 PM

LAST QUARTER

NEW MOON



LOW TIDE

HIGH TIDE

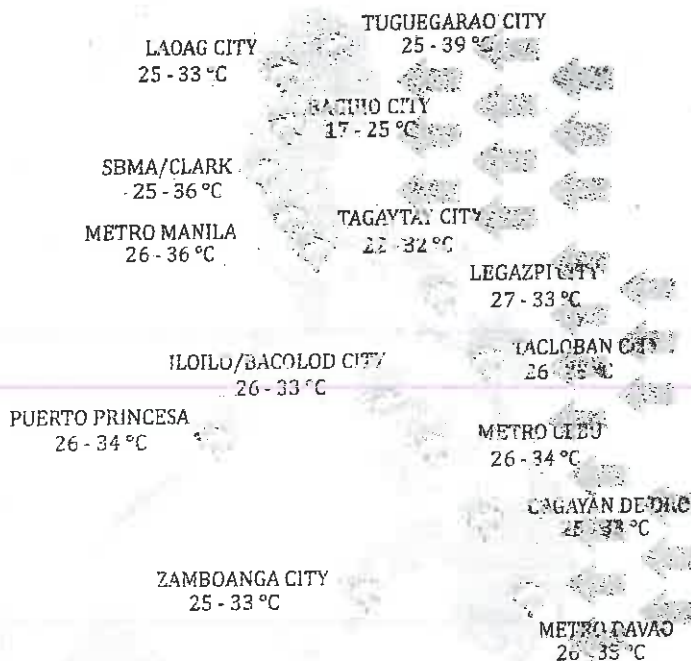


2:25 AM
0.19 Meter

9:02 AM
0.77 Meter

Partly cloudy skies

Partly cloudy to times cloudy with rain showers and/or thunderstorms



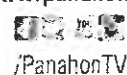
	TEMP. TUESDAY	TEMP. WEDNESDAY	TEMP. THURSDAY		TEMP. THURSDAY	TEMP. FRIDAY	TEMP. SATURDAY
METRO MANILA	25 - 36 °C	26 - 36 °C	25 - 35 °C	BAGUIO	16 - 25 °C	17 - 25 °C	17 - 26 °C
METRO CEBU	26 - 34 °C	26 - 34 °C	26 - 34 °C	PUERTO PRINCESA	26 - 34 °C	27 - 34 °C	26 - 34 °C
METRO DAVAO	26 - 34 °C	26 - 33 °C	25 - 34 °C	BORACAY	24 - 34 °C	24 - 33 °C	24 - 34 °C



Watch PANAHON TV everyday at 5:00 AM on PTV (Channel 4).

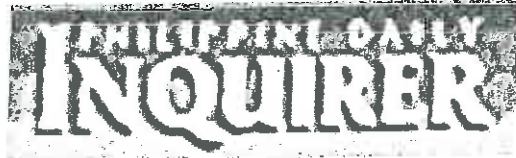


www.panahon.tv



/PanahonTV

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INC backs Duterte, Marcos

Pacquiao, Gordon, Romualdez, Lacson among 12 Senate picks

By Kristine Felisse Mangunay

THE BLOC-VOTING, home-grown Christian sect Iglesia ni Cristo (INC) last night endorsed Davao City Mayor Rodrigo Duterte for President and Sen. Ferdinand Marcos Jr. for Vice President in Monday's national elections.

INC announced its endorsement through a circular read during worship service by executive minister Eduardo Manalo, who called on the sect's members to vote as one on Monday.

"This is based on the teachings in the Bible that were taught to us even before we were accepted as members of the Church of Christ. We have faith that it is God's teaching that there shouldn't be division among us, but that we should be one in thinking and one in judgment," Manalo said in Filipino.

INC BACKS / A15

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From page A1

The INC head cited I Corinthians 1:10 and Romans 15:6 in claiming that the sect's unity came "in the name of Jesus Christ, for the glory of God and for the sake of the church."

He said a sample ballot containing the names of national and local candidates the INC followers would vote for would be sent to them before the vote.

Senatorial candidates

INC also endorsed the senatorial candidacies of the Liberal Party's Joel Villanueva, Franklin Drilon and Ralph Recto, the Nationalist People's Coalition's Vicente Sotto III, United Nationalist Alliance's Manny Pacquiao, independent former Sen. Richard Gordon, former Akbayan Rep. Risa Hontiveros, the NPC's Sherwin Gatchalian, independent Francis Tolentino, former Bukidnon Rep. Miguel Zubiri, former Sen. Panfilo Lacson and Lakas Rep. Martin Romualdez.

There was no immediate comment last night from Duterte's rivals Grace Poe, Mar Roxas, Jejomar Binay and Miriam Defensor Santiago, and Marcos' opponent Leni Robredo, who is leading the race for the country's second highest office in the latest voter preference polls.

All five presidential candidates have sought the endorsement of the influential INC, which does not officially state how many members it has. Unofficial estimates put the sect's following at 2.25 million.

There were no immediate comments from Duterte and Marcos, although Marcos, whose father, the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos, had also been backed by the sect, appeared to have known about his selection as early as last week.

Marcos was reported on Friday as saying he learned last Tuesday that INC would endorse him. But the sect did not confirm Marcos' statement and the next day his camp said the senator had been misquoted.

Last night's INC announcement showed Marcos' advance information had been right after all.

President Aquino met with INC executive minister Eduardo Manalo on Monday in an apparent last-minute plea for support for his chosen candidate, Roxas, although the LP standard-bearer, who is trailing Duterte in the latest Pulse Asia poll, said he could win the presidential election without the sect's support.

Mr. Aquino had also warned of an impending return of dictatorship as the trash-talking Duterte, who promises to kill tens of thousands of criminals outside the justice system, and Marcos, who has been trying to pull the ultimate political comeback for his family, captured the lead in the polls in recent weeks.

The sect has gotten into a legal brawl with the Aquino administration, with the Department of Justice (DOJ) investigating allegations of kidnappings of dissenting ministers who had exposed corruption involving the group's leaders in

October 2015.

Rejecting state intervention in its affairs, the sect picketed the DOJ building in Manila and blockaded a narrow intersection of the belt highway Edsa for four days before quietly giving way to the probe that eventually ended in the dismissal of the charges against the group's leaders.

Whether the incident affected the INC choices was unclear, and Malacañang had no immediate comment after the sect announced its endorsement of Duterte and Marcos.

Not always successful

INC endorsement, however, does not always translate into electoral victory.

In 1992, INC endorsed the presidential candidacy of Eduardo Cojuangco Jr., but the businessman lost to then President Corazon Aquino's defense secretary, Fidel V. Ramos.

In 2010, the sect endorsed the presidential candidacy of Sen. Benigno Aquino III and the vice presidential candidacy of

Roxas. Mr. Aquino won, but Roxas lost to Binay.

Yesterday, Gordon told INQUIRER reporters and editors in an interview that INC endorsed his run for the Senate in 2013 "but I lost."

But Gordon, chair of the Philippine Red Cross, said he was "elated" by the reports that the sect had endorsed him again, even though he was unsure whether the reports were true.

Reports of the sect's decision began to spread on social media in the morning, with INC Facebook users in the Visayas posting on their accounts that Duterte was the sect's choice for President and Marcos for Vice President.

Sample ballots reportedly distributed to INC members also appeared online, three of them posted on Facebook. *With reports from Maricar B. Brizuela; John Cyril Yee and Angelica Cruz, trainees; Carmel Loise Matus, Inquirer Visayas; and Inquirer Research*

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Duterte bares 2014 bank account balance

Mayor threatens BSP, AMLC

By ROBERTZON RAMIREZ

In the face of accusations of ill-gotten wealth, presidential frontrunner Davao City Mayor Rodrigo Duterte yesterday revealed the contents of his bank accounts, disputing allegations that he amassed billions in suspicious transactions.

Duterte took to task the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) and the Anti-Money Laundering Council (AMLC) for their failure to flag the supposed P2.4 billion in his bank accounts.

In a news conference held at **The STAR**, Duterte presented documents covering the months of December 2013 to December 2014 and April 1, 2016 to April 30, 2016.

No documents were showed for the year 2015.

Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV earlier claimed Duterte did not declare in his 2014 statement of assets, liabilities and net worth (SALN) the P211 million supposedly deposited in a joint Bank of the Philippine Islands (BPI) account with his daughter Sara.

But Duterte stressed that if the allegations of Trillanes were true, the BSP and the AMLC must have been remiss in flagging the suspicious

Turn to Page 8

BANK OF THE PHILIPPINE ISLANDS

3 MAY-16

BANK CERTIFICATION OF DEPOSIT

This is to certify that on 31-MAR-16,

RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE JR.
RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE AND
SARA Z. DUTERTE

maintain/s the following account/s with corresponding available balance/s, excluding undeposited funds, garnishment & / or hold-out on deposit, with BANK OF THE PHILIPPINE ISLANDS-JULIA VARGAS.

TYPE	ACCT NO.	CURR.	AMOUNT
Savings	2133061539	PHP	17,816.96

This certification is being issued upon the written request of the above client/s for whatever legal purpose it may serve.

MARIA SERNA B. O'LEARY
BUSINESS MANAGER
JULIA VARGAS

A BPI bank certification of deposit shows Mayor Rodrigo Duterte's account, which had only P17.817 a few days after large deposits were allegedly made.

Duterte From Page 1

transactions.

"What Trillanes was claiming that the P2.4 billion has been in my account ever since, then why the hell wasn't I investigated by the AMLC. That is hidden wealth, not only that, Trillanes is now claiming it was drug money and it also came from smuggling," Duterte said.

"What I am trying to say is if there is proof, then that is criminal negligence if there was no action on their part. It behooves upon the authority of the ombudsman, especially the Bank of the Philippine Islands, because that is dirty money," Duterte said.

Duterte threatened to file

criminal charges against the BSP and the AMLC for negligence in failing to flag the supposed P2.4 billion in his bank accounts.

Duterte said the BSP and the AMLC committed criminal negligence when they failed to investigate him about his alleged ill-gotten wealth as Trillanes has been claiming.

In same news conference, Duterte showed 11 passbooks of his peso and dollar accounts at the BPI Julia Vargas branch in Pasig City.

Duterte's bank certification of deposit, which is a joint account with his daughter Sara, showed he has only P17,816.93 in his savings as of March 31,

2014.

Duterte also showed that the same bank account had P17,766.98 as of Dec. 31, 2014 and P74,734.30 as of April 29, 2016.

As of May 3, 2016, one of his passbooks in the same BPI branch also showed he has a total of P128,829.34.

The money from this same passbook increased to P128,829.34 after some of his supporters deposited an amount following Trillanes' exposé.

Duterte has \$5,021 in his BPI dollar account as of March 31, 2014. He noted the only recent deposit in that account was that of rival presidential candidate Manuel Roxas II.

The document also showed a deposit of \$10 at the New

Farmers Market branch of the BPI bank in Cubao, Quezon City, apparently from Roxas who previously showed his transaction to prove that Duterte's dollar account exists.

Trillanes accused Duterte of having billions of undeclared assets, including over P211 million in the BPI Julia Vargas branch.

But Duterte justified his having several properties and assets by saying evangelist Apollo Quiboloy had given them to him as gifts over their long friendship.

He has also confessed to using Quiboloy's jet and helicopter in his campaign.

Duterte also admitted that he has accepted valuable gifts during his birthday.

Duterte's counsel Salvador Panelo said there is nothing

wrong or illegal with the Davao mayor accepting gifts from his friends and supporters.

Administration standard-bearer Manuel Roxas II has accused Duterte of violating Republic Act No. 6713, or the Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees, in accepting gifts of value.

The law prohibits public officials and employees from soliciting or accepting, "directly or indirectly, any gift, gratuity, favor, entertainment, loan or anything of monetary value from any person in the course of their official duties or in connection with any operation being regulated by, or any transaction which may be affected by the functions of their office."

The law further provides that gifts are prohibited "even on the occasion of a family celebration or national festivity like Christmas, if the value of the gift is neither nominal nor insignificant, or the gift is given in anticipation of, or in exchange for, a favor."

Liberal Party spokesman Akbayan Rep. Ibarra Gutierrez said Duterte, being a lawyer, should follow the law.

"He cannot pick one law over another. As citizens, we are all obliged to follow all laws, and government officials must obey and implement all of them," he said.

However, Gutierrez said Duterte "has no respect for the law, for his office and for the people, and is not fit to be president." - With Jess Diaz

<http://dwdd.com.ph/>

HELPING HAND II Army ladies' club launches new educational assistance program

Lui



FORT BONIFACIO, Taguig City – The Philippine Army Officers' Ladies Club, Inc. (PAOLCI) launched here on Tuesday a special educational assistance program for the dependents of active Army personnel.

The educational assistance is available to qualified dependents of active Philippine Army personnel, officers and enlisted personnel alike, who are entering senior high school.

Under the program, the amount of P5,000.00 per semester, or P10,000.00 per year shall be given to qualified and deserving beneficiaries.

The PAOLCI Educational Assistance Program (PAEAP) is spearheaded by Mrs. Jean Joselyn Maria Año, the wife of Lt. Gen. Eduardo M Año, the Commanding General of the Philippine Army.

"The Club is very grateful to be of assistance. In the future, we hope to expand the scope of our assistance and to fill the gap and interventions in other areas. We also count on the support of our stakeholders," said Mrs. Año. "In the end, the more resources we have, the more Army families we can help, the more children we can inspire to achieve their dreams."

At present, PAOLCI has funds ready for 13 beneficiaries for the coming school year. They will start in senior high school this year until next year. On the 3rd year, they will continue to help those who graduated from senior high school to enable them to start college until they finish their tertiary education.

The Army commander congratulated the PAOLCI for their noble undertaking.

"The educational assistance program of the PAOLCI is unique in the sense that it solely caters to the dependents of active Philippine Army soldiers, soldiers who give their all and their best for our country," said Lt. Gen. Año. "Our soldiers can now be rest assured that their children are being honed as future professionals."

05 May 2016

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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Reds free 3 soldiers, militiaman in Agusan

By Chris V. Panganiban
Inquirer Mindanao

SAN LUIS, Agusan del Sur—Communist rebels freed three Army soldiers and a militiaman from captivity and formally turned them over to Davao City Mayor Rodrigo Duterte and other city officials in a ceremony in a remote village here on Tuesday.

Two of the government troopers, Pfc. Diven Tawide and Pfc. Glenn Austria of the 23rd Infantry Battalion, were separately taken at road checkpoints set by the New People's Army (NPA) in San Luis and Tacugon towns, in Agusan del Sur province on April 3.

The decision to also free Cpl. Jawad Awadi and militiaman Roy Perez was reached at the last minute during the handover program, according to Ka Omar Ibarra, custodial officer of the NPA. They were caught in civilian clothes earlier in the morning by the rebels who were securing the vicinity of the venue in Barangay Balit here.

Duterte arrived late afternoon on a private helicopter for the turnover ceremony and was the last signatory in the release papers of Tawide and Austria. The soldiers were handed over to the Army's 402nd Brigade at its camp in Bancasi, Butuan City.

The release of the captives was worked out by third-party facilitators led by church leaders from the Philippine Ecumenical Peace Platform and local government-officials, in coordination with the Philippine National Police, Armed Forces of the Philippines and the NPA.

Tawide and Austria, in separate interviews, said they were treated humanely

during their monthlong captivity. But Ibarra said they had to contend with the hardships of walking through the hinterlands of the neighboring provinces of Agusan del Norte and Agusan del Sur.

Ibarra lambasted the Philippine Army for not presenting to the public one of its NPA leaders, identified as Ricardo Manili, alias Ka Joker, and six other civilians who were seized at a military checkpoint in neighboring Esperanza town.

Ka Joker, who was supposed to lead the turnover rites, was arrested in the area still covered by the agreement on suspension of military operation to pave the way for the smooth release of the NPA "prisoners of war," he said.

In a press statement, the 401st Army Brigade confirmed the arrest of Manili at a military-police checkpoint in the far-flung village of Remedios in Esperanza. The rebel, who was among those riding in a Starex van, was caught after a brief chase after it tried to make a sudden U-turn near a checkpoint set up by the Commission on Elections.

Capt. Jasper Gacayan, spokesperson of the military unit, identified Manili as the NPA commander of the subregional committee 3 of North Central Mindanao Regional Command and concurrent secretary of Guerrilla Force 4A, and had standing warrants of arrest for multiple murder, arson, robbery and homicide committed in Agusan and nearby provinces.

Also present during the turnover program were San Luis Mayor Ronaldo Corvera and Mayor Norberto Pagaspas of Buenavista, Agusan del Norte.

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<http://retirecanalyst.blogspot.com>

SOLCOM conducts 'Bike for SAFE 2016'

From the Philippine News Agency

In line with its efforts to ensure that the coming May elections will be transparent and peaceful, the Lucena-based Southern Luzon Command (SOLCOM) on Tuesday held its "Bike for SAFE 2016".

An estimated 2,000 bikers participated in the activity held in selected cities and municipalities in Regions IV-A, IV-B and V.

SOLCOM spokesperson Lt. Col. Angelo Guzman said the activity aims to send their message of commitment for a safe and fair elections.

Aside from SOLCOM and its subordinate units, other participants include the Philippine National Police, Commission on Elections, Department of Interior and Local Government, Department of Education, Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting and other non-government organizations.

It was simultaneously conducted in Infanta, Quezon; Binangonan and Tanay, Rizal; Calapan City, Oriental Mindoro; Lucena City and Calauag of Quezon; Labo and Daet of Camarines Norte; Legazpi City, Albay; Virac, Catanduanes and Sorsogon City, Sorsogon.

SOLCOM head Lt. Gen. Ricardo Visaya said they will strictly abide to the non-partisan stand of the organization.

By doing so, the unit helps maintain the sanctity of the ballots, votes and the entire election process.

"We just want to show the people that we are ready for the elections. We just want it to be peaceful," he added.

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

49 killed in unprovoked NPA attacks in Davao, SOCCSKSARGEN

From the Philippine News Agency

Unprovoked attacks by suspected New People's Army (NPA) rebels has so far resulted in the death of 49 unarmed persons in the Davao and SOCCSKSARGEN regions.

SOCCSKSARGEN refers to South Cotabato, Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, Sarangani and General Santos.

This is from Jan. 1 to May 2 this year, said 10th Infantry Division public affairs office chief Capt. Rhyan Batchar.

The figure includes 28 civilians, 12 CAGU Active Auxiliaries (CAAs), five soldiers and four policemen.

The 49 victims were killed in 45 incidents, 23 of which happened in Compostela Valley Province; 10 in Davao del Norte; two each in Davao del Sur, South Cotabato, Sarangani Province, Bukidnon and Davao City; and one each in North Cotabato and Davao Oriental.

Batchar said all 10th Infantry Division personnel were advised to heighten their personal security as the NPAs started targeting unarmed military operatives.

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<http://retiredanalyst.blogspot.com>

NPA releases 2 cops in Bukidnon

From the Philippine News Agency

The New People's Army (NPA) has released the two other remaining police captives to the local government of Bukidnon, a police report reaching here said Wednesday.

The Provincial Police Office in Bukidnon identified the two police officers as Senior Police Officer 2 Warren Coñales and Police Officer 3 Edwin Castor. The police officers were held captive in an NPA checkpoint in Impasug-ong, Bukidnon last April 3.

Bukidnon Governor Jose Maria Zubiri fetched the two police officers during a turn-over ceremony in the remote village of Bulonay in Impasug-ong, Bukidnon around 4:00 p.m. Tuesday.

Zubiri, together with Bishop Felixberto Calang, of the Iglesia Filipina Independiente (IFI) and head of the Third Party Facilitator, immediately brought the two police officers to the Bukidnon Provincial Police Office for medical examination and custodial debriefing.

At around 1:00 p.m. Tuesday, the NPA earlier released Senior Police Officer 4 Rene Rombo during a turnover in the remote village of Banglay in Lagonglong, Misamis Oriental.

The police officers were captured when the communist group mounted a coordinated road blockade in some areas in the Caraga Region and Northern Mindanao last April 3.

Two other government troopers identified as PFCs Glenn Austria, of Patag, Cagayan De Oro City and Devin Tawide, of Talacogon, Agusan Del Sur, all of the army's 23rd Infantry Battalion, remained in the custody of the NPA.

Austria and Tawide were captured in an NPA roadblock in Buenavista, Agusan Del Norte, on April 3.

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

Army, cops hunt down suspects in Maguindanao school bombing

From the Philippine News Agency (May 4)

Sultan Kudarat — Police and military authorities have been deployed in two Maguindanao towns where public schools to be used as voting centers on Monday's national and local elections have been subjected to grenade attacks.

Senior Inspector Esmael Madin, police chief of Sultan Kudarat town in Maguindanao, said elements of the 37th Infantry Battalion have been deployed in town to help the local police ensure the safety of voters and personnel of the Commission on Elections (Comelec).

This after unidentified gunmen bombed another school in Maguindanao Tuesday night, the eighth school to be used as polling precincts on Monday subjected to grenade attacks since last week.

The bombing has sent fears among teachers who will be serving as Board of Election Inspectors (BEIS) for the national and local elections.

"The grenade attacks occurred while the town was experiencing heavy rains," Madin said, adding that the Sandakalan Day Care Center in Barangay Dalumangcob sustained damage due to explosion.

Madin said the school will be used as voting center for the national and local elections in Sultan Kudarat.

He said nobody was hurt in the attack but the locals fear similar incident to happen on Election Day.

Seven schools in nearby Sultan Mastura town were subjected to grenade attacks and strafing by still unidentified gunmen.

Madin believed the bombings of the school in Barangay Dalumangcob was politically motivated. "The armed men wanted to develop fear among poll officials and voters so they will not come out on Monday," he said of the suspects.

No group has claimed responsibility for the series of bombings in Maguindanao schools but police and military authorities are not taking any chances.

More troops have been deployed to Sultan Mastura and Sultan Kudarat which has more than 19,000 voters.

Madin said police and military personnel are working 24 hours to thwart similar attacks in the future or during the run-up to Monday's national and local elections.

The poll body has listed four towns in Maguindanao as "areas of immediate concern" due to the presence of armed men, intense political rivalry and violence in previous elections.

Sultan Mastura and Sultan Kudarat were not in the list of the Comelec. Following the incident, security and poll officials are considering putting the towns under Comelec control. ||

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Joint government forces arrest 8 in illegal drug raid in Maguindanao

Joint police, anti-narcotics agents and the military arrested Tuesday eight persons engaged in illegal drug operation in Maguindanao.

Armed with search warrants, elements of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA), elements of 7th Infantry Battalion and local police, government agents raided several houses in Barangay Bulit, Datu Montawal, Maguindanao Tuesday afternoon.

The law enforcers were after a certain Tarhata who operates an illegal drug den in the village.

PDEA, in a statement, said unidentified armed men opened fire on government forces, triggering a 45-minute firefight. Nobody was hurt in the exchange of bullets.

Elements of Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) helped the government forces in arresting eight suspects.

PDEA identified the suspects as Tarhata Sambutuan, 27; Sobbo Sandalan, 21; Dotin Edsrael, 40; and Jinson Ampatuan, 54, all residents of Barangay Bulit.

Also arrested were Ali Anta, 30, of Barangay Malabuwaya, Datu Piang, Maguindanao, Honeyboy Radtudan, 20 of Kabacan, North Cotabato, Diyal Kasim, 30 of Barangay Talapas, Datu Montawal, Maguindanao, and Allan Lumna, 29 of Barangay Poblacion, Matalam, North Cotabato.

The raiding team seized 50 grams of suspected methamphetamine hydrochloride or shabu with a street market value of PHP110,000, a cal. 45 with magazine and cal. 40 pistol and other illegal drug paraphernalia.

All the suspects are now detained at PDEA office in Cotabato City while charges for violation of Republic Act 9165 or the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002 are being prepared against them.

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<http://reuterscanews.blogspot.com>

Alleged NPA leader nabbed in Agusan Sur; rebels free 3 soldiers, militiaman

From MindaNews (May 4)

An alleged commander of the New People's Army (NPA) was arrested by policemen and members of the 23rd Infantry Battalion manning a Commission on Elections composite checkpoint in Esperanza town in Agusan Del Sur on Monday afternoon.

Ricardo Manili aka Commander Joker, said to be the fourth most wanted person in Caraga Region, was nabbed in Barangay Remedios.

Manili carried a P4.9-million reward on his head, according to police regional director Chief Supt. Rolando Felix.

"Commander Joker was inside a van without an authorized plate, that inside the van the police team were also able to get a homemade shotgun, a caliber .45 pistol, a 9mm pistol, an improvised explosive device, grenade, two blasting caps, three bolos, several rounds of ammunition, medical kit and other documents and personal belongings," Felix said.

"There were also six individuals inside the van with him who are now under investigation to verify their real names and assess if they are together with Commander Joker and members of the NPA," he added.

Felix, who assumed his post in January this year, considered the capture a big achievement for the region's police force.

"This is an achievement not only for the police but also for our brothers in the Army and a huge hit to the leadership of the NPA here in Caraga Region. Commander Joker is known to be an institution within the armed movement, I'm sure his capture will have an impact towards the NPA," he said.

A police field report said the vehicle was on its way to Bayugan City through the new road along Esperanza and believed to have come from barangay Tungao in Butuan City.

Police said Manili has an outstanding warrant for two counts of rebellion, two counts of murder, robbery with homicide, two counts of multiple murder and arson.

In October 2011, the 4th Infantry Battalion made a report that Manili was killed in an encounter in Barangay Calabuan, Esperanza along with four other guerrillas.

The NPA refuted the military report.

Manili was last seen on camera as the NPA commander who handed over the release of Corporal Adriano Bingil of the Army's 26th Infantry Battalion on December 31, 2015 in Las Nieves, Agusan del Norte.

On Monday, the National Democratic Front-North Central Mindanao issued a statement that Manili's arrest would not hamper the scheduled release of Privates First Class Diven Tawide and Glen Austria, two members of the 23rd Infantry Battalion who were held as captives by the NPA.

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

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

NDF regional spokesperson Cesar Renerio said they expect the military and police to treat Manili the way the NPA treats its "prisoners-of-war" especially since Manili is suffering from emphysema of the lungs.

He said Manili's companions who were also arrested are relatives who attended to him whenever the disease attacks.

He said his relatives should be released if the police could attend to Manili's medical needs.

Renerio claimed the explosives and other weapons allegedly found inside the van were planted to justify the arrest.

The rebel made good of its promise by releasing on Tuesday afternoon not just Tawide and Austria but also Corporal Jawad Awadi and militiaman Roy Perez.

The release took place in Balit village in San Luis, Agusan del Sur.

Ka Omar Ibarra, the NPA's custodial officer said his comrades saw Awadi and Perez roaming around the venue of the release in civilian clothes.

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RELEASED Pfc. Diven Tawide and Pfc. Glenn Austria, who were held captives by the New People's Army for a month, are turned over to Davao City Mayor Rodrigo Duterte and other local officials in a remote village in San Luis, Agusan del Sur province. BARRY OHAYLAN / CONTRIBUTOR

05 May 2016

MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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Central, Western Visayas police gear up for election duties

By **MARS W. MOSQUEDA JR.**
and **TARA YAP**

BOGO CITY, Cebu – The Cebu Provincial Police Office (CPPO) has sent advance augmentation forces to seven towns and one city in the province earlier identified as election watch list areas.

Meanwhile, the Police Regional Office-7 is now on full alert ahead of the May 9 general elections.

Chief Superintendent Patrocinio Comendador Jr., PRO-7 regional director, said that based on guidelines from the PNP hierarchy, the PNP is already on full alert status since May 2.

PNP-Western Visayas has likewise started the deployment of its personnel in the region.

"We will be deploying in polling centers and other vital installations," said Police Chief Superintendent Bernardo Diaz, director of Police Regional Office (PRO-6).

Quick response teams

CPPO Director Senior Supt. Clifford Gairanod said elements from the CPPO's quick reaction team has been assigned to each of the areas under the watch list to prevent cases of election-related violence with the general elections less than a week away.

Gairanod said the areas, which include Bogo City and the towns of San Francisco, San Fernando, Dumanjug and Argao, were placed under the election watch list because of intense political rivalry and history of election-related violence.

The CPPO chief said the augmentation team will report to the CPPO every now and then and make sure that the

private armies of some politicians will not be able to sow fear among voters before and during election day.

Regional police on alert

With the full alert status, Comendador said the police should be able to respond to any alarm or eventuality round the clock.

"Our police will be ready for deployment anytime," Comendador said.

Comendador said reports of disturbances are nothing new during elections, referring to a grenade-throwing incident in Barangay Cang-agong, Siquijor around 5 p.m. Sunday, and an alleged strafing incident in Barangay Tejero, Cebu City, around 2 a.m. Tuesday.

Diaz said police teams have already been dispatched to Aklan, Antique, Capiz, Guimaras, Iloilo, and Negros Occidental provinces for election duties.

The police teams will likewise accompany Commission on Elections (Comelec) personnel transporting vote counting machines to polling precincts.

Diaz said that areas that cannot be covered by the PNP will be handled by the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP).

"We are coordinating with our counterparts from the Philippine Army, Philippine Navy, Philippine Air Force, and Philippine Coast Guard," Diaz pointed out.

Diaz also added that 63,000 volunteers of its Oplan Lambat-Sibat operations will augment police security forces across the six provinces.

Meanwhile, Diaz ordered for intensified checkpoints in all areas of the region.

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Ilocos police declares readiness to secure polls

By **MAR T. SUPNAD**

CAMP BGEN OSCAR M FLORENDO, La Union — Philippine National Police - Ilocos regional director Chief Superintendent Ericson T. Velasquez yesterday declared that the Police Regional Office-1 (PRO-1) is all set and ready to ensure secure and fair elections on Monday, May 9.

Velasquez said necessary security preparations and deployment plans, in coordination with counterparts from the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) are in place, along with precautionary measures specifically prepared for areas considered as election watch list areas (EWAs).

"Our equipment and other logistical needs are in place and even our

augmentation personnel from PRO1 Regional Headquarters to include personnel undergoing schooling and Public Safety Field Training Program (PSFTP) are on standby for deployment," Velasquez pointed out.

900 police officers have undergone the pre-deployment orientation seminar (PDOS) and will be deployed on May 9 (Monday) to polling centers. Simulation exercises were also conducted at the police station levels.

"Walang ibang hinahangad kundi ang makaboto ng maayos at matiwasay ang ating mga kababayan. Hinihingi po namin sa mga mamamayan ng kanilang kooperasyon at tulong upang mapanatili ang kapayapaan sa darating na eleksyon (Our goal is that the electorate get to cast their votes peacefully. We appeal for the cooperation

of the public so that peace and order during the elections is ensured)" Velasquez added.

Meanwhile, around 201 assorted firearms were confiscated and 273 persons were arrested by the police amid the strict implementation of the gun ban imposed by the Commission on Elections since January 10.

Velasquez said the 201 seized firearms were composed of 70 high powered and 131 low powered firearms.

Of the 273 individuals arrested for illegal possession of firearms, firearm replicas, explosives and bladed weapons, 257 are civilians, two PNP members, ten government employees and four security guards.

Some 123 were arrested in Pangasinan, 49 in La Union, 35 in Ilocos Sur and 50 in Ilocos Norte.

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PNP, AFP claim 'strategic victory' with capture of top NPA official in Mindanao

BUTUAN CITY - The higher command of the Philippine National Police (PNP) and Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) yesterday claimed a strategic victory in their fight against the New People's Army (NPA), armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP).

Top officials of the PNP and AFP also claimed that the capture of Ricardo Andan Manili, 62, alias "Ka Joker" commanding officer of the Regional Operational Command (ROC) also known as "Julito Tero Command (JTC) of the Mindanao Commission and secretary of guerilla-Front Committee 4-A of the CPP-NPA Northeastern and North Central Mindanao Regional Committee, was a big blow to the underground movement in the northern and northeastern Mindanao regions.

Manili had a ₱ 4.9-million bounty for his capture. He was listed as the fourth most

wanted person in the region and had pending criminal cases in local courts, including two counts of rebellion, two counts of murder, robbery with homicide, two counts of multiple murder and arson, police officials said.

"Ka Joker is most noted and high profile personality in the NPA and we consider his capture as a big blow to the Godless communist movement," Chief Supt. Rolando B. Felix, regional director of Police Regional Office 13 (PRO-13) said.

The region's police chief expressed his appreciation to the apprehending personnel for another job well done. "Such effort is a demonstration of enduring motivations of PNP Caraga and the strong partnership of the AFP to serve the public better even at the expense of one's comfort being far from the family for the sake of public service," he added.

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BusinessMirror
A Division of Intercontinental

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DA, DND ink MOA for cloud-seeding operations

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) on Wednesday said it has signed a memorandum of agreement (MOA) with the Department of National Defense (DND) for the use of the Philippine Air Force's (PAF) aircraft in cloud-seeding operations.

Agriculture Undersecretary Emerson Palad said the MOA also ensures the assistance of cloud-seeding experts from the PAF.

Palad said the MOA took effect immediately after Agriculture Secretary Proceso J. Alcala and Defense Secretary Voltaire T. Gazmin signed it on May 2.

He added that the DA has also fully used its Quick Response Fund worth P370.08 million, which has been allocated to the affected regions.

Prior to the agreement between the DA and the DND, the Bureau of Soils and Water Management has deployed contracted aircrafts to seed clouds for rain in identified vulnerable agricultural areas and watersheds to

minimize the impact of El Niño on crop production.

To date, the DA said a total of 252 sorties (352 flying hours) with a success rate of 68 percent was conducted in various locations in North Cotabato, South Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, Sarangani, Maguindanao, Davao del Sur, Davao del Norte, Davao Oriental, Davao City, Bukidnon, Misamis Oriental, Lanao del Sur, Isabela, Cagayan, Quirino, Nueva Vizcaya, Ifugao and Kalinga.

It was also undertaken in areas of wide magnitude where the development of crop such as rice and corn becomes critical due to inadequate soil moisture.

The DA said it has programmed interventions, initiated strategies and activities as early as 2014, among them are the maximization of production in nonthreatened areas; saving vulnerable areas through appropriate irrigation intervention, or crop shifting using short gestation crops; massive information dissemination; and rehabilitation of vulnerable

areas that cannot be saved.

To address water scarcity in vulnerable areas, the DA said it had distributed pump irrigation equipment for open source/replace ment for damaged/nonfunctional pumps and shallow tube wells to eligible farmers organizations and irrigators' associations.

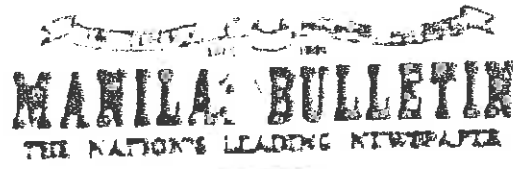
The DA said its regional offices has distributed 9,000 bags of hybrid rice seeds, 60,000 bags of rice certified seeds, 20,000 bags of fertilizer and hybrid seed package and paid crop insurance to affected farmers.

For corn, the DA's regional offices distributed 20,000 bags of hybrid seeds, 30,000 bags of open-pollinated varieties seeds and 30,000 bundles of cassava seed pieces.

The DA said it has also been actively promoting crop shifting through distribution of drought-resistant assorted vegetable seeds, mungbean, peanut and cuttings of sweet potato, watermelon, squash and cucumber. *Mary Grace Padin*

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No military coup under Poe presidency

By **CHARISSA M. LUCI**

LUCENA CITY, Quezon - Should she win, presidential aspirant Senator Grace Poe yesterday expressed con-

fidence there will be no military coup under her administration.

Citing that her reforms and programs would make people happy, the independent presidential bet said she

is not expecting the military to turn its back on her.

"If I become a president, there will be no coup d'etat. All will be happy with our reforms, we will take care of them. We will modernize them," Poe told reporters after a campaign rally in this city ▶4

after Senator Antonio Trillanes IV warned that Davao City Mayor Rodrigo Duterte, if elected, would be prone to military coup because of his ties with the communist rebels.

Poe said if Duterte wins, his administration "is vulnerable to a lot of things."

"Even before he sits as a president, his credibility is being ques-

tioned because of his questionable assets. He should disprove them if it is not true. He needs to do it. Even his pronouncement that if you're against him, he will send you to jail and if an institution opposes him, he will close it down," she pointed out.

The lady senator also promised that under her government, the media's right to freedom of expression

will not be curtailed.

"If I become a president, I won't be your problem. I will push for the Freedom of Information Act," she said.

In a forum with the Foreign Correspondents Association of the Philippines (FOCAP), Trillanes, a vice-presidential candidate, said there will be military "aversion" under the possible Duterte administration as the mayor is pushing for a revolutionary government if elected

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president on May 9.

More support for Grace

With a few days left before the May 9 polls, Poe and vice-presidential aspirant Senator Francis "Chiz" Escudero got the endorsement of coconut farmers and indigenous peoples' groups.

The Confederation of Coconut Farmers Organization of the Philippines (CONFED), and the Tri-Council Mindanao endorsed Poe-Escudero tandem who pledged to promote the welfare and interest of their members.

CONFED is the largest and broadest alliance of major coconut farmers' organizations in the country with 3.2 million members. It is headed by Efren Villaseñor.

Tri-Mindanao is a brotherhood of Muslim-

Christian-Lumad in southern Philippines. It is headed by Datu Mao Andong Jr., who is also the national chairman of Kaunlaran ng mga Magsasaka at Manggagawa ng Pilipinas and national president of the Coconut Peasants' Reform Alliance (COPRA).

The groups hailed the tandem's plan to allocate at least ₱300 billion from the national budget for the agriculture sector that hosts 60 percent of the nation's poor.

On Tuesday, the People's Coalition for Progressive Philippines (PCPP), which has 14 million members also threw their full support for Escudero's vice presidential bid with the signing of a manifesto, led by its chairman, Manuel Barbara Jr., and other members of the board of trustees.

PCPP is a coalition of 146 socio-civic organizations.

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Poe to care for soldiers

LUCENA CITY, Quezon – Independent presidential aspirant Sen. Grace Poe yesterday expressed confidence that there will be no military coup under her administration.

Poe said she is not expecting the military to turn its back on her because of the reforms and programs would make people happy.

"Pag naging presidente ako, walang magiging coup d'etat. Magiging masaya ang lahat sa ating reporma, aalagaan natin ang military, imo-modernize natin sila,"

Poe said after a campaign here after Sen. Antonio F. Trillanes IV warned that Davao City Mayor Rodrigo R. Duterte, if elected, would be prone to military coups because of his ties with the communist rebels.

Poe said if Duterte wins, his administration is vulnerable to a lot of things. "Hindi pa nakakaupo, may malaking kwestiyon na sa kredibilidad, sa mga ari-arian. I-disprove niya kung hindi totoo, kelangang gawin yun. Yung pronouncements din nya ay nakakabahala, kung kumontra ka ipapakulong ka, kung ang isang

institusyon kumontra, ipapasara niya," she said.

Meanwhile, Poe is worth ₱89 million, according to her latest Statement of Assets, Liabilities, and Net Worth.

Poe's SALN stated that she has two residential properties in California, one purchased in 1992 and another in 2008. Both described as a house and lot, the property bought in 1992 was purchased for ₱27,995,500 while the other in 2008 was acquired at ₱15,074,500. (**Charissa M. Luci and Hannah L. Torregoza**)

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The
Standard
PHILIPPINE

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Sayyaf again threatens to harm three hostages

THE Abu Sayyaf group issued a fresh warning Tuesday threatening to harm three hostages, just over a week after they beheaded a captive.

The trio—from Canada, Norway and the Philippines—appealed for help from the Philippine and Canadian governments in a video uploaded to YouTube Tuesday and reported by SITE intelligence group, which monitors jihadist media.

"To the Philippine government: Please stop shooting at us and trying to kill us. These guys are going to do a good job of that," Robert Hall, a Canadian, said in the video.

He said the kidnappers had told him to tell his own government "to meet the demand"—though he did not specify what the demand was.

The Abu Sayyaf announced last

week they had killed a Canadian hostage, retiree John Ridsdel, as an April 25 ransom deadline lapsed.

Norwegian Kjartan Sekkingstad and Marites Flor, Hall's Filipina girlfriend, also pleaded with the two governments.

The video showed them sitting on the ground, beneath what appeared to be a coconut plantation, with six gunmen standing behind them.

The Norwegian said that "if the demand is not met we will be executed like our friend John was a few days ago".

One of the gunmen then warned Manila to heed the "lesson" of

Ridsdel's killing and avoid delays in negotiations.

President Benigno Aquino III has vowed to "neutralize" the gunman and his government has said it will not negotiate with a group it considers a terrorist organization.

"In a statement last week, President Aquino already stated the following, which also addresses the latest threat, he said Communications Secretary Herminio Coloma Jr. in a statement in reaction to the latest Abu Sayyaf threat.

"The full resources of the State are being brought down on the ASG. Our primary objective is to rescue the hostages and ensure the safety of our civilian population," he said Aquino in his earlier statement.

"We have always believed in the

power of dialogue, development and positive engagement over arms. But we will always act from a position of strength. So, to the ASG, and whoever may aid or abet them, you have chosen only the language of force, and we will speak to you only in that language," he said Aquino.

"We will not stop until the threats they pose to our communities is ended," he Aquino also said.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau also said—after announcing Ridsdel's murder—that his government would not negotiate with the kidnappers.

Aquino said the three hostages were being held on the Abu Sayyaf stronghold of Jolo island, more than 1,000 kilometres (620 miles) south of Manila.

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The Manila Times

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Abu Sayyaf threatens to execute hostages

ISLAMIC militants in the Philippines issued a fresh warning Tuesday threatening to harm three hostages, just over a week after they beheaded a captive.

The trio - from Canada, Norway and the Philippines - appealed for help from the Philippine and Canadian governments in a video uploaded to YouTube Tuesday and reported by SITE intelligence group, which monitors jihadist media.

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Hall, a Canadian, said in the video.

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rorist organization.

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Ridsdel and the three were snatched from a resort elsewhere in the southern Philippines in September last year, with the kidnappers demanding millions of dollars in ransom.

On Sunday the gunmen freed 10 Indonesian sailors they had abducted at sea five weeks earlier.

But they are also still holding four Malaysian and four other Indonesian sailors, as well as a Dutch birdwatcher abducted in 2012.

AFP

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3 pang bihag mula sa Samal, pupugutan din—ASG

Nagbanta ang Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) na pupugutan ang tatlong nalalabing bihag, kabilang ang dalawang dayuhan, na dinukot sa Samal Island kapag nabigo ang grupo sa hinihinging tig-P300 milyon ransom sa pagpapalaya sa mga ito.

Ito ang babalang tinanggap ng militar kahapon.

Ayon sa Abu Sayyaf, 13 ang kasalukuyang bihag nila, kabilang ang apat na Malaysian seaman, isang Japanese at isang Dutch.

Kasama sa bilang ang tatlong pinagbantaang pupugutan, ang Canadian na si Robert Hall, ang Norwegian na si Kjartan

Sekkingstad, at ang Pinay na si Marites Flor.

Sinabi ng militar na inilabas kahapon ang video na nagpapakita sa tatlong bihag habang todo ang pag-apela sa gobyerno at nagmamakaawang ibigay na ang hinihinging ransom ng Abu Sayyaf para sa kanilang kalayaan.

Sa video, nagbanta pa ang ASG na hindi sila magdadalawang-isip na pugutar: ang mga bihag kapag hindi naibigay ang kanilang hinihinging ransom.

Matatandaang pinugutan ng Abu Sayyaf ang isa pang Canadian na bihag, si John Ridsdel, matapos na hindi mabayaran ang hinihinging

ransom nitong Abril 25.

Personal na umapela sa Canada si Hall. Aniya, "I'm told to tell you (Canadian government) to meet the demand. I don't know what you're doing, but you're not doing anything for us. John (Ridsdel) has been sacrificed, his family has been decimated, and I'm not sure why or what you're waiting for."

Panawagan naman ni Sekkingstad: "I'm appealing to Canadian government, the Filipino government, friends, family, anybody who can possibly help us. If the demand is not met, we will be executed like our friend John was a few days ago."

Fer Taboy

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ASG hostages make video plea

By ELENA L. ABEN

The Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) has threatened to behead all three remaining Samal hostages if their ransom demand of P300 million for each of the victims is not met.

This, as the militant group released a latest video in which the trio – Canadian Robert Hall, Marites Flor, Hall's Filipina girlfriend, and Norwegian Kjartan Sekkingstad – were shown appealing to the Philippine and Canadian governments.

Another video showed the beheading of Canadian John Ridsdel who was seized along with Hall, Sekkingstad, and Flor from the posh Ocean View Resort on the Island Garden City of Samal, Davao-Del Norte last September 21, 2015.

Ridsdel was killed by the ASG on April 25, less than an hour after the 3:00 deadline for the payment of ransom set by the Islamist group expired.

In the new video, one of their masked captors is heard saying: "Notice to the Philippine government and to the Canadian government: The lesson is clear. John Ridsdel has been beheaded."

"Now there are three remaining



A SCREENGRAB from YouTube video shows Abu Sayyaf bandits standing behind their hostages – three foreigners and a Filipina – in a jungle in Sulu province, a few days before Canadian John Ridsdel was beheaded on April 25, 2016.

captives here. If you procrastinate once again the negotiations, we will behead these all anytime," he added.

In the same video, Hall appealed to the Philippine government by saying: "Please stop shooting at us and trying to kill us. These guys are going to do a good job of that."

"To the Canadian government, I'm told to tell you to meet the demand. I don't know what you're doing, but you're not doing anything for us. John has been sacrificed, his family has been decimated and the rest of our

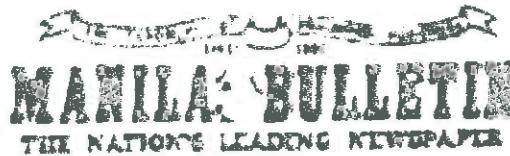
why or what you're waiting for," he added.

Sekkingstad, for his part, said: "I'm appealing to the Canadian government, the Filipino government, friends, family, anybody who can possibly help us, that if the demand is not met we will be executed like our friend John was a few days ago."

Holding back tears, Flor asked several officials and prominent Philippine personalities, including local presidential candidates, for help "because we want to be freed" (PHILIPPINE NEWS FROM AP).

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NPA on goodwill offensive, frees two more POWs

By **MIKE U. CRISMUNDO**

BUTUAN CITY - After releasing a police officer on Monday and two Army soldiers on Tuesday, the New People's Army (NPA) also freed two remaining prisoners of war (POWs) from several checkpoint abductions last April 3, at a hinterland area of Bulonay, in Impasug-ong town, Bukidnon.

Released were SPO1 Warren Hansel Coñales, and PO3 Edwin Panis Castor near the area where they were abducted last April 3.

Coñales and Castor were released almost at the same time that 23rd Infantry

Battalion soldiers PFCs Diven Tawide and Glen Austria in San Luis, Agusan del Sur.

On Monday, the communist rebels freed SPO4 Rene Rombo in Lagonglong, Misamis Oriental.

The NPA custodial force turned over the POWs in separate occasions to third party facilitators and local crisis committee, which acted as intermediaries between the rebels, and the government and the captives' families.

The release also came even after Ricardo Manili, or "Ka Joker", a high-ranking NPA official in Mindanao, was captured last Monday in Agusan del Sur.

The National Democratic Front of the

Philippines (NDFP) credited the efforts of the third party facilitators and local crisis committees in different areas for the POWs' safe release.

The NDFP said the release of POWs was just one of the steps that will pave the way for the final resolution of the problem on communist insurgency that can only be attained through peace talks.

"We believe that peace is not the absence of war. Genuine peace can only be attained when the basic problems that are at the roots of this conflict are addressed and the Filipino people's demands for national freedom and democracy are satisfied," the NDFP said, in a statement.

The release came after a five-day

stand down order of the military and police that started 12 midnight of April 30 until 12 midnight of May 5.

The leaders of the Iglesia Filipina Independiente (IFI) led by Bishop Felixberto Calang and other ranking leaders of the Philippine Ecumenical Peace Platform (PEPP), who acted as third party facilitator expressed gratitude to all sectors who also contributed to the immediate and safe release of the five government soldiers.

"We also extend our thanks to the NPAs for not harming the soldiers and they are in good shape and good health when received by their respective kin," Bishop Calang added.

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

AFP condemns latest ASG video threatening to behead 3 remaining Samal Island hostages

By Priam F. Nepomuceno

MANILA, May 4 (PNA) -- The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) on Wednesday condemned "to the highest extremes" the latest Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) video threatening to behead the three remaining Samal Island hostages if their ransom demands are not met soon.

"We condemn them to the highest extremes and your Armed Forces will continue to work to secure the safety of the hostages who still remain in the hands of these bandits," said AFP spokesman Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla.

A video circulating in the Internet shows Canadian Robert Hall, girlfriend Marites Flor, and Norwegian Kjartan Sekkingstad, flanked by masked ASG members, begging the Canadian and Philippine governments to comply with the bandits demand.

After the victims' appeal, an ASG representative, speaking in very good English, threatened to behead the three if their ransom demands are not met.

The brigands are demanding a Php300 million from each of the remaining captives.

Last April 25, Canadian John Ridsdel was beheaded after Canadian and Philippine authorities ignored the ASG ransom deadline.

Ridsdel's head and torso were recovered separately by military authorities a few days later in Jolo, Sulu.

All four were kidnapped by the bandits at a post Samal Island resort in Davao Oriental last Sept. 21.

"We have not stopped, we have (no) let-up on ongoing operations and will not cease on doing this until we are able to make these personalities or these bandits and criminals accountable for their actions," Padilla said.

"That is all I can say on the matter and as a matter of request again that I have mentioned a while ago, please help not to dignify the activities of these bandits and criminals," he stressed. (PNA)
LGI/PFN

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~~THE PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY (May 4)~~

Troop deployment for election duties now at 97.1% -- AFP

From the Philippine News Agency (May 4)

The deployment of units tasked to secure the coming May 9 elections has reached 97.1 percent, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) announced Wednesday.

Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla, AFP spokesperson, said complete deployment will be announced anytime soon.

When asked regarding the exact number of troops and units involved in securing the coming polls, Padilla stressed the entire 125,000-strong AFP is committed to preserving the peace, transparency, sanctity of the polls with its Philippine National Police (PNP) counterparts.

He added that bulk of the military units are deployed in traditional election hot spots which include Maguindanao, Lanao Del Sur, Zamboanga, Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi.

Padilla said military units in these provinces are deployed in checkpoint operations to prevent the proliferation of loose firearms and movement of private armed groups.

In the same vein, the AFP spokesperson said all unified command headquarters are given leeway to elevate their alert status if needed.

~~He also stressed that additional troops can be deployed as the need arises.~~

As of this posting, the security situation all over the country is normal.

Padilla also stressed that the AFP is willing to transport election paraphernalia to far-flung areas of the country if ordered by the Commission on Elections.

He said that this was demonstrated by recent Nomad flights carrying election materiel to the Kalayaan Island Group some two days ago.

<http://www.philstar.com/>

Filipino militants threaten 3 hostages after beheading 1

By Jim Gomez (Associated Press) | Updated May 4, 2016 - 5:07am

MANILA — Muslim militants have threatened to kill three more hostages in their jungle base in the southern Philippines more than a week after beheading a Canadian man when their multi-million dollar ransom demands were not met.

In a video circulated yesterday by the SITE Intelligence Group, which monitors jihadi websites, the captives from Canada, Norway and the Philippines pleaded for the Canadian and Philippine governments to heed the Abu Sayyaf militants' demand.

Six heavily armed Abu Sayyaf fighters stood behind the hostages, who were made to sit in a clearing and spoke briefly before a camera. A black flag hang in the backdrop of banana trees and lush foliage.

Norwegian hostage Kjartan Sekkingstad said that if the kidnappers' demand was not met, "we will be executed like our friend John."

The militants beheaded John Ridsdel on April 25 in the southern Philippine province of Sulu, an impoverished Muslim province in the south of the largely Roman Catholic country, after they failed to get a ransom of 300 million pesos (\$6.3 million).

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau condemned the killing but vowed not to give in to the kidnappers' ransom demands. Following the beheading, the Philippine military launched an offensive, which security officials believe have killed more than a dozen gunmen so far.

Canadian captive Robert Hall asked the Philippine government to "please stop shooting at us and trying to kill us. They're gonna do a good job at that." He asked his government to heed the militants' demand.

Holding back tears, Filipino Marites Flor asked several officials and prominent Philippine personalities, including local presidential candidates, for help "because we want to be freed alive."

A masked militant warned Canada and the Philippines that the three remaining hostages would be killed "if you procrastinate once again."

It was the first time, the three captives were shown in a video after Ridsdel's killing.

The four were seized from a marina on southern Samal Island and taken by boat to Sulu, where Abu Sayyaf gunmen continue to hold several captives, including a Dutch bird watcher who was kidnapped more than three years ago, and eight Indonesian and Malaysian crewmen who were snatched recently from three tugboats.

The militants freed 10 Indonesian tugboat crewmen a few days ago reportedly in exchange for ransom.

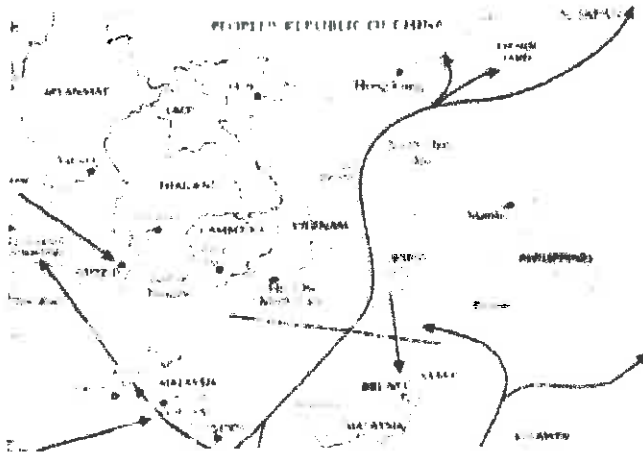
The United States and the Philippines have separately blacklisted the Abu Sayyaf for kidnappings for ransom, beheadings and bombings. The brutal group emerged in the early 1990s as an extremist offshoot of a decades-long Muslim separatist rebellion in the south.

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China to carry out more military drills in South China Sea

By: Ben Blanchard, Reuters

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BEIJING - China's military will carry out more military exercises in the South China Sea this month involving advanced warships and submarines, state news agency Xinhua said on Wednesday, terming the drills routine.

China claims almost all of the energy-rich waters of the South China Sea, through which more than \$5 trillion of maritime trade passes each year. The Philippines, Brunei, Vietnam, Malaysia and Taiwan have overlapping claims.

Xinhua said the ships, including a new guided missile destroyer, would take part in anti-submarine, anti-missile and other exercises.

It did not say exactly where the drills would take place, but noted they were routine and had been planned for this year.

China periodically announces such exercises in the South China Sea as it tries to demonstrate it is being transparent about its military deployments.

China has been at odds with the United States of late over the strategic waterway.

Washington has criticized Beijing's building of artificial islands in the South China Sea's disputed Spratly archipelago, and has conducted sea and air patrols near them.