

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



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OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS
NEWS CLIPPINGS

17 November 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.

NEWS HEADLINES

17 NOVEMBER 2016



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

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INQUIRER

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BALANCED NEWS + FEARLESS VIEWS

TODAY'S WEATHER FORECAST NOVEMBER 17, 2016 | THURSDAY

TAIL-END OF A COLD FRONT AFFECTING NORTHERN LUZON (As of 5:00 PM - Nov.16, 2016)



PHILIPPINE AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY (PAR)




SUNRISE	SUNSET
5:58 AM	5:24 PM
MOONRISE	MOONSET
8:18 PM	8:28 AM
FULL MOON	LAST QUARTER
NOV 14 9:52 PM	NOV 21 4:23 PM
LOW TIDE	HIGH TIDE
MANILA SOUTH HARBOR	
6:52 AM -0.23 Meter	11:22 PM 1.29 Meter


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

Cloudy with rainshowers and/or thunderstorms

	NOV 16	NOV 17	NOV 18	NOV 19	NOV 20	NOV 21
METRO MANILA	25-33 °C	25-34 °C				
TAGAYTAY			21-30 °C	21-30 °C		
TACLOBAN					24-31 °C	25-32 °C
TUGUEGARAO	22-28 °C	23-29 °C	23-30 °C	24-31 °C		
LEGAZPI					25-32 °C	24-33 °C
LADAG	24-32 °C	25-33 °C	24-32 °C	24-32 °C		
PUERTO PRINCESA					24-33 °C	25-34 °C
BAGUIO	16-24 °C	15-24 °C	24-32 °C	24-33 °C		
ILOILO/BACOLOD					24-33 °C	25-34 °C
SBMA/CLARK	25-32 °C	25-33 °C	24-32 °C	24-32 °C		
METRO CEBU						

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SAGOT KO, PADALA MO!

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19 November 2016

MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

Page: 1

Improved ties with US seen

Duterte expresses optimism he'll get along well with Trump

By ELENA L. ABEN

After his series of anti-US rhetoric, President Duterte is now looking at improved relations with the country's longtime ally while expressing optimism he can

get along well with America's president-elect Donald Trump.

Duterte's relationship with the US has soured due to criticisms against his bloody war on illegal drugs. He has repeatedly lashed out at outgoing US President Barack Obama and even told

him once to "go to hell."

But following Trump's election as America's 45th president, Duterte appeared to have softened his stance against the US.

"To the president-elect of the US, Donald Trump, congratulations. It was

a well-deserved victory and you are the chosen leader of the most powerful country on earth," Duterte told reporters late Tuesday.

When asked if he thinks the relationship between Philippines and the US would improve, Duterte replied: ►6

"Oh, I'm sure."

According to Duterte, he has no issues with Trump as the latter "has not meddled in human rights issues."

"Wala man karning away (We don't have any quarrel). I can always be a friend to anybody, especially to a president, chief executive of another country," he said.

"Hindi naman ako sinasaway about my campaign on human rights," he added, referring to Trump.

On the issue of Trump's intent to crackdown on illegal migrants that could affect a large numbers of Fili-

pinos believed to be working illegally in the US, Duterte said: "I trust in his judgment that he would be fair in the matter of the treatment of illegal immigrants."

"I cannot talk for the illegals because whether the President is Trump or not, or somebody else, it won't matter. Because an illegal is always an illegal. So he is subject at any time a deportation," he added.

Combat exercises continue
Meanwhile, US and Philippine special forces will begin annual combat

exercises on Wednesday in a sign such joint drills are continuing despite vocal opposition by the President Duterte.

The US military says that so far there's been no reduction in cooperation with the Philippines, a longstanding US ally, despite President Duterte's threats to do so and his expressed desire to expand security ties with China and Russia.

But in a sign of a possible restriction, Philippine army spokesman Col. Benjamin Hao said Tuesday both the US and the Philippines have agreed to forego live-fire drills in the field during the month-long Balance Piston exercises which will take place in the western province of Palawan.

He said about 40 elite Filipino

troops are taking part but wouldn't say how many Americans. He didn't give a reason for dropping the live-fire maneuvers.

The Philippine defense department has said Duterte wants such overt assault drills to be discontinued.

Military cooperation remains

In Washington, Admiral Harry Harris, the commander of US forces in the Pacific, said Tuesday there's been no change so far in US-Philippine military cooperation.

He said US special forces are still advising the Philippines in counter-terrorism in the country's south, U.S. surveillance aircraft have continued ro-

tational deployments at Clark Air Base, and plans for enhanced defense cooperation agreed by the previous Philippine administration remain on track.

"There are five Philippines bases that they have agreed to allow us to use. That hasn't changed so far and I have no reason to believe that will change. I will know more next week," Harris told reporters.

Next Tuesday, Harris said he will meet in the Philippines with the chief of staff of its armed forces, Gen. Ricardo Visaya, to discuss the schedule for military exercises in the coming two years. Harris said there could be a "re-scoping" of some of the big exercises in 2017. (With a report from AP)

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Kerwin ready to talk

Dayan offered witness protection; Leila says she's the target

By JAIME LAUDE and CHRISTINA MENDEZ

Alleged drug lord Kerwin Espinosa has agreed to spill the beans on his illegal drug operations and cooperate with the government, Philippine National Police (PNP) chief Director General Ronald dela Rosa said yesterday.

Espinosa is scheduled to arrive tomorrow from Abu Dhabi to reveal what he knows about the illegal drug operations, Dela Rosa said.

"He has declared his willingness to cooperate with the government initially, unless he changes his mind," the PNP chief said.

Dela Rosa said Espinosa would be placed in the custody of the PNP-Anti-Illegal Drugs Group (AIDG) at Camp Crame following his arrival from the

United Arab Emirates early tomorrow.

"(He is) very important because he holds the key to the future of others involved in the illegal drug trade," Dela Rosa stressed.

He said Kerwin has yet to make an affidavit detailing his confession.

Dela Rosa said Kerwin was earlier

interviewed by Philippine authorities in Dubai, and he reportedly agreed to turn state witness and reveal the key players in the illegal drug operations named by his slain father and namesake, Albuera Mayor Rolando Espinosa.

The elder Espinosa reportedly maintained a

ledger of key personalities who were on the take in the illegal drug operations in Eastern Visayas. Among the personalities allegedly listed in the supposed blue book was Sen. Leila de Lima.

Turn to Page 8



Kerwin Espinosa

Kerwin From Page 1

Mayor Espinosa was killed during a supposed shootout with policemen who were serving a search warrant in his detention cell at Baybay City, Leyte on Nov. 5.

Kerwin agreed to turn state witness after learning that his father was killed by policemen while in detention.

During the Senate inquiry into the killing, senators believed Espinosa was executed to prevent him from revealing the extent of the illegal drug operations in the region, including the personalities on his payroll.

The senators are interested in finding out who ordered the killing of Espinosa.

Two witnesses

Justice Secretary Vitaliano Aguirre II had said Kerwin would be placed under the Witness Protection Program (WPP) to testify against the personalities involved in the illegal drug trade, possibly including De Lima.

Aguirre yesterday also offered government protection to Ronnie Dayan, the former driver and bodyguard of De Lima.

Aguirre noted De Lima's admission that she had an af-

fair with Dayan.

"We welcome all who want to cooperate so that we can pin down responsibility on the public officials involved in the drug trade. So, we were offering the protection of the WPP to Kerwin Espinosa, even to Ronnie Dayan, as long as they are cooperative and that they will be qualified to be accepted, to be admitted under our Witness Protection Program," Aguirre said.

Dayan, who has P1-million bounty for his capture, is reportedly hiding under the protection of some local officials in Northern Luzon.

"We were told that Ronnie Dayan is protected by some high public officials in his home province of Pangasinan and other northern provinces, up to Baguio," he said.

The House of Representatives cited Dayan in contempt for his refusal to appear before the committee investigating the illegal drug operations at the New Bilibid Prison (NBP).

Aguirre said Dayan should be held responsible for disregarding the summons of the House of Representatives.

"He committed an offense by disrespecting Congress, so

I believe that he has to answer this, although contempt is a relatively lighter offense," he said.

On Kerwin, Aguirre said the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) will assist the PNP in getting the testimony.

Aguirre said he has told Dela Rosa that the NBI is ready to provide additional protection for Espinosa.

Too slow

Aguirre also scored the Office of the Ombudsman for its failure to speed up the filing of cases against De Lima.

At a briefing in Malacañang yesterday, Aguirre wondered why the ombudsman has not acted on De Lima's case when the DOJ has gathered enough testimony to bolster claims that the senator had received drug money through Dayan.

Aguirre made the statement in response to the query on why no charges have been formally filed against De Lima despite the DOJ's findings.

He said the testimonies given during the House probe on the drug dealings at the NBP are enough for the filing of charges.

Aguirre cited the two NBI officials who claimed that in two instances, they handed P5 million each to De Lima and Dayan at their residence

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in Parañaque City.

"But to the ombudsman, these are not sufficient. I don't know what they still want, because they are saying that these are mere allegations," Aguirre added.

He explained the cases against de Lima could be investigated or could be heard in preliminary investigation by the ombudsman and by the DOJ at the same time.

"So we are conducting, we are continuing our preliminary investigation in connection with these charges," Aguirre added.

Aguirre said the case against De Lima can stand alone even without the testimonies of Kerwin and Dayan. "Even without Ronnie Dayan, even without Kerwin Espinosa, I think it is very strong, especially now that Senator De Lima admitted her relationship – her illicit relationship – with Ronnie Dayan. That's a big change," Aguirre said.

Aguirre stressed De Lima's recent admission of her affair with Dayan has bolstered further the case against her.

Lawmakers also scored the ombudsman for what they called deafening silence from the anti-graft body in filing cases against De Lima.

"The ombudsman is much too quiet in the campaign

against illegal drugs. They should seriously look into this issue. They should seriously look into the drug proliferation and the involvement of public officials into the drug problem. They should pursue this," Buhay Rep. Lito Atienza said.

Ako Bicol party-list Rep. Alfredo Garbin said the ombudsman should initiate the probe.

"Being a constitutional body and a watchdog on the accountability of public officials, the ombudsman should act on its own even without a benefit of a complaint from somebody," Garbin said.

"The ombudsman should conduct the probe immediately, given the magnitude of the drug problem," he added.

Congressmen also observed the plot had thickened when it was revealed that the NBP riot that broke out on Oct. 2 was allegedly masterminded by De Lima in an apparent attempt to cut the ties linking her to the drug trade.

A high-profile Chinese drug lord was killed while four others, including controversial convict Jaybee Sebastian, were wounded during a riot inside the NBP.

Sebastian's attacker, Tomas Doniña, reportedly confessed that he was ordered by a former comrade in the Navy.

Supt. Francisco Ebreo of the PNP-Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) made this revelation before the House hearing yesterday.

Ebreo said Doniña made an affidavit last Oct. 8 that he was ordered to kill Sebastian.

Ebreo, however, said the police investigators failed to get Doniña to divulge the name of the mastermind.

Ebreo quoted the affidavit in Filipino that Doniña was prevailed upon to create a ruse in prison and make it appear that Sebastian was killed during a riot. Sebastian was not supposed to reveal the illegal drug operations in the NBP and talk against De Lima.

Sebastian, who was convicted of kidnapping, has accused De Lima of allegedly requiring him to raise funds inside prison for her campaign in the May 9 elections.

Sebastian described De Lima as the "protector" of the illegal drug operations inside the national penitentiary when she was still justice secretary.

Sebastian said De Lima received P10 million in total payoffs from the drug trade. He added she was fully aware of the illegal drug trade inside the prison facility. – With De-ion Porcalla, Eva Visperas

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17 November 2016



Pahina. 3

Sundalo nilikida sa kasalan

TODAS ang isang sundalo matapos pagbabarilin sa gitna ng kasalan sa Barangay Baya, Ragay, Camarines Sur kamakalawa.

Natukoy ang pagkakakilanlan ng biktimang si Corporal Fidel Penano, assistant detachment commander ng Bata detachment ng 22nd Infantry Battalion ng Philippine Army.

Nabatid kay Capt. Joash Pramis, hepe ng 9th Infantry Division Public Affairs Office, wala pang pagkakakilanlan ang lalaking pumuntirya sa sundalo habang nasa gitna ng kasalan. Patuloy ang pagsisiyasat ng mga otoridad sa motibo at nasa likod ng pagpapatumba sa sundalo. JEFF GALLOS

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AFP obtains 'proof of life' of German hostage

By ROEL PAREÑO

ZAMBOANGA CITY – A 70-year-old German that the Abu Sayyaf had snatched appears to be alive after the military got hold of a photograph of him taken by an informant last Nov. 11 at 7:40 a.m.

The photograph showed Juer-gen Kantner wearing a maroon t-shirt and gray jogging pants, barefoot while lying on a black plastic canvass in the mountains of Sulu, according to a source.

The source said Kantner appeared to be resting and nobody was seen around him.

"It could be a proof of life of the victim," the source, who asked not be named as he is not authorized to speak on the issue, said.

Maj. Filemon Tan Jr., Armed Forces Western Mindanao Command spokesman, said they cannot ascertain yet the condition of Kantner based on the photograph since they have not seen any newspaper with a date that he is holding.

"Nevertheless, we are hoping it is true that he is still alive and that we have the chance to rescue him and see him safe once again," he said.

Tan said they already have leads about the possible place where Kantner is being held but could not divulge the information because it could compromise their operation.

"The safety of the victim

and our ground troops running after bandits are always of utmost concern," he said.

Tan said since Kantner is believed to be held in Sulu, with the number of Abu Sayyaf hostages having increased to 22 – a Dutch, a German, two Indonesians, five Malaysians, a South Korean, six Vietnamese and six Filipinos.

Two captive Indonesians are still subject for confirmation, he added.

Meanwhile, the Abu Sayyaf has freed unharmed a Filipino held for three months but kept his 8-year-old son, the military said yesterday.

Elmer Ybañez Romoc was

released Monday night somewhere in Jolo, according to Tan.

Romoc's son Ericson was kept by the Abu Sayyaf band of Adore Abdulla and Jaber Susukan, he added.

Romoc, a local government employee, his wife Noro and son Ericson were forcibly taken last Aug. 5 in the coastal town of Payao, Zamboanga-Sibugay and brought to Sulu as captives.

Romoc's wife was released last Aug. 24 to raise the ransom for her husband and son.

Romoc, upon his release, boarded a commercial ferry for Zamboanga City and was fetched by his family and the police under the Anti-Kidnaping Group, Tan said.

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AFP working with Vietnam embassy to locate 6 sailors

By JAIME LAUDE

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) is closely coordinating with the Vietnamese embassy in its effort to locate six Vietnamese sailors kidnapped by Abu Sayyaf bandits in waters off Basilan last week.

Col. Edgar Arevalo, AFP Public Affairs Office chief, said the Vietnamese embassy is assisting the military in extracting vital information from the remaining crewmembers of *M/V Royal*, who escaped the abduction.

"My understanding is that we have coordinated with the Vietnamese embassy, they have provided an interpreter for us to be able to come up with clearer information of what really happened," Arevalo said. He declined to divulge details of ongoing field operations to rescue the hostages.

There were reports the Vietnamese were sighted in the outskirts of Tipo-Tipo, Basilan and were being guarded by around 30 heavily armed bandits.

"We do not want to preempt whatever action we are doing by saying exactly

where they were taken," he said.

The Vietnamese were abducted while their vessel was cruising the Basilan Strait on Friday last week.

Earlier, Abu Sayyaf bandits intercepted a German couple cruising the Sulu Sea on a yacht, taking away the male and killing his female companion. The female victim was found dead on the yacht, bearing signs of being raped.

The abductions took place despite President Duterte's order for AFP chief Gen. Ricardo Visaya to finish off the local terrorist group "down to the last man" and end its notoriety in Western Mindanao. Visaya is set to retire on Dec. 8.

Duterte announced last week his wish to suspend the writ of habeas corpus to give more teeth to his campaign against criminality, especially drugs and terrorism.

Aside from the Abu Sayyaf, the Lanao del Sur-based Maute gang is also considered a major terror group by security forces.

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Judge inhibits from Marcelino drug case

By GHIO ONG

A Manila judge has inhibited from hearing the drug case against Marine Lt. Col. Ferdinand Marcelino and his Chinese companion due to personal reasons.

Judge Felicitas Laron Cacanindin of the Manila Regional Trial Court (RTC) Branch 17 said she decided to inhibit from the case because of her association with former Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) director general Arturo Cacdac.

Cacdac was the PDEA chief when Marcelino and Yan Yi Shou were arrested in a raid on a shabu storage facility in Sta. Cruz, Manila where 77 kilos of shabu worth P380 million were seized in January.

Cacanindin said Cacdac is the brother of her best friend in high school.

The judge also said she and Cacdac graduated from the same high school in La Union where they hail.

"To erase any suspicion on impartiality, herein presiding judge is voluntarily inhibiting from hearing the case due to personal reasons," Cacanindin said in a three-page order, referring to herself in the third person.

"Actually, at the outset, this fact entered her mind," Cacanindin said, but "she did not entertain any bias toward Cacdac because she thought he only performed his functions as the then PDEA chief and he had nothing to do with the case."

Cacanindin said she continued studying the voluminous pleadings submitted by the parties in the case.

"In fact, it took its toll on her health that she got sick due to sleepless nights as she brought home copies of the documents filed to be read and studied," the judge said.

However, Cacanindin said she was reminded by friends and relatives of her association with Cacdac, prompting her to take a second look "at Cacdac's supposed role in the arrest of Marcelino."

"Marcelino pointed to Cacdac as the one who ordered his arrest despite his explanation of his presence at the shabu laboratory. It was averred that Cacdac made Marcelino a scapegoat for personal reasons and merely to gain," the order read.

Records of the case will be forwarded to Manila RTC Executive Judge Reynaldo Alhambra before the complaint is raffled off to another judge.

Marcelino and Yan had filed a motion to dismiss the case.

Cacanindin earlier suspended the arraignment and issuance of a warrant for the arrest of Marcelino and Yan pending the resolution of the appeal.

Public Attorney's Office (PAO) chief Persida Rueda-Acosta, lawyer for Marcelino, said there was no probable cause to proceed with the trial of Marcelino and Yan for possession of dangerous drugs.

Marcelino, a former PDEA official, and Yan, supposedly a former anti-narcotics asset, said their arrest was illegal because they were engaged in a covert surveillance operation.

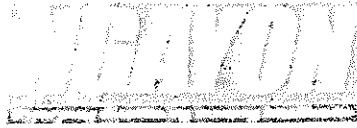
It was not established that Marcelino and Yan exercised control over the premises where the illegal drugs were found, the PAO argued.

Last June, the Department of Justice (DOJ) cleared Marcelino and Yan of drug charges for lack of evidence.

The Philippine National Police-Anti-Illegal Drug Group and the PDEA filed a motion for reconsideration.

DOJ Assistant State Prosecutor Alexander Suarez found Marcelino and Yan guilty of possession of illegal drugs on Sept. 15, reversing an earlier resolution dismissing the charges against the two.

17 November 2016



Pahina. 6

Judge nag-inhibit sa kaso ni Col. Marcelino

Nag-inhibit ang isang hukom ng Maynila sa paglilitis sa kasong may kinalaman sa droga na isinampa laban kay Marine Lt. Col. Ferdinand Marcelino at sa Chinese niyang kasamahan na si Yan Yi Shou.

Matatandaang si Marcelino ay inaresto ng mga tauhan ng PDEA at Anti Illegal Drugs Group ng PNP sa pagsalakay na ikinasa ng mga awtoridad sa Sta. Cruz, Maynila noong Enero ng taong kasalukuyan.

Si Marcelino ay ipinagharap ng reklamong paglabag sa Section 11 at 26 ng RA 9165 o Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act na tumutukoy sa manufacturing at possession at conspiracy in the manufacturing of illegal drugs.

Sa kanyang tatlong pahi-

nang kautusan na may petsang November 11, 2016, sinabi ni Judge Felicitas Laron-Cacanindin ng Manila RTC Branch 17 na si Cacdac ay kapatid ng kanyang matalik na kaibigan noong high school.

Pareho rin umano silang taga-La Union ni Cacdac at parehong nagtapos sa high school sa isang eskwelahan.

Kaya para maalissama ang mga pagdududa at ang pagiging patas niya sa paghawak sa kaso, minarapat niyang mag-inhibit na lamang alang-alang sa diwa ng katarungan.

Bago siya mag-inhibit, nauna na niyang iniutos ang pagsuspindi sa arraignment o pagbasa ng sakdal, gayundin ang pagpapaliban sa pag-iisyu ng mandamyo de aresto. (Doris-Franche-Borja)

17 November 2016

The Manila Times

Page: A7

SON HELD CAPTIVE

Sayyaf frees kidnapped father

BY AL JACINTO

ZAMBOANGA CITY: Abu Sayyaf terrorists have freed a 42-year-old man they abducted in Zamboanga Sibugay province in August but continue to hold in captivity his eight-year-old son in Sulu.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines' (AFP) Western Mindanao Command (Westmincom) on Wednesday said Elmer Romoc was released on November 14 in Jolo town and traveled alone on a ferry for Zamboanga City where his wife and other relatives and policemen fetched him the next day.

It was unknown how much ransom his family paid to the Abu Sayyaf.

The victim was immediately taken to the police headquarters here where he gave a statement but details of the debriefing were not made public.

Romoc, his wife Nora and their son Ricson were kidnapped on August 5, 2016 from the village of Kulisap in Payao town in Zamboanga Sibugay and spirited out on a motorboat to Sulu.

He is an employee of the municipal treasurer's office of Payao.

On August 22, the rebels freed his wife so she can raise money to pay the ransom.

She took a boat in Jolo and traveled to Zamboanga City and arrived by bus in her cousin's house in Siay town, also in Zamboanga Sibugay.

Authorities believed that Nora's relatives

paid an unspecified amount of ransom to the Abu Sayyaf for her liberty.

The relatives also raised money for the safe release of Elmer and their son.

It was not immediately known, however, why the Abu Sayyaf held on to the child.

The military has tagged Ador Abdullah and Haber Susukan as behind the abduction of the family.

Meanwhile, officials in the second district of Sulu vowed to work with security forces to stop unabated kidnappings and proliferation of illegal drugs in the province.

In a meeting also on Wednesday hosted by Lt. Gen. Mayoralgo de la Cruz of the AFP Westmincom, the officials led by Rep. Abdulmunir Mundoc Arbison assured the military and the police of their assistance in the campaign.

Brig. Gen. Arnel de la Vega, AFP's Joint Task Force Sulu commander, said the government

will succeed in ending the group's nefarious activities in the province through concerted efforts of AFP units and local leaders in Sulu.

Government forces in July launched an all-out offensive against the bandits' strongholds in Sulu and Basilan after President Rodrigo Duterte ordered the "total decimation" of the extremist group.

But despite the all-out offensive, the terrorist group still managed to pull off kidnapping activities the latest of which was the abduction of five crew of a Vietnamese cargo vessel off Basilan last Friday.

This brought to eight the number of people abducted from vessels in the region over the past week, including an elderly German sailor whose woman companion was found dead inside a yacht with the German flag and marked "Rock All" off Laparan Island in the town of Pangutaran, Sulu.

WITH FERNAN MARASIGAN

11 November 2016

Malaya
The Nation's Newspaper

Page: 34

Gov't worker freed by Abu Sayyaf

BY VICTOR REYES

A GOVERNMENT employee was released by his Abu Sayyaf captors in Sulu last Monday, some three months after he, his wife, and their son were kidnapped in Payao town in Zamboanga Sibugay.

The military said it has no information on whether ransom was paid for the release of Elmer Romoc, an employee at the treasurer's office of Payao government.

The military, meanwhile, said it remains clueless as to the whereabouts of six Vietnamese sailors and a German who were recently abducted off Basilan and Sabah.

Col. Edgard Arevalo, chief of the AFP public affairs office, downplayed reports that the Vietnamese are in Basilan, particularly in Tipo-Tipo town where they are reportedly being guarded by around 30 Abu Sayyaf men.

"We still have no confirmation on that, as to where they were brought after they were kidnapped by the members of the Abu Sayyaf but that is also subject of our further verification," said Arevalo.

Maj. Filemon Tan, spokesman of the Zamboanga City-based AFP Western Mindanao Command, said Romoc was released in Jolo, Sulu at around 4:30 p.m. last Monday. He later boarded a passenger vessel to Zamboanga City where he was fetched by policemen and his family.

Romoc, his wife Nora, and their son Ricson were abducted by Abu Sayyaf members reportedly under Adore Abdulla and Jaber Susukan, in Barangay Kulisap in Payao last August 5.

Nora was released by the Abu Sayyaf last August 23 also in Jolo, Sulu. Her sister-in-law, Angelina Romoc, later said their family paid ransom.

Ricson is still in captivity, said Tan.

Arevalo said efforts to locate the foreign captives continue.

The Vietnamese are all crew members of bulk carrier MV Royal 16 which was intercepted by the Abu Sayyaf in the vicinity of Coco island in Basilan strait on Friday last week. The vessel was on the way to Davao City at that time.

German Jurgen Kantner, 70, was abducted on November 5 after his yacht off Sabah. The yacht was later recovered in

Sulu, with the body of his wife, Sabine Isle Merz.

Arevalo said the military is still determining if the Abu Sayyaf was involved in the abduction of Kantner though Sulu-based Abu Sayyaf members have said they are holding the German.

Told the Abu Sayyaf has already claimed responsibility for Kantner's kidnapping, Arevalo just said: "They can always claim but we have to rely on our reports from the field with regard to confirmation."

"We do not want to be misled... They seek a halt of the military operations (in Sulu) on account that they have him in their custody," he said.

On whether the Abu Sayyaf is taunting the Armed Forces by pulling off the kidnapping despite the military's intensified campaign against the group in Sulu and Basilan, Arevalo said: "We are not looking at it in that perspective... It shows their determination to commit a crime."

The Abu Sayyaf is still holding over a dozen foreign and Filipino kidnap victims in Sulu despite the military's intensified operations against the group in the province and in Basilan since July.

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ASG releases kidnap victim

ZAMBOANGA CITY — An employee of the Payao Municipal Treasurer's Office in Payao, Zamboanga Sibugay province was released by the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) Tuesday after holding him captive for more than three months in the forested areas of Sulu province.

Armed Forces of the Philippines–Western Mindanao Command (West–MinCom) Spokesman Maj. Filemon I. Tan, Jr. identified the released victim as Elmer Ybanez Romoc.

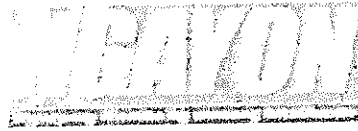
Romoc was released by the ASG at an undisclosed place in Sulu following discreet negotiation for his liberty.

Tan said Romoc boarded the M/V Bounty Cruiser from Jolo, Sulu and was fetched by his family and personnel of the Anti-Kidnapping Group at the Zamboanga City wharf at about 7:30 a.m. on Tuesday.

Romoc, his wife Nora, and son Ricson were kidnaped by the ASG led by Adore Abdulla and Jaber Susukan on August 5, 2016 in Barangay Kulisap, Payao, Zamboanga Sibugay. His wife Nora was released by the ASG last August 23, 2016. Their 8-year-old son Ricson remains in the hands of the ASG in Sulu, Tan said. (Nonoy E. Lacson)

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Pahina. 1

ORA MISMO

NI BUTCH M. QUEJADA



Vice Admiral Mercado, bagong FOIC

ISA si Vice Admiral Ronald Joseph Mercado, ng PMA Matikás Class 1983, na pinakabata sa magmi-Mistah dahil up to 2018 pa siya maninilbihan sa Philippine Navy.

The other day, sumamba este mali nanumpa pala sa harap ni AFP Chief of Staff General Ricardo Visaya sa kanyang bagong puesto bilang Flag Officer in Command ng Philippine Navy si Ronnie, sa turn-over of command, change of command at retirement ceremony sa Sangley Point, Cavite City.

Nakuha ni Ronnie ang inaasam-asam na puesto sa tulong ni Lord ang pagka-FOIC ng ma-tired este mali mag-retired pala si PN Vice Adminiral Cesar Taccad.

Ayon sa mga asset ng mga kuwago ng **ORA MISMO**, sa ngayon, dalawang puesto ang hawak ni Ronnie, dahil ito ang acting FOIC at Commander ng Western Coomand dyan sa Palawan.

Sabi nga, God bless and congrats!

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17 November 2016



Pahina. 2

Bihag na negosyante pinalaya ng Abu

Isang negosyante na binihag ng mahigit tatlong buwan ng mga bandidong Abu Sayyaf ang pinalaya sa isang lugar sa Jolo, Sulu, kamakalawa.

Kinilala ni Major Felimon Tan, Spokesperson ng AFP Western Mindanao Command ang pinakawalang bihag na si Elmer Romoc na sumakay sa M/V Bounty Cruiser ay sinundo ng kaniyang pamilya sa Jolo, Sulu dakong alas-7:30 ng umaga kamakalawa ilang oras matapos itong palayain ng mga bandidong Abu Sayyaf.

Magugunita na noong Agosto 5, 2016 ay binihag si Romoc at anak nitong si Ricson ng mga bandidong Abu Sayyaf sa pamumuno ni Adore Abdulla at Jaber Susukan sa Brgy. Kulisap, Payao, Zamboanga, Sibugay.

Nanatili namang bihag ang anak nitong si Ricson na ipinagpapalipat-lipat ng taguan sa kagubatan ng Sulu.-Joy Cantos-

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INQUIRER

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US, PH troops hold war exercises

US and Philippine Special Forces begin Balance Piston drills in Palawan province, despite President Duterte's threats to end joint war games and kick American soldiers out of the Philippines. But in a sign of a possible restriction, the United States and the Philippines have agreed to forgo live-fire drills during the monthlong exercises. So far, there's been no change in US-Philippine military cooperation. —STORY BY AP AND AFP

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US and Philippine Special Forces began annual combat exercises on Wednesday, despite President Duterte's threats to end joint war games and kick American soldiers out of the Philippines.

The US military says that so far there's been no reduction in cooperation with the Philippines, a long-standing US ally, despite Mr. Duterte's threats to do so and his expressed desire to expand security ties with China and Russia.

But in a sign of a possible restriction, Col. Benjamin Hao, spokesperson for the Philippine Army, said on Tuesday that both the United States and the Philippines had agreed to forego live-fire drills in the field during the monthlong Balance Piston exercises, which opened in Palawan province on Wednesday.

He said about 40 elite Filipino troops were taking part but wouldn't say how many Americans were participating.

He didn't give a reason for dropping the live-fire maneuvers.

The Department of National Defense has said Mr. Duterte wants such overt assault drills



Adm. Harry Harris: There has been no change so far in US-Philippine military cooperation. —INQUIRER PHOTO

to be discontinued.

No change in cooperation

In Washington, Adm. Harry Harris, the commander of US forces in the Pacific, said on Tuesday that there was no change so far in US-Philippine military cooperation.

He said US Special Forces were still advising the Philippine military in counterterrorism in Mindanao, US surveillance aircraft had continued rotational deployments at Clark Air Base, and plans for enhanced defense cooperation agreed by the previous Philippine administration remained on track.

"There are five Philippine bases that they have agreed to allow us to use. That hasn't changed so far and I have no reason to believe that will change. I will know more next week," Harris told reporters.

He said he would meet in the Philippines with the chief of staff of the Armed Forces, Gen. Ricardo Visaya, next Tuesday to discuss the schedule for military exercises in the coming two years.

He said there could be a "rescoping" of some of the big exercises in 2017.

Mr. Duterte has been antagonistic toward the United States for its criticism of his deadly war on drugs.

He has publicly declared

that he would halt all joint combat exercises with the Americans, but later walked back on the threat, sparking uncertainty among Philippine and US officials.

Benefits to PH

Philippine defense officials said last week that Mr. Duterte agreed to allow a smaller number of exercises after they explained to him the benefits to the Philippines, including its capability to respond to natural disasters.

Live-fire maneuvers are traditionally one of the highlights of the Balance Piston exercise.

Hao said marksmanship events would proceed but would be confined to a camp.

The drills will also include mock sea interdictions, care for combat casualties and "combat" swimming drills, he said.

"This is an annual training event to test the basic warfighting skills of our soldiers and to foster an improved relationship of our Armed Forces," Hao told reporters.

—REPORTS FROM AP AND AFP

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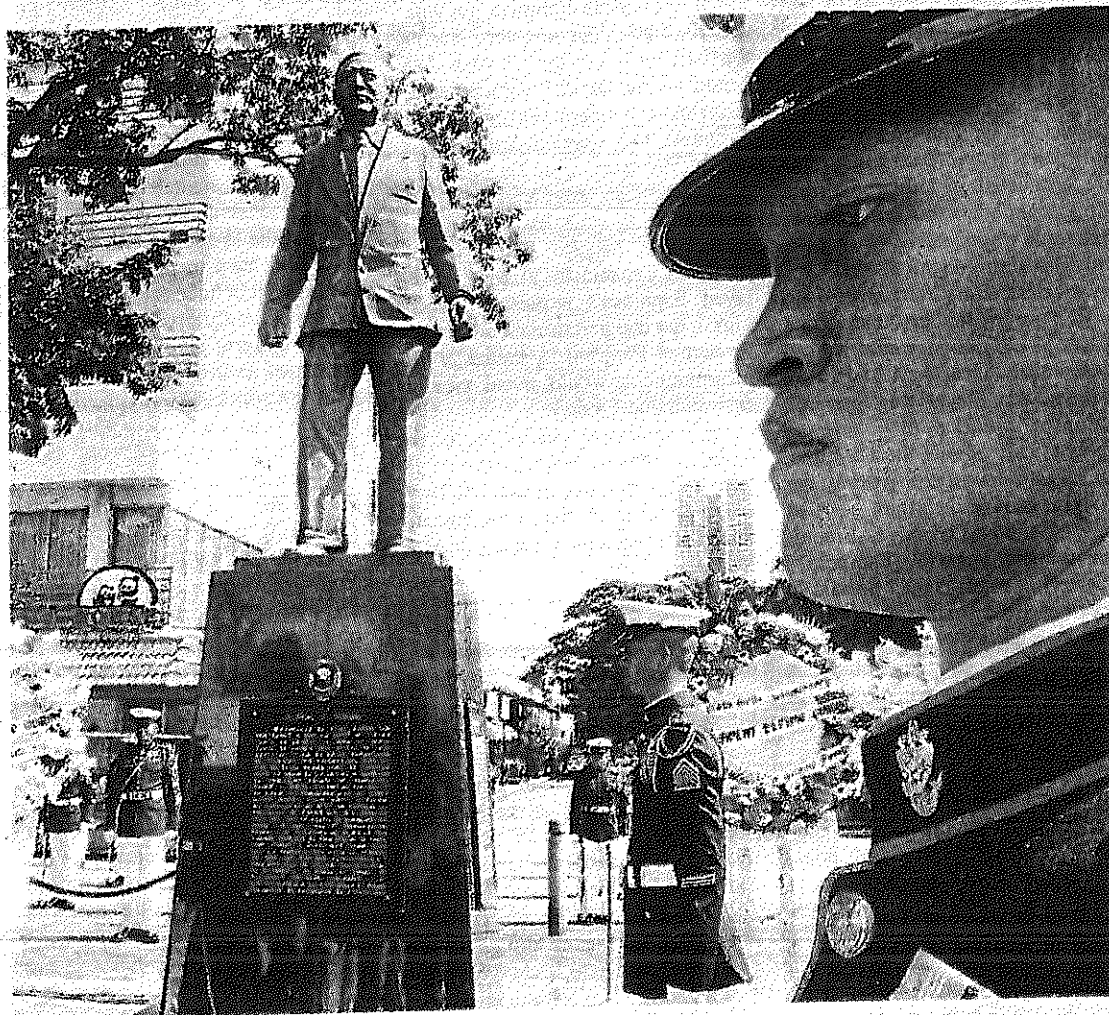


SHARING EXPERTISE American and Filipino soldiers participate in a joint military exercise in General Santos City in this photo taken in 2012. President Duterte said in September that US troops should leave Mindanao. —JEFFREY MAITEM

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The Standard

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MEMORIAL RITE. TV host-author Cory Quirino (not in picture), granddaughter of President Elpidio Quirino, leads the laying Wednesday of a wreath at her grandfather's statue on Quirino Ave. corner Roxas Blvd. during the 126th birth anniversary of the lawyer-politician, the sixth President of the Philippines from 1948 to 1953. **Norman Cruz**

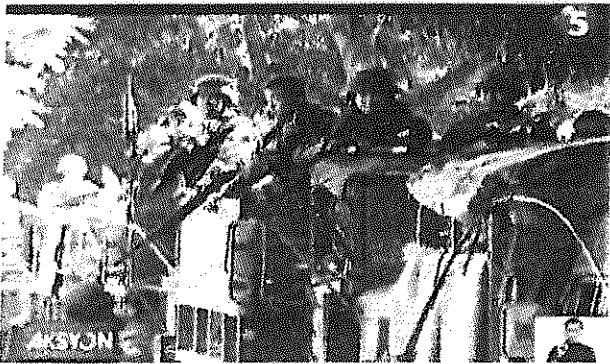
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www.interaksyon.com/national

AFP acknowledges receiving tip about ASG holding Vietnamese cargo vessel crew

By: Thom Andrade, InterAksyon
November 16, 2016 4:34 PM



MANILA - The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) on Wednesday said it has received reports that six Vietnamese seamen abducted by armed men who stormed their cargo vessel in Basilan Friday last week are now in the custody of the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG).

According to Col. Edgard Arevalo, chief of the AFP Public Affairs Office, reports were received from field units that the Vietnamese crew are now at the hands of the ASG, although it still has to be confirmed whether or not they are being held at the island province of Basilan off Zamboanga.

Arevalo stressed, though, that the reports are still subject for their further verification, "because we do not want to preempt any further follow-up action that might be taken on the matter."

He elaborated, though, that, as part of the military's standard operating procedure, a team has already been dispatched to look into the abduction of the Vietnamese.

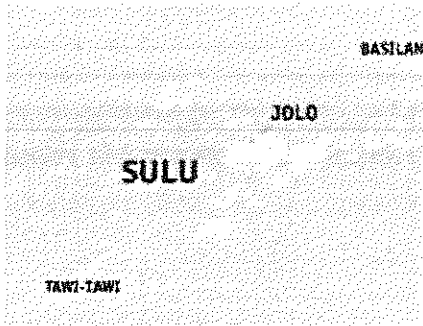
Arevalo said he believes there is now coordination between the AFP and the Vietnamese embassy. An interpreter has been provided to facilitate possible opportunities for communicating directly with the hostages.

He also told journalists that, as of Tuesday, the vessel was still in Zamboanga waiting for a replacement set of crew to arrive and resume the vessel's journey to Davao City.

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

UNITED | Sulu Leaders agreed to end Kidnapping and Drugs

Posted by Lui Claudio on November 16, 2016 at 3:04 PM



Camp Bautista, Sulu – Local Chief Executives of Sulu 2nd District led by Congressman Abdulmunir Mundoc Arbison set aside their differences and become united to stop kidnapping and drugs in Sulu at Headquarters Western Mindanao Command, Zamboanga City, yesterday morning.

According to COL JESUS A MANANAQUIL JR Commander of 101st Infantry Bde that has operational jurisdiction in some areas of the province said " We welcome this huge opportunity that our local leaders have resolved their differences and become one and determined to end kidnapping and drugs proliferation in Sulu. I am sure that it will have a positive impact in our campaign against the Abu Sayaff Group (ASG)."

"We believe that thru the concerted efforts of the AFP units and local leaders in Sulu we will be successful in ending ASG's nefarious activities in the province." BGen Arnel Dela Vega JTF Sulu Commander stressed in the meeting.

It can be recalled that most of the kidnapped victims are being held by Sulu-based ASG and as of posting, 14 kidnapped victims are yet to be rescued 5 of which are Filipinos and 9 are foreigners.

LTGEN MAYORALGO DELA CRUZ AFP, Commander of Western Mindanao Command hosted the meeting.

<http://bomboradyo.com/>

6 Vietnamese na bihag ng ASG, hawak na ng AFP

By Bombo Analy Wednesday, 16 November 2016 18:30

Kinumpirma ng pamunuan ng Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) na hawak na ngayon ng bandidong Abu Sayyaf ang dinukot na anim na mga Vietnamese na tripulante ng barko.

Ayon kay AFP Public Affairs Office (PAO) chief Col. Edgard Arevalo na ang nasabing report ay mula sa mga field operating units subalit hindi makumpirma kung hawak ang mga ito ng Basilan based ASG members.

Sinabi ni Arevalo na wala silang impormasyon kaugnay sa kinaroroonan ng mga kidnap victims ngayon.

Aniya, ayaw din nilang mapre-empt ang ginagawang efforts ngayon ng militar para ma-rescue ang mga dinukot na bihag.

Pagbibigay-diin ni Arevalo na kapag may mga insidenteng pagdukot, standard operating procedures na mag deploy ng mga tropa para i-validate ang report at tugisin ang mga kidnappers.

May ginagawa na ring koordinasyon ang AFP sa Vietnamese embassy kasunod ng insidente.

Sinabi ni Arevalo na kanilang isinailalim sa debriefing ang isang sugatang crew.

Pero ang barko ay kasalukuyang nasa Zamboanga.

Dagdag pa ni Arevalo na naka depende sa desisyon ng kompanya ng barko kung kailan babalik sa Vietnam ang nasabing barko.

<http://news.abc-cbn.com/news>

US troops train in PH despite Duterte threat

Agence France-Presse

Posted at Nov 16 2016 06:37 PM

MANILA - Filipino and US troops began training exercises this week, the Philippine military said Wednesday, despite President Rodrigo Duterte's threats to end joint war games and kick American soldiers out of his country as he edges closer to Beijing.

Duterte has called for the withdrawal of American troops from his country and has hit US President Barack Obama in response to international criticism of his deadly war on drugs.

He also announced an end to joint war games after an amphibious exercise involving several hundred US and Filipino marines finished last month.

But on Wednesday, military spokesmen told AFP about an ongoing month-long joint training exercise involving around 30-40 Filipino soldiers and an unspecified number of US Special Forces.

"This is a very small bilateral activity," Filipino military spokesman Brigadier-General Restituto Padilla said, referring to the exercise that kicked off on Monday on the island of Palawan in the west of the archipelago.

Philippine Army spokesman Colonel Benjamin Hao earlier told reporters that the exercise was intended "to test the basic war fighting skills of our soldiers (and) to improve the relationship of both armed forces".

Harry Harris, commander of the US Pacific Command, said in Washington that military cooperation between the US and the Philippines is unchanged for now.

The Philippine military said it was awaiting guidelines from Duterte on whether the joint war games with its key defense ally would continue to be held next year. The country hosts 28 such exercises annually.

Duterte has made no secret of his hostility for the US, calling for US Special Forces to leave the Philippines' troubled Mindanao region where they currently train Philippine soldiers in counter-terrorism.

He has also threatened to scrap a defense pact intended to counter Chinese expansion in the South China Sea as he courts Beijing for aid and investment.

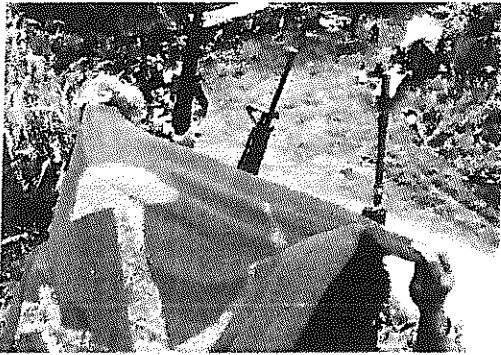
Duterte's war on drugs has seen more than 4,000 people killed, with the United Nations, the European Union and rights groups raising concerns about alleged extrajudicial killings and a breakdown in the rule of law.

Duterte has insisted he is not doing anything illegal, but added he would be "happy to slaughter" three million drug users.

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

CPP cautions Duterte on writ suspension, constabulary revival

By Jonathan de Santos (philstar.com) | Updated November 16, 2016 - 4:09pm



The CPP said a suspension of the writ of habeas corpus is an affront to fundamental human rights. File photo

MANILA, Philippines — The Communist Party of the Philippines on Wednesday criticized President Rodrigo Duterte for hinting at the suspension of the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus.

"Limited or not, a suspension of the writ of habeas corpus is an affront to fundamental human rights which are bound to be abused by the police and military," the CCP said on its website.

The party, which is in peace talks with the government, also criticized Duterte for considering reviving the Philippine Constabulary, a military police force that has been replaced by the civilian Philippine National Police. "Hyperbole or not, Duterte must be severely castigated for putting forward the twin proposals which seek to justify the possibility of removing restraints on his power and allowing him to rule as an absolute," the party said.

Duterte said over the weekend while talking about the peace and order situation in parts of Mindanao that "if you force my hand... I will declare the suspension of the writ of habeas corpus."

His spokespersons have said that the president was only "thinking aloud" and was issuing a warning to lawless elements that he has an option to take more drastic measures.

The Palace has stressed, however, that the 1987 Constitution requires the existence of either a rebellion or an invasion to justify a suspension of the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus, a legal remedy against warrantless arrests and illegal detention.

Duterte's supporters, including Sen. Manny Pacquiao, have said that there is nothing to fear from a possible suspension of the writ of habeas corpus.

Philippine National Police Director General Ronald Dela Rosa, meanwhile, has said that a suspension would make the jobs of his police officers easier.

"It strongly appears like Duterte is merely destigmatizing such measures in order to make these acceptable to the people. He makes himself look like a buffoon to trivialize such hallmarks of Marcos' martial law dictatorship," the CPP said.

The party said Duterte "must be cautioned against making the miscalculation that he can get away with measures of reviving a Marcos-style rule."

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