

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



TEAM ARMY

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OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

NEWS CLIPPINGS

06 April 2017

Thursday

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

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BusinessMirror

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BusinessMirror

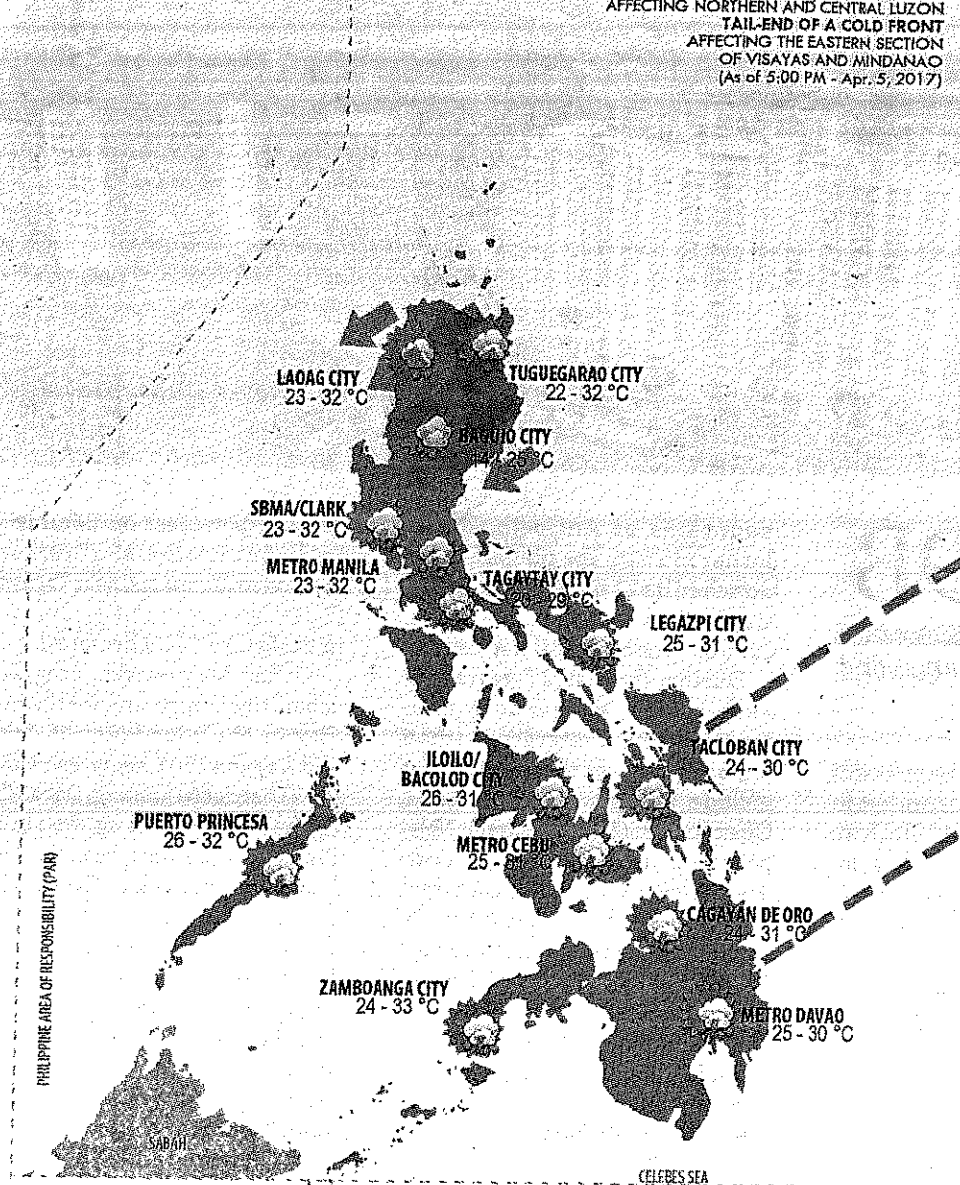
A broader look at today's business



TODAY'S WEATHER

APRIL 06, 2017 | THURSDAY

NORTHEAST MONSOON
AFFECTING NORTHERN AND CENTRAL LUZON
TAIL-END OF A COLD FRONT
AFFECTING THE EASTERN SECTION
OF VISAYAS AND MINDANAO
(As of 5:00 PM - Apr. 5, 2017)



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3-DAY EXTENDED FORECAST	APR 7 Friday	APR 8 Saturday	APR 9 Sunday
METRO MANILA	24 - 32 °C	24 - 33 °C	25 - 34 °C
TUGUEGARAO	23 - 32 °C	23 - 32 °C	23 - 33 °C
LAOAG	23 - 32 °C	24 - 33 °C	24 - 33 °C
BAGUIO	15 - 25 °C	15 - 26 °C	15 - 26 °C
SBMA/ CLARK	24 - 33 °C	25 - 34 °C	25 - 34 °C
TAGAYTAY	21 - 29 °C	21 - 30 °C	22 - 30 °C
LEGAZPI	25 - 31 °C	25 - 31 °C	26 - 32 °C
PUERTO PRINCESA	25 - 32 °C	27 - 33 °C	26 - 33 °C
ILOILO/ BACOLOD	26 - 31 °C	27 - 32 °C	26 - 32 °C

3-DAY EXTENDED FORECAST	APR 7 Friday	APR 8 Saturday	APR 9 Sunday
METRO CEBU	25 - 32 °C	25 - 32 °C	26 - 32 °C
TACLOBAN	25 - 30 °C	25 - 31 °C	25 - 31 °C
CAGAYAN DE ORO	24 - 32 °C	24 - 32 °C	24 - 31 °C
METRO DAVAO	25 - 32 °C	26 - 32 °C	26 - 33 °C
ZAMBOANGA	24 - 33 °C	24 - 34 °C	25 - 34 °C

SUNRISE	SUNSET	MOONRISE	MOONSET
5:48 AM	6:09 PM	2:02 PM	2:08 AM

FIRST QUARTER	FULL MOON	LOW TIDE	HIGH TIDE
APR 4 2:39 AM	APR 11 2:08 PM	1:34 AM -0.10 Meter	5:45 PM 0.90 Meter

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

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6 April 2017

**MANILA BULLETIN**
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

Page: 1

Closer to peace

GRP, NDF agree on interim joint ceasefire

By ROCKY NAZARENO

NOORDWIJK, The Netherlands – The Philippine Government (GRP) and the National Democratic Front (NDF) signed Wednesday an Agreement on an Interim Joint Ceasefire (AIJC) here that will move peace negotiations significantly closer to resolving 48 years of armed conflict in the Philippines.

As the weather in this North Sea-facing town turned from gloomy to pleasant, so did the atmosphere ►10

in this Fourth Round of Formal Talks, which started a day late because of incessant wranglings over matters that should or should not be included in the ceasefire deal.

Leading the signing for the GRP was Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process Jesus Dureza and, for the NDF, its Chief Political Consultant and founding chairman of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) Jose Maria Sison. It was witnessed by the Third Party Facilitator Royal Norwegian Government (RNG) Special Envoy to the Philippine Peace Process Ambassador Elisabeth Sluttom.

No ceasefire yet

But what put a damper on the signing of the AIJC was the clarification made by both sides that the deal will not actually stop fighting on the ground.

"There is no de facto ceasefire yet. This is an agreement to work for a permanent ceasefire," said Dureza.

NDF Peace Panel Chairman Fidel Agcaoili admitted that "it was an agreement to agree on the guidelines" that will lead to the full implementation of the truce.

Other members of both panels confirmed that a status of "talk and fight" will still prevail despite the signing of the AIJC.

Addressing the 4 conditions

The AIJC effectively addressed the four conditions set by President Rodrigo Roa Duterte before the government could agree to such a truce deal.

These included his demands for the insurgents to stop collecting revolutionary tax, for them to stop hostile acts, to release captured government security personnel, and refrain from making any territorial claims anywhere in the country.

Simply put, the AIJC will be the general agreement on the ceasefire, while awaiting the approval of the so-called

"annexes" that will tackle Duterte's four conditions.

The NDF promptly acted when it announced Wednesday morning that it was ordering the release of four policemen who were being held captive by its military arm, the New People's Army (NPA), in parts of Mindanao.

In a statement, it said it was ordering the release of Sgt. Solaiman Calucop and PFC Samuel Garay, who were both captured in Columbio, Sultan Kudarat in February 2; PFC Edwin Salan, who was taken in Alegria, Surigao del Norte last January 29; and PO2 Jerome Natividad, captured in Talakag, Bukidnon last February 9.

These releases will add to the two other POWs, who were earlier freed by the NPA last March 25. They were paramilitary men Rene Doller and Mark Nocus, who were captured in Lupon, Davao Oriental last February 14.

Under the deal, both parties' ceasefire committees have been mandated to "meet even in-between formal talks to discuss, formulate and finalize the guidelines and ground rules for the implementation" of the AIJC.

The following objectives were set forth:

- To generate goodwill and trust in the GRP-NDF peace negotiations;
- To encourage the forging of a more stable and comprehensive Joint Ceasefire Agreement; and
- To provide an enabling environment for eventual and early signing of the Comprehensive Agreement on Social and Economic Reforms (Caser).

The two parties likewise agreed to come up with rules "governing the presence of armed units and elements of both parties in local communities and the creation of buffer zones."

An agreement on "prohibited, hostile and provocative acts" will also have to be reached.

Mechanisms for "Ceasefire monitoring and verification in relation to the implementation of the ceasefire, and the handling of complaints, and

alleged violations" will also have to be crafted.

And to address Duterte's conditions on revolutionary taxes and the acknowledgment of a single governmental authority, these will be taken up when the Comprehensive Agreement on Political and Constitutional Reforms (CAPCR) comes up for discussion in future talks.

It underscored that discussions on these issues will be undertaken under the "framework of the proposed Federal Republic."

According to Dureza, he saw the approval of the "annexes" on revolutionary tax, buffer zones, hostile acts and single government authority within the year.

"Once these (annexes) are completed, these will be incorporated to the AIJC and will facilitate the full implementation of the ceasefire," he said.

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INQUIRER

Page: A1

Gov't, Reds sign deal on interim ceasefire

FROM A1

By **Karlos Manlupig**
and **Delfin T. Mallari Jr.**
@InqNational

Government and communist rebel negotiators meeting in the Netherlands on Wednesday signed an agreement to forge an interim ceasefire leading to the end of the 48-year-old insurgency.

The ceasefire will take effect as soon as the guidelines and ground rules are approved.

The two sides agreed "to forge a joint interim ceasefire agreement," a joint statement said, adding that this will be "more stable" than the separate unilateral ceasefire declarations issued by the rebels and the government.

"The interim joint ceasefire will be signed simultaneous to or immediately after the signing of the Comprehensive Agreement on the Social and Economic Reforms (Caser) expected to be finished within the year," the statement said.

Permanent ceasefire

"The Joint Ceasefire Agreement shall be deemed interim until a permanent ceasefire agreement is forged pursuant to a Comprehensive Agreement on End of Hostilities and Disposition of Forces."

The agreement was reached during the fourth round of formal talks in the Netherlands by the government and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP).

The agreement, signed by chief government negotiator Silvestre Bello III and NDFP panel chair Fidel Agcaoili, directs the ceasefire committees of both parties to "meet immediately, even in between formal talks, to finalize the guidelines and ground rules."

The signing was witnessed by Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process Jesus Dureza and Communist Party of the Philippines founder Jose Maria Sison.

Dureza, speaking by phone from the Netherlands, said he had consulted President Duterte on a draft interim ceasefire agreement.

Approved

"Mr. President, after several days, we have crafted together with the NDFP an agreement. Awaiting for your approval," Dureza said he had told Mr. Duterte.

"Approved!" he quoted the President as saying.

Dureza also said the President reaffirmed his commitment to release some political prisoners.

This will show goodwill but that certain processes must be observed and it will take time and effort, he added.

The negotiating panels believe that a joint agreement could prevent unnecessary hostilities between government and rebel forces.

The guidelines cover the presence of armed groups in communities and the creation of buffer zones. It specifies prohibited, hostile and provocative acts, including the collection of revolutionary taxes. It also calls for undertaking joint socioeconomic projects.

Ceasefire committee

The agreement also calls for the formation of a joint ceasefire committee and the prospective role of a third party to monitor the ceasefire and other mechanisms to implement the truce, including the handling of complaints and alleged violations.

"Matters regarding a single government authority and taxation shall be discussed and resolved in forging the Comprehensive Agreement on Political

and Constitutional Reforms within the framework of the proposed Federal Republic of the Philippines," the agreement said.

Bello had welcomed the openness of the NDFP "to forge an agreement on joint interim ceasefire that will accompany our peace negotiations throughout."

Sison said a joint ceasefire monitoring committee would consist of "an equal number of representatives of the government and NDFP and their respective independent nominees."

In an online interview on Wednesday, Sison said representatives from the Royal Norwegian Government, which has been brokering the peace negotiations, would also act as "third party observers" of the ceasefire.

Sison said the planned truce will not be different from the President's demand of a bilateral ceasefire.

"Bilateral is synonymous with joint. No problem. The

content of the agreement is what is important," he said.

Agcaoili said the ceasefire agreement was proof that the talks were moving forward.

Captives to be freed

He said the New People's Army (NPA) would immediately facilitate the release of a police officer and three soldiers the guerrillas had captured in Mindanao earlier this year.

But the speedy and safe release of the captives would require government forces to stand down in areas where they would be turned over to authorities, Agcaoili said.

The NDFP asked the government to suspend offensive police and military operations in the towns of Talakag, Lantapan, Baungon, Pagantucan and Kalilangan and the cities of Valencia, all in the province of Bukidnon. In Surigao del Norte, the suspension of military and

police operations should cover Surigao City, Alegria, Bacuag, Gigaquit, Claver, Placer and Mainit.

The NDFP also requested a stand down in the town of Kitcharao in Agusan del Norte and certain areas in the provinces of Sultan Kudarat, Sarangani and South Cotabato.

Safety of officials

Agcaoili said the suspension of operations by government troops would help ensure the safety of the third party teams, NPA custodial units and local government officials who will be at the releases.

Meanwhile, government negotiator Hernani Braganza confirmed that they had been meeting with the third party team composed of religious leaders from the Sowing the Seeds of Peace and said that military officials were also present in the discussions.

"As far as the AFP (Armed

April 2017

MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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Police, military on full alert for ASPAC confab

By **RESTITUTO A. CAYUBIT**

CATBALOGAN CITY – The joint police and the military forces have tightened security in this city to secure the conference and the delegates of the United Cities and Local Governments Asia-Pacific (UCLG) Asia Pacific (ASPAC) in Catbalogan City in Samar.

Police Regional Office-8 (PRO-8) Director, Chief Superintendent Elmer Beltejar, based in Palo, Leyte, told Manila Bulletin the police in the region are on full alert and has stepped up security measures in bus terminals, airports, and seaports to secure the event and the delegates attending the international conference from April 5 to April 7.

Major General Raul Farnacio, the Army's 8th Infantry Division commander, said his troops have been put on full alert and that there has been no specific or direct threat so far monitored from the New People's Army (NPA) or any terrorist group.

Farnacio said the city, including the airports in Calbayog and Tacloban where the delegates will be arriving, is well secured by the police and the military.

Leyte Police Provincial Office Director Senior Supt. Franco Simborio said his men were stationed in strategic areas at the Tacloban City Airport last Sunday to guard local and foreign delegates at the airport and escort them from Tacloban to this city.

Mayor Stephany Uy Tan said the Catbalogan City government is prepared to host its first international event that will be attended by at least 300 delegates from local governments in the Philippines and the Asia-Pacific region.

Uy Tan said expected to attend are local government officials from South Korea, China, New Zealand, Salomon Island, Taiwan, New Kiribati, Betio, Cambodia, Indonesia, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Vietnam, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh,

and Maldives. Philippine senators, cabinet officials, national and regional government officials and the governors and city mayors of Eastern Visayas have also been invited.

She said that her city with a population of 103,000 is the lone member in Eastern Visayas of the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) which is the only local government organization recognized by the United Nations.

The conference aims is to draw up sustainable programs for the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction at the local levels which was adopted by the Third United Nations Conference in Sendai, Japan on March 18, 2015.

Uy Tan said it will also allow local chief executives to interact with their counterparts from other countries and establish linkages that could lead to productive partnerships.

She added that aside from soliciting commitments of local governments for full implementation of the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) 2015-2030, there will be commitments and declarations, policy proposals and projects to support the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The mayor said the event is an opportunity for her city and the local government units of Eastern Visayas to attract international investors to the region.

The mayor said she will announce during the event the partnership of her city with South Korea Odin Energy Co., Ltd. on the \$2.4-million wind tower project that will supply 90 percent of the city's electricity needs.

It was learned that the Department of Interior and Local Government has sent memorandum circular inviting all local chief executives of Eastern Visayas, 50 members of League of Cities and 50 women local chief executives to attend the international conference.

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Duterte calls on Ph Army for continues help in drive against illegal drugs

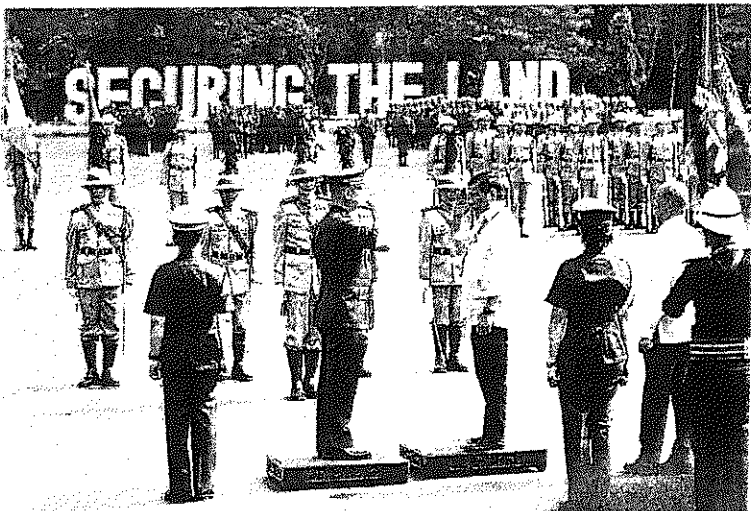
From the Philippine Information Agency (Apr 5): Duterte calls on Ph Army for continued help in drive against illegal drugs



President Rodrigo Duterte has called on the members of the Philippine Army and all branches of the military to continue helping the administration's drive against illegal drugs.

The call was made during the celebration of the 120th Anniversary of the Philippine Army at its headquarters in Fort Bonifacio in Taguig City.

Being the commander-in-chief, the President can tap the military in the conduct of law enforcement operations by granting them police powers, if he deems it necessary.



Duterte also said earlier he was fortunate to have been empowered by the executive order of former president Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo raising the level of the drug menace to a national security threat.

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This, he said, would entitle him to use the AFP in the fight against illegal drugs.

In his speech during the event, the President said that since the establishment of the Philippine Army 120 years ago, "our history is replete with tales of our soldiers' great sacrifices and significant victories to best protect our people and our national sovereignty."

He promised continuous support to the members of Philippine Army saying that he current administration has been providing telecommunication apparatus, firepower and infantry fighting vehicles to the Army in line with the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) modernization program.



The administration has allocated almost P6.5 billion for Philippine Army projects under the Revised AFP Modernization Plan to procure individual equipment such as rifles, pistols, grenade launchers and force protection armors.

The President also recalled that he signed an Executive Order last September increasing the combat pay of soldiers from P500 to P3,000 per month and their combat incentive pay from P150 to P300 a day.

The Department of Budget and Management is also working on the proposed compensation adjustment to increase the base and hazard pays of military personnel, Duterte said.

He said the GSIS will also study the possibility of having a housing loan program that will complement the soldier's ability to pay, noting that soldiers are more confident to perform their mandate if their loved ones are well-sheltered.

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Army brigade vows to respect bilateral truce

From the Philippine News Agency (Apr 5): Army brigade vows to respect bilateral truce

Soldiers of the 701st Infantry Brigade (IB) based in Mati City, Davao Oriental will respect a bilateral ceasefire signed by both the government and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP).

In an interview Wednesday, Col. Reuben Basiao, 701st IB commander, said that if both parties will sign a bilateral ceasefire agreement in this round of peace talks, he will suspend the combat operations of his troops.

It will be suspended once we get the order from President Rodrigo Duterte, he added.

"It is clear from the statement of the President that what he expects from the fourth round of talks (is a signed) bilateral ceasefire (agreement), which we look forward to," he said.

For now, Basiao said they maintain an offensive position to protect communities from harassment allegedly perpetrated by the New People's Army (NPA) and other armed groups within their area of jurisdiction.

"Some people asked why the soldiers still have combat operations even if the fourth round of peace talks is still ongoing? Well, we just follow the order of our national government and our President also stressed that there will be no unilateral ceasefire from the government side," Basiao said.

He said the NPA released a statement to have a unilateral ceasefire before the end of March, but did not pursue it since the government did not respond.

<http://www.pna.gov.ph/index.php?idn=2&sid=&nid=2&rid=977799>

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PA now evolving through 'soldier-center, knowledge-based system'

From the Philippine News Agency (Apr 5) PA now evolving through 'soldier-center, knowledge-based system'

As the Philippine Army (PA) evolves into a more modern military force, efforts are now underway to ensure that this process is done in a "soldier-center, knowledge-based system" manner.

This was disclosed by Army commander Lt. Gen. Glorioso Miranda as the PA celebrated its 120th founding anniversary Tuesday.

This is done with the goal of enhancing the capabilities of all PA troops as well as standardizing the Army's ability to manage information, he added.

"We expect these measures to help fulfill the mission of the PA to develop, organize, train, equip, support and sustain ground forces in support of the AFP mission, backed up by a large reserve (force)," Miranda stressed.

He is also pleased to report that the PA has greatly improved its warfighting capability with the acquisition of more firepower, better communications and force protection assets while ensuring that all newly-acquired equipment are compliant with existing statutory and regulatory requirements.

The PA was founded on March 22, 1897 through the Tejeros convention. The Army currently has 85,000 strong men and women dedicated to serve the people and secure the land.

Its anniversary was moved to April 4 to accommodate the availability of all stakeholders which includes President Rodrigo Duterte and other ranking defense and military officials.

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Feature: Female soldier grateful for equal opportunities granted to women in military service

From the Philippine Information Agency (Apr 5): **Feature: Female soldier grateful for equal opportunities granted to women in military service**

Grateful for Magna Carta

"I am grateful that the Magna Carta for Women have accorded us fundamental rights, protection and opportunities in our society," said Sgt. Liezel Gonzaga-Soliven of the 1st Cavalry (Tagapanguna) Squadron, Mechanized Infantry Division, Philippine Army.

In 2009, the Senate and House of Congress enacted a law protecting women and children - - Republic Act No. 9710 otherwise known as "An Act Providing for the Magna Carta of Women," a comprehensive women's human rights law that seeks to eliminate discrimination against women by recognizing, protecting, fulfilling and promoting their rights.

Discrimination no longer exist

Soliven observed that the issue on the discrimination against women on the recognition, enjoyment, as well as in the exercise of political, economic, social, cultural and civil rights no longer happens.

Women are now able to enhance and develop their potentials and skills. Aside from that, they develop their fullest capabilities as partners in nation building.

For this reason, she was able to join the military. "Unlike before, only men were admitted and joined the ranks in the Philippine Army, but now, women enjoy the same opportunity to serve in the military.

Gov't opened doors for women

The government has opened its doors for women in the Philippine Army, for those who are physically and personally suitable for the job.

Dreamed to be a soldier

Soliven said it's been her dream since she was a child to be a soldier.

When she was 17 yrs old, she was an officer of the Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC). After graduation in college, she underwent probationary training course and eventually enlisted in the military service.

"I was determined to be a soldier so I actively involved myself in the ROTC and Probationary Officer Training Course," Soliven explained.

Protect, serve the people

In 2011, Soliven said she decided to join the military service because she wanted to serve and protect the people and support her family.

"As the eldest in our family, I needed a permanent job in order to support my terminally ill father and fund the college education of my two younger brothers and sister." Soliven narrated.

"With the salary that I received from my work, I was able to provide the daily needs of my family, pay the hospital bills and

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bought the daily maintenance medications of my father." Soliven said.

"My brothers and sister are now professionals and they help me provide and meet the needs of our family," Soliven proudly said.

Military changed her life

She said she was taught discipline and learned to value the importance of physical and mental health. "Physical training has been a compulsory part of our daily military life," Soliven said adding that it benefits soldiers to have a healthy life and improve their efficiency.

"One thing that everyone seems to agree with is that as female soldiers, we can do something for our society. We can make a difference," she concluded.

<http://news.pia.gov.ph/article/view/1371491355738/feature-female-soldier-grateful-for-equal-opportunities-granted-to-women-in-military-service->

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PA to comply with President Duterte's call to let go of Bulacan housing units

From the Philippine News Agency (Apr 5): PA to comply with President Duterte's call to let go of Bulacan housing units

The Philippine Army (PA) will adhere to President Rodrigo Duterte's appeal calling for soldiers to give up their housing units in Bulacan which were forcibly occupied by members of the Kalipunan ng Damayang Mahihirap (Kadamay) since last month.

"We will adhere to the President's appeal. We will talk to our troops and explain to them the position of our President," Army spokesperson Col. Benjamin Hao said Tuesday afternoon.

"We are also happy and excited to hear his plans to give our troops better housing facilities," he added.

The Chief Executive earlier said he decided to allow the members of the urban poor group to remain the Bulacan housing facility to avoid possible bloodshed between the militants and security forces who will be deployed to evict them.

"I am asking you kung maaari lang. Do not be offended. Take it with an open mind. Ako na mismo, inyong Presidente, nakikiusap sa inyo. Let us not wage a fight against our own people," President Duterte stressed.

The President added that he had already asked the National Housing Authority to look for a suitable land to build bigger and more comfortable housing units for the soldiers and policemen.

In the meantime, the President urged Kadamay not to forcefully dislodge the soldiers and policemen who are already in the occupied projects or he would be forced to evict the militant urban poor workers instead.

<http://www.pna.gov.ph/index.php?idn=1&sid=&nid=1&rid=977542>

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

www.dwdd.com.ph

SERVING THE FILIPINO | 120th Founding Anniversary of the Philippine Army (PA)

By Alvin Santiago



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Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City (DWDD) – President Rodrigo Roa Duterte led the 120th founding anniversary of the Philippine Army (PA) held at the PA Headquarters in Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City.

“Your primordial duty to serve the country...gives assurance to our people to live in peace and stability,” said the President as he recognized the acts of courage and bravery of the country’s armed forces at the beginning of his keynote speech.



He guaranteed the Philippine Army that the administration would provide them with the necessary training equipment and benefits prior to their actual deployment. As part of government's modernization program for the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), the military will be given telecommunications apparatus, firepower, and infantry fighting vehicles, particularly for the army.

“These are among the priority initiatives we immediately undertook when I assumed the Presidency in July last year,” President Duterte said, adding that government has allocated PhP 6.5 billion for PA projects under the revised AFP Modernization Plan.



Additionally, the Commander-in-Chief mentioned that on September 2016, he signed an Executive Order to increase the combat pays of all the AFP members. He also tapped the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) for the proposed compensation adjustment in increasing the base and hazard pays of all military personnel.

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

The President also gave directives to the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) to review the housing loan program that will complement the soldiers' ability to pay.



With the administration's drive to fight the illegal drug trade, President Duterte expressed his confidence to the army's continuous assistance. "This is a serious call, not only for you but to all Filipinos, including your loved ones... Without you, our government will not be able to eradicate the ills of society that have been crippling our development for a long time," he ended.

Also present were Department of National Defense (DND) Secretary Delfin Lorenzana, AFP Chief of Staff General Eduardo Año, and PA Commanding General (CG) Lieutenant General Glorioso Miranda. **RTVM / MCAG**

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

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President Duterte dons a full military uniform given to him by the Philippine Army during the PA's 120th anniversary celebration at Fort Bonifacio on Tuesday. With him is his partner Honeyfer Avanceña.

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IN BATTLE GEAR. Soldiers in full gear join the parade before their commander-in-chief President Rodrigo Duterte during the 120th anniversary celebration of the Philippine Army at Fort Andres Bonifacio on Tuesday. Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana, AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Eduardo M. Año, and Army chief Lt. Gen. Glorioso V. Miranda, (not in photo) joined the President during the ceremony. *Malacañang Photo*

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INQUIRER

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2 senators air warning on housing anarchy

**By Christine O. Avendaño,
Philip C. Tubeza
and Cynthia D. Balana
@Team_Inquirer**

An invitation to anarchy.

This was how Senators Panfilo Lacson and Richard Gordon described on Wednesday President Duterte's decision to allow homeless families illegally occupying thousands of idle units in six government housing projects in Bulacan province to own them.

"It is a potential invitation to utter disregard of the rule of law, if not chaos and anarchy," Lacson said in a text message.

Senator Gordon, in a phone interview, said what the President did may sow anarchy.

"The National Housing Authority should have solved the problem for the President," Gordon said.

On Tuesday, Mr. Duterte announced that he would let members of the urban poor group Kalipunan ng Damayang Mahihirap (Kadamay) keep the housing units in Pandi town and San Jose del Monte City originally meant for military and police personnel.

The President promised to build better houses for members of the police and the military by December, as he sought understanding for the poor.

Kadamay reminder

The Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police on Wednesday said they would abide by the President's order.

Interviewed on dzMM radio station, Cabinet Secretary Leoncio Evasco Jr. said the Kadamay action in Bulacan reminded the government of its

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responsibility to the poor, but warned against such action becoming a bad precedent.

"While we appreciated what Kadamay did, because it was a reminder to the government of our responsibility toward the marginalized people, it does not mean that we will have to do it in the future because we have to deal with them in accordance with the law," said Evasco, who oversees government programs, including housing, for the poor.

He said the government would not allow itself to be "hostaged" by certain people. "Now, government should be on top ... [T]his government is listening and addressing the needs for our people."

'Orderly turnover'

Lacson said a system must be put in place "for an orderly turnover of unoccupied housing units to the homeless

among our countrymen if the government is already committed to giving out the units to the Kadamay group."

"If not attended to properly, my concern is, if this move is replicated all over the country and has become uncontrollable, we have a big problem," he said.

In a statement, Sen. JV Ejercito said Mr. Duterte's decision was improper.

Ejercito, chair of the Senate committee on urban planning, housing and resettlement, said the occupation by Kadamay of the housing units served as a "wake-up call" for the government to act on the massive housing problem.

"While I appreciate the President's heart for the poor and homeless, as (Senate) chair, this should not be the means for anyone to become a recipient of housing projects," he said.

The senator said he was against any form of a government project being held

hostage in order to justify anyone's need for shelter, unless in times of calamity.

"We want them to comply with the process so that their occupation would not become a precedent for other groups demanding housing from the government," Ejercito said.

He said he would look into Kadamay's occupation of the housing units and find out those accountable for the neglect of the housing projects at the hearing on April 18.

"Our inquiry will also tackle issues as to why a number of housing projects by the NHA remain substandard in quality, unoccupied and fragmented," he said.

In a statement, Kabataan Rep. Sarah Elago urged the President to look further into the country's housing crisis. "The Duterte administration should investigate why so many houses are left unoccu-

pied despite the huge housing backlog," Elago said.

Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla, AFP spokesperson, recalled that during the inspection of the housing units, some soldier-beneficiaries asked if they could get two units, as they could afford to pay for them because of the small size.

Padilla said each unit was good only for a single soldier, not a family. Thus, single soldiers who would eventually get married wanted more space.

He said the military was hoping that no similar occupation of government housing units would happen in the future.

"The whole episode is both good and bad. Good in the sense that the discourse on housing was opened up again... Bad in the sense that it's setting a precedent," he said.

Grateful

Senior Supt. Dionardo Carlos said the affected police personnel were grateful to the President for promising them "better, bigger and more comfortable homes" by December.

"So, we're willing to sacrifice for the benefit of this group (Kadamay). At the end of the day, we're grateful to the President for also looking after the welfare of our policemen and soldiers by giving a better, bigger and comfortable home, with electricity, water connection. All you need to do is move in," Carlos said in a briefing.

He noted that the President also told Kadamay members to avoid housing units that were already occupied or awarded to policemen and soldiers. —WITH

A REPORT FROM DJ YAP INQ

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Maritime patrols in Batanes benefit fishermen

By MICHAEL PUNONGBAYAN

Fishermen in the Batanes group of islands are getting a bigger catch following the military's intensive patrol operations in the area.

The frequent maritime patrols in the waters surrounding the islands have also put an end to poaching problems in the region.

Local officials have expressed their gratitude to the military as they are now being flooded with positive feedback from fishermen benefiting from the maritime operations.

"Governor Marilou Cayco of the province of Batanes extended the gratitude of the fisherfolk of Batanes for the continuous maritime patrol being facilitated by the Philippine Air Force, Navy and Marines in the northernmost islands and sea territory of the province," AFP Public Affairs Office (PAO) chief Col. Edgard Arevalo said yesterday.

Cayco wrote a letter to Lt. Gen. Romeo Tanalgo, commander of Northern Luzon Command (NOLCOM), expressing her constituents' gratefulness to the military for its prompt response to the needs of the province.

Cayco told the AFP that she was being flooded with positive feedback, particularly from fishermen benefiting from the bountiful catch.

"The incessant problem of poaching in our waters took a respite after the patrol and according to our fisherfolks, they can now fish without being in persistent fear of encountering boats with foreign markings," Cayco wrote.

"Our scarce resources and means to protect our own territory was obliterated by the AFP's genuine concern to our people by keeping our people safe and free from threats of foreign poachers," she said.

On March 19, the Philippine Navy's BRP *Ramon Alcaraz* sailed to Mavulis Island, Itbayat, Batanes to conduct a site survey of the northernmost islands of the country.

Alcaraz also conducted naval cruise patrols to Pasuquin, Ilocos Norte, Dalupiri, Calayan and Casambalangan, Sta. Ana Cagayan before its regular patrolling of the northern seaboard.

The AFP through the NOLCOM started its maritime awareness activities in Mavulis Island in April 2016, which was done to support transforming the islets of Batanes into a resting place and shelter area for Filipino fishermen.

"The positive developments in the islets of Batanes are borne not only of our frequent maritime patrols in the area but also of the active cooperation and coordination of the people of Batanes and other stakeholders. Together we shall continue to reap further successes as we in the AFP perform its mandate of protecting our people and our territory," AFP chief Gen. Eduardo Año said.

On the other hand, acting Foreign Affairs Secretary Enrique Manalo said the Philippines, together with the ASEAN countries and China are exerting efforts to complete the framework for a Code of Conduct (COC) in the South China Sea.

Manalo stressed the Philippines maintains the position that the COC should be legally binding. - With Pia Lee-Brago

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SECURITY THREATS

DPWH TO FIRMS: DON'T LEAVE PROJECTS ATTACKED BY NPA REBS

TUGUEGARAO CITY—Contractors cannot just abandon unfinished road projects in the face of security threats, notably from the New People's Army (NPA), the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) warned on Friday.

Jose Tobias Jr., chief of DPWH regional construction division, said the government must approve the suspension of projects, after contractors served notice they would shut down work in the wake of NPA attacks on three projects in Isabela, Quirino and Cagayan provinces this week.

"[Asking to terminate a project] is the option of contractors but we will still evaluate before they will be allowed to leave," Tobias said.

On March 25, armed men believed to be NPA rebels robbed at gunpoint workers of RD Interior Construction stationed at the field office of an ongoing bridge project in Cabagan town in Isabela. They took away P88,000 as well as the workers' mobile telephones.

On March 26, NPA rebels burned a backhoe excavator that was being used by the same firm for another bridge project at Barangay Ysmael in Maddela town in Quirino.

Later that day, six NPA rebels attacked the depot of Pulsar Construction Corp. in Barangay Baybayog in Alcala town in Cagayan and burned two backhoe excavators, a compactor and a mini truck that were being used for the ongoing repair of the Al-

cala-Baggao Road.

A statement released by the NPA's Fortunato Camus Command operating in northern Luzon said the attacks were "punishments for the companies' refusal to obey the laws" of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines, the NPA's political arm.

The men who attacked the bridge project in Quirino were quoted as saying they torched heavy equipment because RD Interior Construction "refused to pay revolutionary taxes."

Melanio Briosos, DPWH Cagayan Valley director, said the agency might allow a contractor to suspend work or discontinue a project if the security situation at the site warranted a work shutdown.

"We may just have to re-bid the project with the adjusted cost based on the aborted portion and the uncollected funds. Sadly, this will cause prolonged delay in the completion of government projects," he said.

Project engineers, who asked not to be named for security reasons, said they were forced to discontinue over fears for the safety of their personnel.

"Many of our workers have left camp in haste and do not wish to go back anymore. Some of them even said they were quitting the job," an engineer said.

But Army officials urged the DPWH and its contractors to resume work, saying the military and the police could protect them. —MELVIN GASCON INQ

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Forces of the Philippines) is concerned, they have no problem with the stand down," Braganza said.

In an earlier online interview, Sison expressed opposition to two of four preconditions set by Mr. Duterte.

"The no territory and no taxation on business privilege by the people's government amount to demanding the capitulation, pacification and self-destruction off the people's government and all revolutionary forces," Sison said.

4 preconditions

The President set four preconditions for the fourth round of talks: an end to the rebels' revolutionary tax collection, territorial claims by communist rebels, signing of bilateral truce, and the release of soldiers and policemen held by the NPA.

Sources involved in the talks said discussions on the proposed truce included the drafting of an understanding to release the NPA captives.

The CPP had ordered the NPA to release them as early as Feb. 19 to improve conditions for resuming the talks. However, only the militiamen—Rene Doller and Carl Mark Nuncios—have been released by the guerrillas as of March.

The three soldiers still in rebel hands—Pfc. Edwin Salan, Sgt. Solaiman Calucop and Pfc. Samuel Garay—were captured in Columbio, Sultan Kudarat while PO2 Jerome Natividad was seized in Talakag, Bukidnon. INQ

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GROUP TARGETS 4,000 MORE GOV'T HOUSES FOR TAKEOVER

By Carmela Reyes-Estrope
@careyestropelNQ

BUSTOS, BULACAN—Leaders of the urban poor group Kalipunan ng Damayang Mahihirap (Kadamay) on Wednesday asked President Duterte if they could take over other housing projects meant for soldiers, policemen and firemen in Bulacan province.

Kadamay chair Gloria Arellano said her group wanted to occupy about 3,000 houses in Bocaue town and 877 houses in Bustos town that remained idle.

Local officials, residents and policemen had been guarding Bocaue Heights and Bustos Heights housing projects, following sporadic attempts by Kadamay members to occupy these.

Arellano said about 20,000 people took over more than 5,000 houses in six low-cost housing projects in Pandi town and the City of San Jose del Monte on March 8 because their housing applications were ignored by the National Housing Authority (NHA).

The houses that Kadamay members occupied were in Villa Louise in Barangay Cacarong Bata in Pandi.

On Tuesday, Mr. Duterte urged soldiers and policemen to give up their claims to houses forcibly occupied by Kadamay members, saying he would build them better housing projects by December.

"We assume his [announcement] applies to all the vacant houses benefiting the soldiers and policemen, not only in Bulacan but throughout the country," Arellano said.

Meet with the President

"There has to be clarity," she said, adding that Kadamay was seeking a meeting with the President to get from him written directives that they could now own the houses they were occupying.

In Bulacan, more than 12,000 Kadamay members have no houses of their own and are considered the poorest in their communities, Arellano said.

"Since the President referred to all housing projects for soldiers and policemen, we assume [those housing sites] are now ours... to benefit the homeless," she said.

But that was not how some policemen interpreted Mr. Duterte's announcement during the 120th anniversary celebration of the Philippine Army on Tuesday.

Chief Insp. Victor Bernabe, Bustos police chief, said Mr. Duterte referred to houses that Kadamay members had occupied and not all low-cost housing sites.

Bernabe said this was the reason the police continued to guard the Bustos and Bocaue housing projects.

Some policemen guarding Bustos Heights, which was targeted by Kadamay three weeks ago, said they had pending applications for the units there.

Caretakers at Bustos Heights said many units were not yet fully built and were still to be turned over to the NHA. INQ

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'IS fighters may regroup in Mindanao'

By ROEL PAREÑO

ZAMBOANGA CITY – A security official has expressed concern that Islamic State (IS) fighters from the Middle East may regroup in Mindanao.

This possibility prompted the military to conduct relentless operations against militants, particularly in Central Mindanao, the official, who said he is not allowed to make a public statement on the issue, said yesterday.

The official refused to give details on the operations, citing the network of IS-inspired militants.

"IS-inspired groups...are technologically advanced in monitoring the movement of troops," he said.

Armed Forces of the Philippines chief Gen. Eduardo Año earlier said operations are ongoing against the Maute group in Lanao del Sur; Abu Sayyaf bandits in Sulu and Basilan and members of the Bangsamoro

Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF), who are reportedly bent on establishing an Asian Islamic caliphate allied with the IS.

The military said 47 militants were killed in offensives in Datu Salibo town in Maguindanao last month.

The Western Mindanao Command said recent air strikes targeted Muhammad Ali Bin Abdulrahman, alias Muawiyah, a foreign terrorist; his trainee on bomb making Salahuddin Hassan

and Esmael Abdulmalik, alias Abu Toraype, brigade commander of the BIFF and founder of Dawlah Islamiyah Maguindanao.

The military also launched offensives against Maute group members and Abu Sayyaf leader Isnilon Hapilon last month.

Hapilon, said to be the head of the IS in the Philippines, was believed to have been killed in an air raid two months ago.

– With Jaime Laude

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Sara Duterte offers jobs to NPA rebels

DAVAO CITY – Mayor Sara Duterte-Carpio has reiterated her offer of jobs to New People’s Army (NPA) rebels operating in the city and its hinterlands who will return to the fold of the law.

Carpio said rebel-returnees would be given jobs at city hall with salaries and other benefits that regular city government employees get.

“There is no need for more talk, signatures or pictures... If you are interested, it should be all of you and not just one. You know where to find me.

My cell phone is open 24/7,” she said in a statement issued yesterday.

Carpio said localized peace talks would depend on the outcome of the negotiations in the Netherlands.

“The city government...remains aggressive in the pursuit of lasting peace,” she said.

Carpio said she supports her father President Duterte’s call for the rebels to agree to a bilateral ceasefire and stop their attacks as a precondition to the resumption of peace talks.

– Edith Regalado

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PNP: Militants can occupy Pandi housing only

By **RAMON EFREN LAZARO**

MALOLOS – Police officials here vowed to prevent members of the militant Kalipunan ng Damayang Mahihirap (Kadamay) from occupying vacant government housing units outside Pandi, Bulacan.

Chief Supt. Aaron Aquino, Central Luzon police director, assured the public that the police would not allow members of the militant group to occupy other government housing units.

Members of Kadamay forcibly occupied close to 6,000 housing units of the National Housing Authority (NHA) in Pandi last month after they complained of the government's failure to provide houses to poor citizens.

The housing units were supposed to be distributed to policemen and soldiers.

President Duterte an-

nounced last Tuesday that the Kadamay members would be allowed to stay in the housing units that they have occupied in Bulacan.

Aquino told **The STAR** that the militants could only stay in the NHA housing units in Pandi as stated by the President.

However, Kadamay coordinator Elizabeth Guerrero said that their members would try to occupy the vacant government housing units reserved for soldiers and policemen in Bocaue, Bulacan.

Senior Supt. Romeo Caramat Jr., acting Bulacan police director, said that they would stop Kadamay members from occupying vacant housing units in Bocaue and Bustos, Bulacan.

After occupying the military and police housing units in Pandi last March 8, the militants tried but failed to enter other NHA sites in Bocaue and

Bustos.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) had accepted President Duterte's decision to let the Kadamay members keep the homes they have forcibly occupied in Pandi.

Military spokesman Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla said soldiers do not mind giving up the houses allocated to soldiers and policemen so that the issue may be resolved peacefully.

"Our position in the Armed Forces is that there is no problem with the transfer (of rights to avail) and the President's move so this can be resolved peacefully as he also announced that awardees affected would have their units replaced," he announced in a press briefing in Camp Aguinaldo yesterday afternoon.

Padilla said soldiers did not suffer any loss because of President Duterte's promise of better housing units for

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them, which would be built fast, hopefully before the end of the year.

He even admitted that some soldiers have complaints on the Pandi housing units that are reportedly too small for them, with some soldiers wanting to acquire two units to accommodate their growing families.

"The point here is that our government recognizes the shortage in housing and as far as we know, this is being properly addressed through programs that will be launched," he added.

Wake-up call

Sen. Joseph Victor Ejercito said yesterday the takeover of NHA housing units in Bulacan should be a wake-up call for the Duterte administration to address the country's massive housing problem.

Ejercito, chairman of the Senate committee on urban

planning, housing and re-settlement, said the housing problem was evident with President Duterte's decision to allow the Kadamay members to keep the houses they forcibly occupied.

"Resolving housing woes should not be as complicated as this. While I appreciate President Duterte's heart for the poor and homeless, this should not be the means for anyone to become a recipient of housing projects. I am against any form of a government project being held hostage in order to justify anyone's need for shelter, unless in times of calamity," Ejercito said.

He said Kadamay should still go through the proper process in the turnover and awarding of housing units so that the incident would not be a bad precedent for other groups demanding government housing.

Anakpawis party-list Rep. Ariel Casilao lauded yesterday Duterte's order to allow the Kadamay members to keep the housing units they have forcibly occupied in Pandi.

He, however, said that the housing units were substandard but the Kadamay members would stay in their new houses instead of having nothing.

"It is a good call by the President, by heeding the legitimate calls of the poor for shelter and we are hoping that his talk could do the walk in the soonest possible time," Casilao said in a press statement.

He also cited the help of National Anti-Poverty Commission head Liza Maza, who was instrumental in conveying the demands of the urban poor to the President.

– With Paolo Romero, Michael Punongbayan, Ding Cervantes

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No deal on NPA's release of soldiers, cops

By GHIO ONG

The government yesterday rejected a call by the National Democratic Front (NDF) to suspend military and police operations in exchange for the New People's Army (NPA)'s release of military and police captives. Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said the government is maintaining its position that rebels should first declare a unilateral ceasefire and no other condition should be imposed to free the hostages.

In an earlier statement, the NDF urged the government to order a 10-day suspension of military and police operations in areas where four NPA

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hostages - Private First Class Edwin Salan, Sergeant Solaiman Calucop, Pfc Samuel Garay and Police Officer 2 Jerome Natividad - would be released.

The areas include towns in Bukidnon, Surigao del Norte, Agusan del Norte, Sultan Kudarat, Sarangani and South Cotabato.

"The positive response by the government panel in this

regard will create the necessary favorable conditions for the safe, expeditious and orderly release of the POWs, as well as the safety of their respective families and the members of the Third Party Facilitator and Independent Humanitarian Mission and the safe withdrawal of the NPA custodial forces," the NDF said.

The group also confirmed the earlier pronouncement by

the Communist Party of the Philippines "directing concerned NPA units to expedite the release of the six captured POWs still in their custody as a 'positive gesture' for the ongoing fourth round of peace talks."

On March 25, the NPA released paramilitary members Rene Doller and Mark Nocus, both captured in Lupon town, Davao Oriental on Feb. 14.

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BusinessMirror

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Govt, NDF panels draft pact on release of captured soldiers

GOVERNMENT and National Democratic Front (NDF) peace negotiators have started drafting an agreement that would pave the way for the release of military and police personnel kidnapped by the New People's Army (NPA).

This was one of the four conditions President Duterte has set before the start of the fourth round of peace talks in the Netherlands.

The other conditions include the signing of a bilateral cease-fire agreement; a stop to the extortion activities of the rebels; and the non-recognition of any territorial claim made by the communists.

The government's chief negotiator, Labor Secretary Silvestre H. Bello III, said both parties are still discussing the terms that would be included in the draft agreement.

Bello said both panels agreed to make their own drafts and later consolidate their versions of the agreement.

"*Mayroon silang draft, mayroon kami draft so iyon ang pag-uusap namin, pagsasamahin namin iyon,*" Bello said in a radio interview.

The communist insurgents earlier expressed their willingness to release the military and the police personnel they were holding from

March 27 to April 6, among them a policeman from Bukidnon and three soldiers from Surigao del Norte and Sultan Kudarat.

The release failed to push through, owing to continuous offensive operations of the military in the areas where the kidnapped policeman and soldiers were being held by communist guerrillas.

Both parties are still discussing the suspension of military operation.

NDF Panel Senior Adviser Luis Jalandoni, meanwhile, assured that the fourth round of talks is already moving forward.

"Moving forward, agreement toward a more stable cease-fire," Jalandoni said in a separate interview.

Both panels assured that the Comprehensive Agreement on Socio-Economic Reforms (Caser) would be discussed before they end the fourth round of peace talks on Thursday.

The government and communist rebels also agreed to discuss a joint interim cease-fire agreement as they further discussed other terms.

"We welcome the openness of NDF to undertake a forging in this round of talks of an agreement on joint interim cease-fire that will accompany our peace negotiations throughout," Bello pointed out. *PNA*

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The Manila Times

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Maritime patrols end poaching in Batanes

FREQUENT maritime patrols have stopped poaching in the Batanes islands chain to the relief of fishermen, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) said on Wednesday.

Batanes Gov. Marilou Cayco recently wrote a letter to Lt. Gen. Romeo Tanalgo, commander of the Northern Luzon Command (Nolcom), extending gratitude of the fisherfolk for the continuous maritime patrols facilitated by the Philippine Air Force, Navy and Marines in the northernmost islands and sea territory of the province.

"The frequent maritime patrols by the AFP in the Batanes islands chain have already reaped success as fishermen recount respite in poaching," Col. Edgard Arevalo, AFP Public Affairs Office chief, said.

Cayco disclosed that she was being flooded with positive feedbacks especially from the fishermen who are mostly benefiting from the maritime patrols.

"The incessant problem of poaching in our waters [was given] a respite after the

patrols and, according to our fisherfolk, they can now fish without being in persistent fear of encountering boats with foreign markings," the governor said in her letter.

On March 19, the Navy's *BRP Ramon Alcaraz* (FF16) sailed to Mavulis Island in Itbayat, Batanes to conduct a site survey and naval cruise patrols in Pasuquin, Ilocos Norte; and Dalupiri, Calayan and Casambalangan in Santa Ana, Cagayan.

Since then, frequent maritime patrols were facilitated by the military, Arevalo said.

The AFP through Nolcom started its maritime awareness activities on Mavulis Island in April 2016 in support of transforming Batanes islets into resting place and shelter area for Filipino fishermen.

AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Eduardo Año noted that the positive developments in the islets of Batanes are borne not only of the military's frequent maritime patrols in the area but also of the active cooperation and coordination of the people of Batanes and other stakeholders.

FERNAN MARASIGAN

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Malaya
The National Newspaper

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Communist-terrorist tag on NPA remains

BY VICTOR REYES

DEFENSE Secretary Delfin Lorenzana yesterday said the defense and military establishment will continue to refer to the New People's Army as a "communist-terrorist" organization until the group stops its activities like kidnapping, extortion and arson.

"They are indeed communist-terrorists. In fact, other countries have (labeled) them as communist terrorists," Lorenzana said.

The United States government has included the NPA,

and its political wing Communist Party of the Philippines, in its list of foreign terrorist organizations in 2002. It said the NPA has "active urban infrastructure to conduct terrorism and uses city-based assassination squads."

Lorenzana said the DND and the AFP will continue to call the NPA and its members as communist-terrorists "if they continue to commit terroristic acts like burning, kidnapping, extortion, which are actually the work of terrorists."

"If they stop these, then we

will change that. Maybe we will call them insurgents only or NPA. But if they continue doing all these things, we will not stop calling them terrorists," added Lorenzana.

Incidentally, government and communist negotiators have earlier agreed to work for the delisting of the CPP and the NPA as a foreign terrorist organization as part of the ongoing peace process.

Lorenzana said the NPA should also stop these kind of atrocities amid the ongo-

See COMMUNIST > Page B6

COMMUNIST

ing peace talks. Negotiators from both sides are also crafting a more permanent and binding bilateral or joint ceasefire.

"Does this mean that while they are talking peace, ceasefire,

they will continue to burn and extort? I think that's not right," said Lorenzana.

Security officials are actually proposing a halt of the the NPA's extortion activities in the joint ceasefire. The group will not likely to agree to this because extortion,

which they call revolutionary tax, is a major fund source.

"How can they be of help if they continue to burn bulldozers, burn buses, banana plantations? it not helping us. Is that helping us? It's not so they should stop these," the defense chief added.

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GPH, Reds reach deal on interim joint ceasefire

By Ted Tuvera

Malacañang, through the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process, yesterday announced that the government and the National Democratic Front (NDF) have reached an agreement on an interim joint cease-



fire at the fourth round of talks held in Noordwijk, Netherlands, in moves to end one of the world's longest insurgencies.

The talks, which got under way in The Netherlands, are due to last until today.

The interim truce will "accompany our peace negotiations throughout," government **Turn to page 3**

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negotiator Silvestre Bello the other day said, adding it will march "in step with the discussion of the socio-economic reforms that will address the root causes of armed conflict."

The ceasefire which is bilateral in nature prevents both state forces and communist guerrillas to engage in combat operations against each while the peace talks are being held.

No mechanisms on how the truce will be implemented have been released as of press time.

Earlier in the day, both sides started drafting an agreement that would pave the way for the release of military and police personnel captured by the New People's Army (NPA).

This was one of the four conditions President Rodrigo Duterte has set before the start of the talks.

The other conditions include the signing of a bilateral ceasefire

agreement; a stop to the alleged extortion activities of rebels; and the non-recognition of any territorial claim made by the communists.

Bello said both parties are still discussing the terms that would be included in the draft agreement.

He added both panels agreed to make their own drafts and later consolidate them.

The communist insurgents earlier expressed their willingness to release the captured military and police personnel from March 27 to April 6, among them a policeman from Bukidnon and three soldiers from Surigao del Norte and Sultan Kudarat.

The release failed to push through due to continuous offensive operations of the military.

Both parties are still discussing the suspension of military operation.

NDF panel senior adviser Luis Jalandoni, for his part, assured that the fourth round of talks is already

moving forward.

"Moving forward, agreement toward a more stable ceasefire," he said in a separate interview.

The military on Tuesday said it will continue with its operations against the NPA until a ceasefire declaration is ordered by Mr. Duterte.

The President lifted the government unilateral ceasefire and terminated the peace talks in February following the brutal killing of a policemen by alleged NPA members in Bukidnon province.

The peace talks resumed after successful back channel talks between the GRP peace panel and several NDFP consultants in Utrecht.

Return to RP

Meanwhile, the President yesterday reiterated his call for communist leader Jose Maria "Joma" Sison to return to the Philippines.

The founder of the Communist Party who lives in Utrecht is recovering

from a bout of ill-health.

In his speech before a gathering of state prosecutors in Angeles City, Mr. Duterte said he had just phoned government peace panel leaders Bello and presidential peace adviser Jesus Dureza to reiterate his request to Sison.

"I told (Bello and Dureza) to convince Joma to come home. He's already old and sick. It's about time for him to come back," the President said, adding he will guarantee the communist leader's safety when he arrives in the country.

"(Sison), I promise to give him the freedom of movement that he wants. I am also ordering not to arrest you. No arrest," he stressed.

Mr. Duterte even promised to pay for Sison's hospital bills if he asked.

Sison, meanwhile, said he is positive that both the GRP and the NDF will forge agreements before the year ends. **PNA**

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• NPA leader yields

A New People's Army (NPA) leader, together with other four supporters voluntarily surrendered to the 24th Infantry Battalion in Sitio Barbarit, Barangay Tagodtod, Lagangilang, Abra, the Philippine Army reported yesterday. According to report, the surrenderees are all farmers residing in Brgy. Amtuagan, Tubo, Abra. The Army report forwarded to the Northern Luzon Command headquarters identified the NPA leader as Jackelyn Yagyag Cagdan. She also turned over an M-16 rifle. The four other supporters who surrendered were identified as Arcoy Alen Capuyan, 51; Ramil Melencio Daluping, 33; Johnson Sollimen Pitong, 52 years old and Nomer Teodoro Panglao, 56. (Mar. T. Supnad)

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Moro clans in Maguindanao clash due to land dispute

From the Philippine News Agency (Apr 5): Moro clans in Maguindanao clash due to land dispute

Clashes erupted Tuesday afternoon in remote villages here between two rival Muslim clans who are fighting over control of vast track of agricultural lands, police said.

Senior Supt. Agustin Tello, Maguindanao police provincial director, said the armed conflict involving commanders of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and its breakaway Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) has displaced an undetermined number of civilians.

Tello identified the warring leaders as Commander Malambeg Guiad of the MILF and Gani Saligan of the BIFF, which is considered by the military as a terrorist group.

"They fight over territorial control in remote barangays of Gen. SK Pendatun, it has been a recurring armed conflict," Tello told reporters. The two armed groups are contesting several hectares of corn and rice fields in Barangay Midpandacan.

Saligan has been wanted for various crimes, including multiple murder, extortion, robbery and illegal drugs.

Government forces have been deployed to serve as peacekeepers and ensure the safety of civilians, mostly Maguindanaons.

The police also sought the help of ceasefire monitors of the government and MILF peace panels to bring down the tension to allow the return of displaced families who sought shelter at the town center.

The local government of Gen. SK Pendatun provided the evacuees with food packs.

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Batanes Governor lauds Maritime Patrols

Reported by Lui Claudio on April 12, 2016 at 10:00 AM

CAMP AGUINLDO, Quezon City – The frequent maritime patrols by the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) in the Batanes islands chain has already reaped success as fishermen recount respite in poaching, Colonel Edgard Arevalo, AFP Public Affairs Chief disclosed Wednesday, April 5.

“Governor Marilou Cayco of The Province of Batanes extended the gratitude of the fisherfolks of Batanes for the continuous maritime patrol being facilitated by the Philippine Air Force, Navy, and Marines in the northernmost islands and sea territory of the province,” Colonel Arevalo said.

Governor Cayco wrote a letter to Lieutenant General Romeo Tanalgo, Commander of Northern Luzon Command (NOLCOM). She and her constituents expressed their gratefulness to the AFP for its prompt response to the needs of the province.

Governor Cayco disclosed that she was being flooded with positive feedbacks especially from the fishermen who are mostly benefiting from the maritime patrolling.

“The incessant problem of poaching in our waters took a respite after the patrol and according to our fisherfolks, they can now fish without being in persistent fear of encountering boats with foreign markings.” Governor Cayco wrote.

“Our scarce resource and means in protecting our own territory was obliterated by the AFP’s genuine concern to our people by keeping our people safe and free from threats of foreign poachers,” Governor Cayco continued.

In March 19, the Philippine Navy’s BRP Ramon Alcaraz (FF16) sailed to Mavulis Island, Itbayat, Batanes to conduct a site survey at the Northernmost Island of the country. The FF16 conducted naval cruise patrols to Pasuquin, Ilocos Norte, Dalupiri, Calayan and Casambalangan, Sta. Ana Cagayan. Since then, frequent maritime patrolling were facilitated by the military.

The AFP through NOLCOM started its maritime awareness activities in Mavulis Island in April 2016. This was done to support transforming the islets of Batanes into resting place and shelter area for Filipino fishermen.

“The positive developments in the islets of Batanes are borne not only of our frequent maritime patrols in the area but also of the active cooperation and coordination of the people of Batanes and other stakeholders. Together we shall continue to reap further successes as we in the AFP perform its mandate of protecting our people and our territory,” General Eduardo Año, AFP Chief of Staff said.

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