

*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**

**11 April 2017**

**Tuesday**

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

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

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**IS claims responsibility for Egypt church bombings**  
AFP, AP, Reuters, AFP, AP, Reuters, AFP, AP, Reuters



**Duterte: No weapons in island occupation**  
Philippine presidential spokesman says Duterte has no weapons in island occupation




Ready to return 'very good' satisfaction rating

**PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER**  
Duterte: No weapons in island occupation

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**AT PANATAG, CHINA ASSERTS POWER THROUGH CONTROL, CONCESSIONS**  
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**PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER**  
LASCAÑAS OUT TO TESTIFY ON KILLINGS IN DAVAO CITY

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**Manila Standard**  
China offered PH isles




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**MANILA BULLETIN**  
Homecoming for doomed OFWs



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

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BALANCED NEWS + FEARLESS VIEWS

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**TODAY'S WEATHER FORECAST | APRIL 11, 2017 | TUESDAY**

PHILIPPINE AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY (PAR)

RIDGE OF HIGH PRESSURE AREA EXTENDING ACROSS LUZON EASTERLIES AFFECTING EASTERN SECTIONS OF VISAYAS AND MINDANAO (As of 6:00 PM - Apr. 10, 2017)

<b>SUNRISE</b>	<b>SUNSET</b>
5:45 AM	6:09 PM
<b>MOONRISE</b>	<b>MOONSET</b>
6:16 PM	5:44 AM
<b>FULL MOON</b>	<b>LAST QUARTER</b>
APR 11 2:08 AM	APR 10 2:47 PM
<b>LOW TIDE</b>	<b>HIGH TIDE</b>
MANILA SOUTH HARBOR	MANILA SOUTH HARBOR
4:34 PM 0.11 Meter	10:30 AM 0.65 Meter

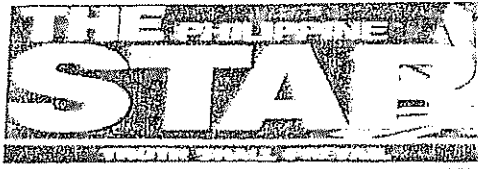
Partly cloudy to at times cloudy with rain/showers and/or thunderstorms  
Cloudy skies with rainshowers and/or thunderstorms

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APR 10		APR 11		APR 12		APR 13		APR 14		
<b>METRO MANILA</b>	26-35°C	25-35°C	21-31°C	21-30°C	24-31°C	24-31°C				
<b>TUGUEGARAO</b>	25-35°C	25-34°C	23-31°C	24-32°C	24-31°C	24-32°C				
<b>LAOAG</b>	24-32°C	25-33°C	26-32°C	25-32°C	25-34°C	25-33°C				
<b>BAGUIO</b>	16-26°C	16-25°C	26-31°C	26-31°C	25-32°C	25-33°C				
<b>SBMA/CLARK</b>	26-36°C	26-35°C	25-32°C	25-32°C						
		<b>TAGAYTAY</b>			<b>LEGAZPI</b>			<b>TACLOBAN</b>		
		21-31°C			23-31°C			24-31°C		
		21-30°C			24-32°C			24-31°C		
		24-31°C			24-31°C			24-32°C		
		24-31°C			25-32°C			25-33°C		
		25-32°C			25-32°C			<p style="font-size: x-small;">SABOT ED, PAWALA NI DI</p>		

Watch PanahonTV on DZRH News Television from Monday to Friday at 11:00 AM and 5:00 PM, and via Pilipinas HD at 6:00 AM, 6:30 PM and 9:00 PM.

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## ME trip: Rody may save OFWs on death row

By EDITH REGALADO

DAVAO CITY - President Duterte will seek clemency for jailed Filipinos, including those on death row, and bring home stranded overseas Filipino

workers (OFWs) during his visit to Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Bahrain.

Philippine consul general to Riyadh Iric Arribas said there are about 700 Filipinos imprisoned in Saudi Arabia.

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## ME trip From Page 1

for various cases, including the use of illegal drugs, immorality and alcoholism.

Of the jailed Filipinos, about 21 have been sentenced to death.

Duterte hopes to bring home at least 5,000 stranded overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) who were granted clemency and also detainees languishing on death row in the prisons of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Qatar during his Middle East visit this week.

The President left yesterday for Riyadh, Saudi Arabia that is part of the three-country state visits in the Middle East, which include stops in Bahrain and Doha, Qatar.

Duterte said to be included in the discussions in his visits to these countries would be the

fate of detained Filipinos and those on death row.

He said it would be possible that these OFWs would be granted pardon and even commutation of sentence.

"Yes, they've been given the clearance. I will fly them home. *Pagdating ko dito dala ko na 'yung iba. Diyan sa Jed-dah 'yan.* Those who are given the permission of clemency to whatever it was may clearance na, about 5,000 of them, we'll start bringing them back. The first batch *pagdating ko pagbalik, Inshallah, nandito na 'yung iba,*" Duterte said in his departure speech here.

During his visit, which started yesterday and will end on April 12, Duterte will meet with Saudi King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud to discuss



**President Duterte is shown with his daughter, Davao City Mayor Sara Duterte-Carpio, before his departure for the Middle East at the Davao International Airport yesterday.**

EPA

bilateral relations, defense, trade and investments, campaign against illegal drugs,

labor, energy, education and culture. Asked if Duterte will seek clemency for jailed Filipinos during the meeting, Arribas said: "It's possible but I could not categorically say. It will be dependent on the flow of discussions. It will have to be discussed among our governments." He noted that the Philippine government seeks clemency for Filipino prisoners whenever the Muslim holy month of Ramadan approaches. Arribas said that none of the Filipinos on death row in Saudi Arabia is scheduled to be executed this year.

"They are not yet for execution. They will have to undergo processes. Others have to pay blood money. In some cases, the victims are fellow Filipinos. The embassy and the Department of Foreign Affairs are talking to the families so there can be a settlement," Arribas said.

"There are legal processes in Saudi that need to be respected. We give legal assistance to our countrymen so they can be properly represented before the courts," he added.

Arribas said the Philippine embassy has also proposed the inclusion of the problem of illegal drugs in the bilateral talks between Duterte and King Salman.

"We need to gain the cooperation of Saudi in our aim to combat illegal drugs. There could be sharing of intelligence information and capacity-building of anti-drug enforce-

ment agencies," he said. "It's not just a domestic issue but a transnational issue."

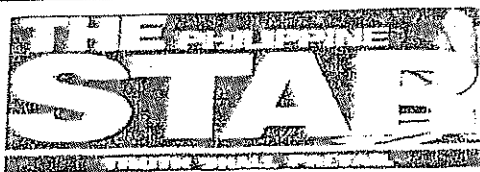
Arribas said there are about 400 Filipinos in Saudi Arabia tagged in cases related to illegal drugs.

The consul general could not confirm Duterte's statement that he would bring home with him some Filipino migrant workers. He stressed though that the embassy is continuously assisting Filipinos who were stranded or who lost their jobs because of the economic downturn.

"For those with cases, we cannot just repatriate them. But we provide them legal assistance," Arribas said.

He also denied claims that the Philippine Overseas Labor Office (POLO) in Riyadh has been slow in helping stranded Filipino workers. – **With Alexis Romero, Christina Mendez**

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### **3 militiamen killed, 11 hurt in clash**

ZAMBOANGA CITY – Three militiamen were killed and 11 other government troopers wounded in an encounter with Abu Sayyaf bandits in a remote village in Sumisip, Basilan yesterday.

Capt. Jo-Ann Petinglay, Western Mindanao Command (Westmincom) spokesperson, said eight of those wounded were brought to the Camp Navarro General Hospital for treatment. Three were confined in a hospital in Basilan.

Soldiers of the 4th Special Forces Battalion and the Civilian Active Auxiliary encountered the bandits in Barangay Cabcaban at around 7:15 a.m. The troops were reinforced by soldiers belonging to the First Special Force Co.

Lt. Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr., Westmincom chief, said the bandits retreated after they suffered an undetermined number of casualties. Pursuit operations are ongoing.

"This incident will not stop us from doing our mandate ...to free communities from the terror these bandits are causing the people," Galvez said.

He said government troops would continue to coordi-

nate with local government units to flush out the Abu Sayyaf and rescue its remaining hostages. – Roel Pareño

### **Fire hits Army detachment**

BACOLOD CITY – A detachment of the 62nd Infantry Battalion in Barangay Carabalan in Himamaylan City, Negros Occidental was razed by fire on Sunday.

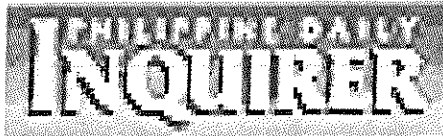
Senior Superintendent Fred Trajeras, Bureau of Fire Protection-Negros Island Region director, said at least 30 bunkers and the personal belongings of the soldiers were destroyed.

Damage to the fire was initially placed at P350,000.

– Gilbert Bayoran



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AMID CALLS FOR HOSTAGES' RELEASE

## NPA REBELS ABDUCT COTABATO VILLAGE CHIEF

KIDAPAWAN CITY—Even with the Communist Party of the Philippines' (CPP) order for its armed wing, the New People's Army (NPA), to release all of its "prisoners of war," the group yet again abducted a village chief in North Cotabato province on Sunday.

Supt. Romeo Galgo Jr., provincial police spokesperson, said about 50 heavily armed rebels arrived in the village of Mahungcog at 9 a.m. and ordered all male residents to come out of their houses.

They identified village chief Michael Lingaro and took him as they fled.

As early as Feb. 19, the CPP had ordered the NPA to hasten the release of government forces in its custody in the hope that it would help create a better atmosphere to resume the peace talks with the government.

Since then, only two militiamen—Rene Doller and Carl Mark Nucos—were released in Mati City in Davao Oriental province on March 24.

The NPA has demanded the suspension of military and police operations in areas where the captives were planned to be released. The military rejected the NPA's demand.

Still in captivity are Pfc. Edwin Salan, who was taken in

Alegria town, Surigao del Norte province; Sgt. Solaiman Calucop and Pfc. Samuel Garay, who were nabbed in Columbio town, Sultan Kudarat province, and PO2 Jerome Natividad, who was captured in Talakag town, Bukidnon province.

The latest abduction in Magpet happened two days after the government and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines ended the fourth round of talks in The Netherlands.

On Jan. 21, while the third round of talks was being held in Rome, a clash between rebels and government forces erupted in Makilala town in North Cotabato. A rebel was killed in what the military claimed was an operation against insurgents who commandeered a truck of the Santos Land Development Corp. in the village of Malisala.

That clash was the start of more armed encounters between government troops and rebels which led to the NPA announcing it was ending its unilateral ceasefire.

In response, President Duterte also terminated the government's unilateral ceasefire and canceled the talks.

After some back-channeling, the fourth round of talks resumed in The Netherlands last week. —WILLIAMOR MAGBANUA INQ

// April 2017

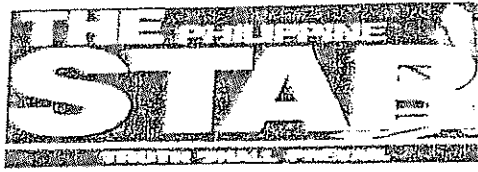
**MANILA BULLETIN**  
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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• **NPA medic in  
Abra surrenders**

A female medic of the New People's Army (NPA) has surrendered to the 81st Infantry Battalion of the army's 7th Infantry Division based in Tubo, Abra. Upon her surrender, Rose Manganip Sadgopen, alias "Ka Helen," also submitted her Colt Combat Commander .45-caliber pistol to the army. She told the military that she was an NPA medical officer who used to operate under Squad UNO, Sandatahang Yunit Pampropaganda (SYP) of the NPA as early as the 1980s until she went on a lie-low status in 1984 and became a Militiang Bayan (MB) under the Kilusang Larangang Gerilya (KLG) MONTES in Barangay Amtuagan, Tubo, Abra. (Mar T. Supnad)

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## Soldier, 3 others nabbed in Taguig sting

A Philippine Army sergeant and three others were arrested in a drug sting in Taguig City Saturday.

Sgt. Carlos Erne, Josephine Bajador, Reynaldo Bechayda and Benson Gierz were caught in a pot session by police officers who were conducting a drug bust at a house along Ranger street in New Lower Bicutan.

Five sachets said to contain shabu, drug paraphernalia and P1,000 marked money were confiscated from the suspects, who will be charged for drug pushing, visiting a drug den and possession of drug

paraphernalia.

### 16 caught in QC

Meanwhile, at least 16 drug suspects were arrested in separate operations in Quezon City on Sunday.

La Loma police arrested seven persons during a sting along Lagusan street in Barangay Apolonio Samson at around 3 a.m. Wilfredo Gravilla, 44, Nataniel Ayuno, 25, Randy Beltran, 27, Jhonar Tuazon, 29, Evelyn Gravilla, 21, Mary Grace Palayo, 24, and Jessica Gravilla, 41.

Seven sachets said to contain shabu, P300 marked mon-

ey and drug paraphernalia were seized from the suspects.

In another drug bust, Talipapa police collared Mark Anthony Bumagat, 28, and Benjie Timado, 26, at a compound in Barangay Tandang Sora at around 1:30 p.m.

Operatives seized three sachets of suspected shabu and marked money.

Emma Ferrer, 39, was also arrested during an entrapment operation with two sachets of shabu underneath a bridge in Barangay Balon Bato at around 3 p.m.

In Barangay Bagumbayan, Jino Antonio, 25, and Jim-

my Formon, 32, a suspected member of the Bahala na Gang, were rounded up during a sting at their residence at around 8:10 p.m.

The suspects yielded six sachets of suspected shabu and drug paraphernalia.

Two other suspects were arrested for possession of illegal drugs and firearms by police officers conducting anti-crime operations at the parking lot of a hospital along Ramirez street in Barangay Novaliches Proper at around 9:39 p.m.

Frank Bernales, 45, and Ethel Oliver Abad, 32, yielded a .22 caliber Magnum Colt re-

volver, bullets, a sachet said to contain shabu and drug paraphernalia upon their arrest.

In separate anti-crime operations, police arrested Eduardo Tubera, 24, and Alberto Revilla, 51.

Tubera was arrested with three sachets of suspected shabu, marked money and his motorcycle along Cambridge street in Barangay E. Rodriguez at around 7:30 p.m.

Meanwhile, Revilla was arrested with a sachet of suspected shabu along N.S. Amoranto street in Barangay Salvacion at around 1:30 p.m. – Ghio Ong, Romina Cabrera

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INQUIRER

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# Duterte set to maintain geopolitical balance in disputed sea

**By Frinston Lim**  
@flimINQ

DAVAO CITY—President Duterte on Monday said his order to the military to reinforce islands in the South China Sea controlled by the Philippines was to maintain the geopolitical balance, and assured China that no “offensive weapons” would be placed there.

Mr. Duterte said the Philippines wanted peace and friendship with China but Manila needed to bolster what territory it had in the South China Sea because “everybody’s grabbing” islands in the Spratly archipelago.

Mr. Duterte set off alarm bells on Thursday, including in Beijing, when he said he had ordered troops to occupy uninhabited islets and shoals in the Spratlys claimed by the Philippines.

China’s foreign ministry on Friday said it hoped the Philip-

pinas could continue to properly manage maritime disputes with China.

## Facility upgrade

Philippine defense and military officials subsequently clarified Mr. Duterte’s comments, saying the plans were to upgrade existing facilities on the Philippines’ inhabited islands and reefs in the South China Sea and not occupy new territories.

The Philippines occupies Pagasa Island (international name: Thitu Island), Likas Island (West York Island), Parola Island (Northeast Cay), Lawak Island (Nanshan Island), Kota Island (Loaita Island), Patag Island (Flat Island), Panata Island (Lankiam Island), Balagtas Reef (Irving Reef) and Ayungin Shoal (Second Thomas Shoal) in the Spratlys.

In addition, the Philippines claims Kagitingan Reef (Fiery Cross Reef), Calderon Reef (Cuár-

teron Reef), Burgos Reef (Gaven Reef), Mabini Reef (Johnson South Reef), Panganiban Reef (Mischief Reef), Zamora Reef (Subi Reef) and McKennan Reef (Hughes Reef), which are also claimed by China and Vietnam.

## No military buildup

“I’d like to address myself to the Chinese government... I ordered the occupation of the 10 or nine islands that were just near our shores because there’s a heightening of geopolitical issues and eventually maybe a violent low-intensity war over here,” Mr. Duterte told a news conference here before leaving on a three-country trip to the Middle East on Monday.

Mr. Duterte said the Philippines would not engage in any military buildup and opposed any attempt to deploy weapons on the islands.

“For the information of Chi-

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na, we will not place there any offensive weapons, not even one gun," he said

"We will just try to maintain the balance of the geopolitical situation there," he said.

China claims almost all of the South China Sea, through which about \$5 trillion in ship-borne trade passes every year.

Neighbors Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Vietnam and Taiwan also have claims in the strategic waterway.

Mr. Duterte said the Philippines would also strengthen its claim to the resource-rich Benham Rise, an underwater landmass off the eastern coast of Luzon.

He said he would rename Benham Rise Philippine Rise or Philippine Ridge through an executive order upon his return to the Philippines from the Middle East.

"That's ours. We will hang on to it," he said.

The military will enforce Mr. Duterte's order by deploying additional troops to islands and reefs occupied by the Philippines, according to Armed Forces of the Philippines Chief of Staff Gen. Eduardo Año.

Ayungin Shoal, where the government grounded an old naval hospital ship, the BRP Sierra Madre, in 1999 to mark Philippine territory in the Spratlys, will also get additional troops.

A small Marine garrison mans the BRP Sierra Madre.

#### Reinforce troops

"We will reinforce our troops and build structures," Año told reporters at Davao International Airport.

He, however, did not explain what structures would be built on the islands.

Mr. Duterte puts the blame for current tensions in the

South China Sea squarely on the United States, for not intervening to stop China from building and arming artificial islands in the Philippines' exclusive economic zone.

"If they fight each other, we will be hit. Everybody knows, the United States will be stockpiling their weapons there. And they said they [would] not," he said, without elaborating.

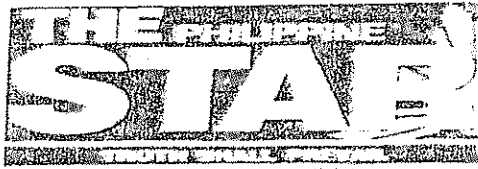
"I do not want to get involved in a war between nations. I have extended my hand and friendship to the US government," he said. —WITH A REPORT FROM REUTERS INQ



WATCH VIDEO: Duterte to China  
We mean no harm, we are friends  
<http://inq.news/DuterteOnChina>

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# Duterte: No weapons in island occupation

By CHRISTINA MENDEZ

No new weapons are being eyed for islets and land features in the West Philippine Sea over which President Duterte wants the military to exercise greater control.

The President made the clarification yesterday, at the Davao International Airport shortly before departing for Saudi Arabia. His pronouncements came on the heels of Beijing's voicing concern over his earlier statement that he had ordered the military to occupy at least nine islets and reefs under Philippine control.

"For the information of China, we will not place there any offensive weapons, not even one gun," he said.

"We are just there to claim the island for us because that is really ours and I have ordered the AFP to build structures there to signify, *atin ito* (it's ours)," he maintained, referring to the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

Reacting to Duterte's order, Beijing had urged the President to "properly manage" the dispute over areas in the South China Sea and West Philippine Sea.

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## Duterte From Page 1

Duterte explained he issued the order amid a "heightening of geopolitical issues" and stressed he did not want "to get involved in any war with nations."

"China can relax. We are friends. We will not go to war with you. We're just trying to maintain the balance of the geopolitical situation there," he said in a press briefing. "Maybe when we get rich, very rich, I can sell the land to you for - inyo na if the spectacle of a war is gone and nothing is dangerous to the Philippines," he said without providing details.

"Now, they (Chinese) are trying to position themselves strategically and I'd like to address myself to the Chinese government and the ... ambassador," he said, referring to Chinese Ambassador Zhao Jianhua.

"I ordered the occupation of the 10 or nine islands that are just near our shores because there's a heightening

of the geopolitical issues and eventually maybe a violent low-intensity war over here," he said.

"We'll be caught in the crossfire if hostilities break out because everybody knows the US has been stockpiling weapons there," he said.

"I have extended my hand and friendship to the Chinese government," he said.

"Kindly, kindly take a deep look at the situation. Everybody's grabbing every land, every islet," Duterte said. "And nearest to us are the 10 islands and I have it on good authority."

Asked about the recent development between China and the United States, which struck an agreement to avert a trade war, Duterte said it was a welcome development that would put the Philippines at an advantage.

"As a matter of fact, I've been praying that the two would get together and talk about really what's - what

ails this planet and talk about peace only and stop violence all over the world," he said.

## Another expedition to Benham

Meanwhile, a group of scientists and government officials led by Agriculture Secretary Emmanuel Piñol is embarking on another exploratory trip to the 13-million-hectare Benham Rise tomorrow to check the area's potential as a food source.

With Piñol in the exploration are officials and scientists from the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR).

A government-owned oceanographic research vessel will take the group to a shallow portion of Benham Rise.

"The flotilla will proceed to the shallow portion of Benham Rise where the depth is only about 70 feet and anchor payaos or fish sheds where the fishermen could catch fish using hand lines," Piñol said.

"BFAR officials and scientists will also study whether it is viable to set up floating structures to serve as rest and

refuge area for fishermen and scientists," he added.

Joining the expedition are 10 fiberglass fishing boats, each weighing 4.5 tons, measuring 38 feet with two engines and equipped with a fish box.

The new fiberglass fishing boats will be distributed to groups of fishermen in Infanta, Quezon tomorrow before the flotilla begins its journey.

Foreign Affairs spokesman Charles Jose said Filipino scientists and fishermen can sail to Benham Rise unimpeded as it is clear that the Philippines has sovereign rights over the area.

"The question of sovereign rights of the Philippines over Benham Rise has already been settled," he pointed out.

"It is clear that sovereign rights to explore and benefit from the resources of the EEZ, the continental shelf and the seabed and subsoil of the extended continental shelf in the Benham Rise region belongs to the Philippines pursuant to the provisions of UNCLOS and the recommendations of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf with respect

to Benham Rise." Jose stressed. The Chinese Foreign Ministry earlier said China was willing to engage in joint scientific research with the Philippines in the area.

Last year, BFAR personnel and marine conservation group Oceana Philippines explored Benham Rise and another part of the area called Benham Bank.

The undersea region east of Luzon is located off the provinces of Aurora and Isabela and is duly recognized by the United Nations in 2012 as the newest Philippine territory under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

Benham Bank, the shallowest portion of the unexplored seamount, is one of the traditional fishing grounds of coastal dwellers on the north-eastern coast of Luzon.

Scientists studied the underwater terrain of Benham Bank covering 12 research stations and discovered different soft and hard corals, fish, algae and sponges.

Based on oceanographic explorations, there are more than 50 species of fish and tiered

plate corals in Benham Bank.

The area is part of the spawning grounds for the Pacific bluefin tuna which are known to swim to the US and Mexico, but come back to spawn in the western Pacific, including Benham Rise.

"We urge the government to expedite the formulation of the management framework for Benham Rise to protect and sustainably manage it. We need to prioritize its protection, including the Benham Bank as a no-take zone," Oceana Philippines vice president Gloria Ramos said.

Oceana is pushing for a management plan to include strict enforcement of biodiversity conservation, fisheries and commercial and economic activities in the area.

"We all recognize the significance of Benham Rise for food security and climate change adaptation. We need to act fast in protecting it from external threats such as territorial encroachments, overfishing and other exploitative activities," Ramos said. - **Louise Maureen Simeon, Edith Regalado, Pia Lee-Brago**



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## PNP chief: No Holy Week break in drug war

By **CECILLE SUERTE FELIPE**

Despite the observance of Holy Week, Philippine National Police (PNP) chief Director General Ronald dela Rosa warned drug pushers and addicts that there will be no break in the war against illegal drugs.

Dela Rosa said the PNP would continue the intensified campaign against illegal drugs even during Holy Week, from Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday on April 15.

"No, *walang* stop. Continuous, no letup, *tuloy-tuloy*," Dela Rosa told a press briefing yesterday at Camp Crame, Quezon City.

Dela Rosa said he does not encourage or discourage any police officer to do certain Catholic practices, like carrying the cross or acts of penitence.

"That's a personal vocation according to their own volition. *Kung gusto nila* (if they want), go ahead," he added.

More than a month after the launch of Oplan Double Barrel Reloaded, the PNP said that 107 drug suspects were killed in police operations, indicating the present

campaign was "less bloody" than the previous one.

From March 1 to yesterday, Dela Rosa said a total of 107 drug suspects have been killed and 7,940 suspects surrendered in 4,973 operations.

From July 2016 until January 2017, a total of 2,555 drugs suspects were killed during the PNP's campaign against anti-illegal drugs, excluding the number of drug personalities killed by still unknown assailants.

President Duterte, however, suspended Oplan Tokhang following reports that some scalawag policemen were engaged in tokhang-for-ransom, such as the kidnap and murder of South Korean businessman Jee Ick-joo.

Oplan Tokhang was the centerpiece of the PNP's campaign against illegal drugs. It involved visiting houses of suspected drug offenders to convince them to surrender or undergo rehabilitation.

But after a month, Duterte ordered the PNP to resume its campaign against drugs last March as drug lords reportedly went back to business.

Last March 6, Dela Rosa said the PNP started implementing high value target (HVT) revalidated, Oplan Tokhang

revisited and double barrel reloaded.

Under HVT revalidated, Dela Rosa said the PNP-Drug Enforcement Group replaced the Anti-Illegal Drugs Group that was dissolved amid accusations that some policemen used the war on drugs for shakedown operations.

He noted that under the rebooted Tokhang, policemen will be revisiting the houses earlier subject to knock-and-plea of suspected drug users.

### **AFP, too**

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) will continue its operations against rebels and terrorist groups like the Abu Sayyaf and the communist New People's Army (NPA) during the Holy Week.

Military spokesman Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla said no suspension of military operations has been issued for the Lenten season.

AFP chief Gen. Eduardo Año said soldiers were ordered to continue efforts to defeat the Abu Sayyaf and protect the public from NPA atrocities.

– With Michael Punongbayan, Sheila Crisostomo, Louella Desiderio

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## Dela Rosa confirms kidnap threat; AFP says no info

**BY RAYMOND AFRICA  
AND VICTOR REYES**

PNP chief Ronald dela Rosa yesterday confirmed the threat of kidnapping by terror groups of foreigners based in the Central Visayas region as advised by the US Embassy on its citizens.

But Armed Forces chief Gen. Eduardo Año said the military has not monitored any such threat.

"We respect the travel advisory but as far as the AFP is concerned, we have not monitored any threat," Año said but appealed to the public to be vigilant and report any suspicious person, object or circumstance so that the AFP can take immediate counter actions."

The Department of National Defense said it was surprised over the US travel advisory issued last Sunday.

In the travel advisory, the US Embassy warned its citizens against going

to Cebu and Bohol as it said it has received "unsubstantiated yet credible information that terror groups may attempt to conduct kidnappings in Central Visayas."

Dela Rosa said Chief Supt. Noli Talino, Police Regional Office 7 chief, has received intelligence information regarding the matter but assured the public the PNP is on top of the situation.

PRO 7 covers the provinces of Cebu, Bohol, Siquijor, and Negros Oriental.

"Huwag kayo matakot (Do not be afraid). I am giving assurance to the people na yung ating mga pulis sa Central Visayas ay ready (that our police in the Central Visayas region are ready)," Dela Rosa said.

The US Embassy advised its citizens to reconsider travel in this region.

See DELA ROSA ► Page B6

## DELA ROSA

avoid large gatherings, and remain vigilant at all times as extremists target these kinds of places.

Dela Rosa said it is the obligation of the embassy to warn its citizens if such information are received.

He declined to identify the terror group.

Dela Rosa said it is still safe to travel to Central Visayas and advised foreign and local tourists to avoid going to the tri-boundaries of the Philippines, Indonesia, and Malaysia which is frequented by the Abu Sayyaf group.

The travel advisory came after

two members of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria were arrested in Iloilo City last March 25.

Husayn Al-Dhafiye, a Kuwaiti, and his wife Rahaf Zira, a Syrian, were arrested by agents of the Bureau of Immigration on the request of the Kuwaiti government.

The couple has been in the country for at least three months.

Dela Rosa said investigators are still finding out if the ISIS couple are involved in the planned kidnappings of foreigners in the Central Visayas region.

Arsenio Andolong, chief of the public affairs service of the defense

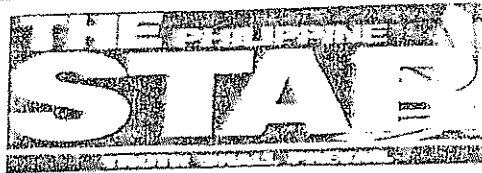
department, said the DND was "surprised" over the issuance of the US travel advisory. "I am frankly at a loss why that was issued," he said.

Andolong said the DND has not gotten any information to warrant the issuance of the travel advisory.

Nevertheless, Andolong said the DND respects the US issuance of the advisory, saying the US merely wants to ensure the safety of its citizens.

"They've done that in the past over even minor issues such as rallies and in response to security situations, although in this case, it's not yet clear as to what the basis of the advisory was," said Andolong.

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## AFP chief: Abu Sayyaf no match for military

Confident of beating the deadline to defeat the terrorist group within the next three months, Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) chief Gen. Eduardo Año yesterday reminded his men that the Abu Sayyaf is no match for the military.

Año said government troops carrying out offensives against the enemy should now operate at full speed.

"The bandits are no match for us," Año told members of the Joint Task Force (JTF) Sulu on Thursday.

He urged the troops to work double time in the campaign to eliminate the Abu Sayyaf by June 30.

AFP public affairs office chief Col. Edgard Arevalo said the military is confident it can meet the deadline set by President Duterte to defeat the bandit group.

"The AFP is midway in its campaign against the Abu Sayyaf; General Año inspired them to intensify the operations. The military has proven its capacity to inflict heavy casualties against the terrorist group," Arevalo said.

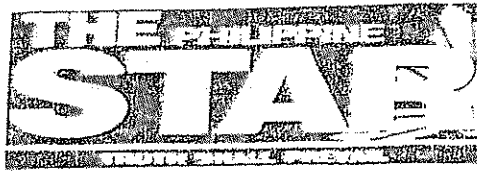
Año visited the Kuta Heneral Teodulfo Bautista in Sulu last week and distributed Glock pistols to officers involved in a successful operation against the Abu Sayyaf that resulted in the recovery of firearms.

Año lauded the JTF-Sulu for their sacrifices and hard work in implementing the six-month campaign against the terrorist group.

"In the past three months, the AFP did not hear a single complaint. Everyone did his and her best in the job. We are very proud of all the soldiers, airmen, sailors and marines who continue to perform their tasks in line with our thrust against the Abu Sayyaf and other local terrorist groups," he said.

- Michael Punongbayan

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## 'Phi to deal harshly with terrorism'

Terrorism would be dealt with "harshly," President Duterte said yesterday in response to a US travel advisory cautioning Americans traveling to or living in Central Visayas on possible kidnapping by terror groups.

While admitting having learned about the travel advisory only from the newspapers, Duterte made it clear he has not wavered in his commitment to go after terror groups, particularly the Abu Sayyaf.

He stressed there are countless Muslims in Mindanao who are peace-loving citizens. "I want to be sure. But if you remember the Maute connected with the terrorist group of Abu Sayyaf, under the umbrella of Al-Qaeda or ISIS - that's a different story," Duterte said.

"But I would like to advise my countrymen that the Moro people are our brothers and sisters," he added.

"And we should not be eternally forever seemingly afraid of them. They're good people, but you hardly talk to them so they think we're angry at them," he said in Filipino and English. "But you know they are all Filipinos like us. And we treat it as is," Duterte said.

Addressing terrorist,

Duterte said he would treat them "harshly" and would give no quarter. "I can do 10 times better than you," the chief executive said.

The President has signed Executive Order 16, directing all government departments and agencies including government-owned and controlled corporations and local government units to adopt the National Security Policy 2017 - 2022.

The National Security Policy (NSP) 2017 to 2022 embodies a comprehensive approach to addressing national security challenges.

The military, for its part, said it has not detected any serious security threat in Central Visayas, especially in Cebu and Bohol.

But despite the absence of specific threat especially to tourists, Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) spokesman Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla said security forces "are ever vigilant and proactively engaged to deter any threats posed on travelers, specially during the long holidays this week."

Philippine National Police chief Director General Ronaldo dela Rosa, however, said there is specific threat of kidnapping in Central Visayas although his

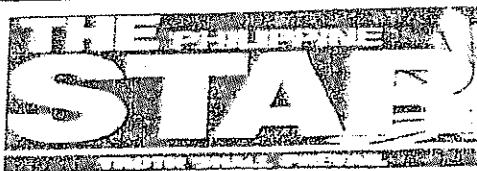
men are prepared for it.

"The US, which has a significant number of citizens who travel, do this regularly as a precautionary means to protect its citizens. The Philippines does the same as far as its OFWs (overseas Filipino workers) are concerned and even goes to the extreme of halting their deployment if necessary in order to protect them," he explained in a statement.

Dela Rosa said it was Central Visayas police regional director Chief Supt. Noli Talifio who informed him of the kidnapping threat and the appropriate security measures taken. He also advised tourists and travelers to avoid areas where terror groups like the Abu Sayyaf operate. He said such areas include the waters between the Philippines and Malaysia and Indonesia.

In a travel advisory posted on its website, the US embassy said it "has received unsubstantiated yet credible information that terrorist groups may attempt to conduct kidnappings in Central Visayas, which includes both Cebu and Bohol provinces. - **With Christina Mendez Michael Punongbayan and Cecille Suerte-Felipe**

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## FIRST PERSON

ALEX MAGNO

### Extortion

In their last meeting earlier this month, the negotiating panels of the Philippine government and the CPP-NPA agreed to an "interim" bilateral ceasefire agreement - whatever that may mean.

The meeting was not even supposed to happen. President Duterte earlier called for a pause in the talks after a series of ambushes pulled by the rebels against soldiers and policemen. Peace advocates managed to cajole one more meeting.



On their way to the meeting, the government panel was given a clear mission. President Duterte asked them to bring home a "ceasefire." The "interim" ceasefire agreement seems to be the mouse coaxed out of the mountain, some sort of minimum compliance to keep the President happy and the talks hopeful.

While his team was already in Europe, President Duterte gave them a call. He wanted a clear commitment from the communists to stop their extortion activities and instructed his panel never to concede any territory to the rebels. The communists justified most of their attacks, especially on troops out on humanitarian missions, on the grounds that the victims strayed into "their" territory.

The past few weeks, the NPA appears to have escalated their attacks apparently in aid of extortion. They burned down millions worth of heavy equipment belonging to vulnerable companies engaged in agribusinesses. Either the spike in such types of attacks were intended for the rebels to make hay before a ceasefire kicks in or an indication the collection of "revolutionary taxes" will continue despite the ongoing negotiations.

I had a long conversation with a businessman from the Caraga region a few weeks ago. He complained NPA extortion activities have become more brazen and more encompassing. Small businesses formerly ignored by the rebel tax collectors were now being approached for regular payments. He has since avoided going to his farm.

Eduardo Maringo, spokesman for the agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs) in southern Mindanao, was more direct. He asks government "to please step up its protection of farm workers and businesses and go after lawless elements. The safety of our families and our livelihood are threatened. If the government fails to address this problem, businesses can leave and we will lose our jobs."

Banana and pineapple plantations in Mindanao appear to be the favorite targets of NPA extortion activities.

On March 30, rebels attacked the facilities of Dole plantation in Barangay Sinawal, General Santos City. They torched the cold storage and palletizing facilities, a container van and other capital equipment. The company has since stopped all farm operations. Top management still has to decide on the continuation of production activities. This severely affects the livelihood of families dependent on the enterprise.

Earlier, on Feb. 5, rebels attacked a banana processing plant in Pantukan, Compostela Valley. After tying up the caretaker of the packing plant, the rebels poured gasoline on the building and burned down the facility.

On Feb. 25, about 80 rebels attacked a pineapple plantation in Bukidnon. They simultaneously set afire heavy equipment in various parts of the plantation. They were not doing this for pure enjoyment. In another attack, a pineapple harvester was hit by a landmine.

On March 25, rebels blocked three container vans in Maragusan, Compostela Valley. The fruits carried in the container vans were doused with gasoline and burned.

On March 26, rebels opened fire at a spray plane in Tagbina, Surigao. Hit thrice, the plane was fortunate to have limped back to its hangar.

On March 27, a little past noon, NPA rebels attacked the plantation of Sumifru (Philippines) Corp. in Malaybalay, Bukidnon. As in the other similar attacks, they burned down equipment and vehicles used by the enterprise.

One agribusiness investor could only fret: "All the while, I thought agricultural development is a priority, but the continuous harassment and extortion activities of the NPA prove otherwise."

ARBs spokesman Maringo adds: "Our industry is already hampered with problems. We have low productivity because of pests and diseases, drought, flooding...but the insurgency is most alarming. We are scared for our lives."

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The products produced by the fruit plantations in Mindanao are the brightest items on our export agenda. Demand for our tropical fruits have picked up. Just recently, a top Chinese official signed a deal for \$1 billion worth of purchases intending to help our fruit plantations grow.

About two million people, including family members and workers in the downstream industries, are dependent on the banana industry alone. If they cannot plant or tend to the crop because of NPA extortion activities, the misery will be large.

There is consensus among the affected communities that government does not seem focused enough on the peace and order problem. They feel that the leadership is betting too much on the possibility that an arrangement with the communist rebels will bring a halt to the destructive extortion activities of the rebels.

There is little to support that expectation. Since the peace talks resumed, extortion activities spiked rather than receded. Even when a previous ceasefire was in effect, NPA commanders in Mindanao kept up their ambushes on government troops. The local guerrilla leaders appear to be impervious to the dictates of the communist panel negotiating in Europe.

Likewise, there is little expectation that the recently concluded "interim" ceasefire agreement will lead to a cessation of extortion. It might not even lead to a real cessation of hostilities on the ground.

Our negotiating panel should ask for a clearer position from the communists regarding what they euphemistically call "revolutionary taxation." The welfare of millions is at stake.

★

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# BusinessMirror

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## Peace talks won't go far without cease-fire



Ernesto M. Hilario

### ABOUT TOWN

**I** SERIOUSLY doubt that the political negotiations between the Duterte administration and the communist-led National Democratic Front (NDF) will move forward and reach a comprehensive peace agreement without a joint cease-fire.

The fourth round of the peace negotiations were held last week in the Netherlands with neither side declaring a unilateral cease-fire.

The NDF had said it would declare a unilateral cease-fire a day before the resumption of the fourth round of the current peace talks but did not do so.

The Armed Forces, for its part, also did not declare a unilateral cease-fire.

In short, while the negotiators on both sides wear broad smiles as they pose for photo opportunities at the start and end of each session, their faces on the ground are grim-faced and ready, willing to kill each other with every weapon in their respective arsenals.

This situation does not inspire confidence at all that the talks will make significant progress.

The military now tries to go on the offensive in areas where the New People's Army (NPA) operates and to decimate the ranks of the rebels with their superior number and weapons.

The NPA will also engage the military in the various areas where they operate, particularly in parts of Mindanao where they have established a foothold.

Full-scale war will certainly lead to casualties on both sides. The military will not hesitate to arrest high-value targets, such as leaders of the Communist Party of the Philippines and the NPA. The NPA will still try to capture soldiers and policemen as bargaining chips in the negotiations and as a propaganda tool to show that they are a force to reckon with.

Previous peace talks starting in the post-Edsa era did not go far enough, aside from agreements on security of negotiators and on international human-rights agreements.

The focus of the talks—the substantive matters involving social and economic reforms, as well as political and constitutional reforms—will take time to thresh out, even as the two sides already have working drafts.

Both panels appeared optimistic when they faced the media at the start of the fourth round of talks, but acknowledged that the negotiations would be tough even as the Norwegian government still stands as third-party facilitator.

Just how tough the political negotiations will be can be discerned from President Duterte's conditions for the government to declare a joint cease-fire.

First, there should be a clear parameters or terms of reference for the cease-fire. Second, the government will not recognize any territorial claims by the rebels. Third, the rebels should stop the collection of revolutionary taxes and refrain from criminal acts, such as extortion and arson. And, fourth, the rebels should release all their captives.

The NPA is not expected to stop the collection of revolutionary taxes as this is the source of funds to maintain their standing army and mass organizations.

And if the military will not budge from its all-out war stance, there isn't likely to be a joint cease-fire anytime soon.

GRP chief negotiator and Labor Secretary Silvestre H. Bello III has said he expects a difficult phase in the peace talks with the NDF "given the diversity of the positions taken by the parties on the issues at hand".

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The fourth round of talks succeeded in forging an agreement on the NDF demand that, as part of genuine agrarian reform, farmers should be given land for free. How that would be implemented is still up in the air. There are issues that should be resolved, such as just compensation for landowners, that is guaranteed by the Constitution. The NDF wants big tracts of land such as Hacienda Luisita to be expropriated and given free to tenant farmers who have worked there for decades, but it's not going to be easy to do that without opposition from the Cojuangco-Aquino family.

We do not expect the current peace talks to produce dramatic results with armed hostilities taking place and the armed components of the two sides aiming for the jugular and trying to decimate the other with hammer and tongs. But if by some miracle they make progress and decide to finally stop fighting and forge a comprehensive agreement, then we will gladly welcome this after 50 long years of violence and bloodshed.

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# Malaya

The National Newspaper

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## US troops in civic action

**L**ESSONS learned from previous Balikatan exercises between Philippines and American soldiers were evident this year as local organizers, particularly the AFP and the Presidential Commission on the Visiting Forces Agreement (PCVFA) announced that the joint excises will not involve war games.

They said the visiting United States forces would partner with the Philippine Army in constructing classrooms in two schools in Ormoc and one in Guiuan, Samar. They will also conduct community relations activities like health education and veterinary services.

**'It is but proper for Philippine authorities to take control of the nitty-gritty matters such as physical arrangements and the conduct of the participants.'**

The joint activity will stress exchange of skills and technology, with the Filipinos most likely at the receiving end because the Americans have more and better technologies to share.

The most telling in the list of lessons learned from Balikatan exercises in past years is the policy of restricting the US sol-

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## US TROOPS

diars to their quarters to avoid a "Pemberton-like incident" from happening anew, referring to the conviction in Olongapo City of US Marine Joseph Scott Pemberton of the killing of Jennifer Laude, a transgender woman. If it becomes very necessary for these

American soldiers to leave, they will be escorted by troops of the Philippine Army.

Several months ago, in the heat of his impassioned speech, President Rodrigo Duterte announced the scrapping of the Balikatan exercises, saying that the Philippines was not able to gain anything from these events. This was during the time

former President Barack Obama used to criticize Duterte for his aggressive war against illegal drugs that resulted in numerous deaths of drug pushers and addicts.

As in other spur-of-the-moment comments, Duterte later rescinded this announcement, thus the implementation of Balikatan this month.

It is well and good for the Amer-

ican side in this joint activity to accede to operational reforms in the conduct of Balikatan. Since the event is observed and implemented in various places in the Philippines, it is but proper for Philippine authorities to take control of the nitty-gritty matters such as physical arrangements and the conduct of the participants.

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## **ONLINE NEWS**

### **11 APRIL 2017**

[www.dwdd.com.ph](http://www.dwdd.com.ph)

### **Patrolling troops clash with Abus in Basilan**

Posted by **Lui Claudio** on April 10, 2017 at 3:32 PM

A heavy armed confrontation ensued between patrolling troops of the Joint Task Force Basilan and members of the Abu Sayyaf Group in Sumisip, Basilan early this morning (April 10).

Personnel of the 4th Special Forces Battalion, who established a detachment in Barangay Cabcaban, Sumisip, Basilan, encountered the said Abu Sayyaf bandits while they were conducting security patrol in the said area at 7:15am.

At around 7:45am, the engaging troops were reinforced by the 1st Special Forces Company, who were being fired at by the withdrawing bandits as the troops were traversing the said temporary patrol base in Barangay Cabcaban.

As of press time, pursuit on the evading enemy forces is currently being conducted by the Special Forces following bloodstains left by the fleeing bandits.

As a result of the earlier engagements, five (5) members of the Civilian Active Auxiliary (CAA) sustained wounds, while three (3) CAA members were killed in action. Six (6) other soldiers were also wounded during the second encounter.

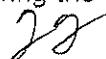
Eight (8) of the wounded were brought to Zamboanga City for further medical attention at the Camp Navarro General Hospital (CNGH) of the Western Mindanao Command, while three (3) were admitted in a hospital in Basilan.

"Our engaged troops have recently established a detachment in Barangay Cabcaban in response to the call of the local government of Basilan to secure the area from the threats posed by the Abu Sayyaf bandits. Our soldiers are on security patrols when the encounter occurred," said Lieutenant General Carlito G. Galvez, Jr., Commander, WestMinCom.

"The military will continue to secure the area and work with the local chief executives to contain the Abu Sayyaf bandits in the barangay," added Lieutenant General Galvez.

"This incident will not stop us from doing our mandate, in order to free the community from the terror these bandits are causing the people.

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[www.inquirer.net](http://www.inquirer.net)

## **Abu Sayyaf member surrenders to military in Basilan**

By: Cynthia D. Balana - Reporter / @cynchdbiINQ

Philippine Daily Inquirer / 07:20 PM April 10, 2017

A member of the dreaded Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) and a known follower of sub-leader Nurhassan Jamiri surrendered to the Joint Task Force Basilan last Saturday apparently tired of military pressure on the terrorist group.

A report from the Armed Forces of the Philippines' Western Mindanao Command (Wesmincom) said Ferdauz Asgari, alias Mammong, surrendered to troops from the 74th Infantry Battalion in Poblacion in Tipo-Tipo town.

Asgari also surrendered his caliber .30 M1 Garand rifle (Springfield) and a clip loaded with eight live ammunition.

Lt. Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr., Wesmincom commander, lauded Asgari's surrender and expressed hope that more Abu Sayyaf members would follow suit.

"The recent surrender only manifests that the pressure employed by the military and the coordination made by the Joint Task Force Basilan with the local government and the people of Basilan have compelled the Abu Sayyaf bandits to surrender to the government forces," Galvez said.

"I commend the men and women of the Joint Task Force Basilan, led by Colonel Juvymax Uy, for this achievement, which is a result of the intensified conduct of focused military operations in the province."

Meanwhile, in Barangay Cabcaban in Sumisip, Basilan, patrolling troops from the 4th Special Forces Battalion clashed with ASG on Monday morning.

The soldiers were immediately reinforced by the 1st Special Forces Company, which were fired upon by withdrawing ASG members bandits.

As of press time, pursuit operations against ASG members were ongoing as Special Forces men followed a blood trail by fleeing terrorists.

In the first encounter, five members of the Civilian Active Auxiliary were wounded while three CAA members were killed in action. Six other soldiers were also wounded during the second encounter.

"The military will continue to secure the area and work with the local chief executives to contain the Abu Sayyaf bandits in the barangay," Galvez said.

"This incident will not stop us from doing our mandate, in order to free the community from the terror these bandits are causing the people," he stressed.

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[www.pna.gov.ph](http://www.pna.gov.ph)

## **PA assures safety of 2 detained ISIS members**

MANILA, April 10 (PNA) -- The Philippine Army (PA) has assured the safety of two members of the terrorist group Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) who were formally turned over to its custody last Saturday.

"The inmates are in safe place which is not easily accessible. Clearance and approval for visits shall be granted by the Bureau of Immigration (BI)," said Army spokesperson Lt. Col. Ray Tiongson.

Tiongson said the two were turned over to them last April 8, around 11:55 a.m., following the request of the Department of Justice (DOJ) to Department of National Defense (DND), to provide temporary detention facility for the two foreign detainees.

On March 25, BI agents arrested Kuwaiti Husayn Al-Dhafiri and Syrian national Rahaf Zina in Taguig City.

Based on intelligence reports provided by the AFP and the information given by the Kuwaiti government, Al-Dhafiri is a member of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), also known as ISIS.

Al-Dhafiri is allegedly involved in explosives manufacturing and possibly on operational planning against Kuwait, while Rahaf is the widow of the slain Abu Jandal Al-Kuwaiti, who is the number two military commander of the ISIS operating in Syria. (PNA)

/PRIAM F. NEPOMUCENO

[www.mindanaotimes.net](http://www.mindanaotimes.net)

## **2 reported NPAs arrested over IED**

Posted on April 10, 2017 by Rhoda Grace Saron

TWO ALLEGED members of New People's Army (NPA) were arrested by the 67th Infantry Battalion after they were caught detonating an improvised explosive device at Sitio Magong-ong, Barangay San Rafael, Cateel, Davao Oriental on Saturday afternoon.

Capt. Alexandre Cabales, acting chief of Division Public Affairs Office (DPAO), said the troops of 67th IB on board two KM450 from Sitio Yapsay, Barangay Taytayan, Cateel were heading towards Sitio Tagadao, San Rafael when an IED exploded at around 1 p.m.

The troops immediately jumped from the vehicles and assumed defensive positions.

Two suspects were then arrested in a follow-up operation. They were identified as Ronron Bacquiao alias Gong-gong and Jodel Nunez alias JB who was allegedly the one who triggered the device.

They recovered a backpack from the suspect containing one cellphone, one blasting cap, one set of battery and 50-meter electrical wire.

The apprehended suspects were interrogated and presented to the Cateel police for proper filing of cases.

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## Armed forces: on right track to beat Abu Sayyaf

Published April 10, 2017, 5:40 PM

By Francis T. Wakefield

The chief of the Armed Forces of the Philippines-Public Affairs Office (AFP-PAO) said that the military is on the right track in defeating the terrorist Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG).



Members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (Mark Balmores | Manila Bulletin)

Marine Colonel Edgard Arevalo, chief of Armed Forces PAO, said the AFP is confident it can meet the timetable of six months within which the President Rodrigo Duterte ordered the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) defeated.

During his visit to operating units in Sulu, AFP Chief of Staff General Eduardo Año rallied soldiers, sailors, marines, and airmen of Joint Task Force Sulu and urged them to speed up its campaign to strategically eliminate the ASG within the specified time frame of up to June 30, 2017.

"The AFP is midway in its campaign against the Abu Sayyaf, General Año inspired them to operate at full speed, double or increase the operational tempo some more. The AFP has proven its capacity to inflict heavy casualties against the terrorist group," Arevalo said.

Año, on the other hand, stressed that the Abu Sayyaf are no match to the military.

"We have actually perfected the art of combined and joint operations. We saw the interplay among major services, and the interplay of ground troops to deliver in different lines of operation, the maneuvers, the fire support and the combat leadership," Año declared.

On Thursday, Año along with senior Generals of the AFP visited the officers and men in Kuta Heneral Teodulfo Bautista in Sulu.

He awarded new Glock pistols to the officers who led the successful operations against the ASG that led to the recovery of a .50 Caliber Heavy Machine Gun, an 60mm Mortar, thousands of ammunition, 4 machine gun, mortar rounds, 40 mm. rounds, assorted M-16, M-14, Carbines, Garand rifles, FALN, and other war materiel.

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## Amid travel warning, AFP assures safety of Americans in PH

By: Yuji Vincent Gonzales - Reporter / @YGonzalesINQ

INQUIRER.net / 03:20 PM April 10, 2017

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) on Monday assured Americans in the country that they have nothing to worry about their safety amid a travel advisory issued by the United States Embassy in Manila warning its citizens to be careful in going to Central Visayas due to kidnapping threats.

Military spokesperson Col. Edgard Arevalo said the military had always employed security measures against threats from local and international terror groups.

"The AFP, in support of the PNP, is committed to ensuring the safety, security, and well-being of people residing in or sojourning in the Philippines- whether Filipinos or nationals of other countries. We have instituted measures and proactive steps to toward that direction," Arevalo said in a statement.

"Arrests have been made of people with links or possibly connected to local or international terrorist organizations. We have been successful so far in warding off security threats without announcing the meritorious results," he added.

The US Embassy in Manila on Sunday warned its citizens to be careful in going to Central Visayas, citing "unsubstantiated yet credible information" that terrorist groups may attempt to conduct abductions there.

Philippine National Police (PNP) chief Ronald "Bato" dela Rosa on Monday also confirmed the existence of terror threats, citing information from the regional director of the Police Regional Office in Region VIII.

Arevalo said the AFP respects the right and mandate of the US government or any other country to issue such advisory and protect its citizens.

"They have the obligation to protect their citizens by issuing advisories to their citizens that they 'should be mindful of the importance of taking preventative measures to ensure their safety and security while traveling and residing in the Philippines,'" he said.

"To further this objective, the AFP will actively collaborate with its American counterparts, and those from other countries when warranted, to address any security concerns," Arevalo added. *JE/rga*

[www.pna.gov.ph](http://www.pna.gov.ph)

## AFP still under 'white alert' for Holy Week

MANILA, April 10 (PNA) --- Military alert level in Metro Manila remains at "white" or the lowest possible as it is yet to detect any security threat for the Holy Week.

"(Alert levels) is still at 'white'. It is still normal at the National Capital Region. Area commanders have the say elsewhere in the country based on their existing security situation," Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) spokesperson Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla in an interview with the Philippine News Agency Monday.

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"White alert" is followed by "blue" which means that 50 percent of all available troops and vehicles must be available for instant deployment, and "red", the highest, means 100 percent of all personnel and assets must be ready for immediate deployment if needed. (PNA)

PRIAM F. NEPOMUCENO

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## AFP reaction to US Advisory to its citizens

Posted by Lui Claudio on April 10, 2017 at 2:16 PM

The AFP, in support of the PNP, is committed to ensuring the safety, security, and well-being of people residing in or sojourning in the Philippines- whether Filipinos or nationals of other countries.

"We have instituted measures and proactive steps to toward that direction. "Arrests have been made of people with links or possibly connected to local or international terrorist organizations.

"We have been successful so far in warding off security threats without announcing the meritorious results.

"We respect the right and mandate of the US Government- and that of any other countries' for that matter.

"They have the obligation to protect their citizens by issuing advisories to their citizens that they 'should be mindful of the importance of taking preventative measures to ensure their safety and security while traveling and residing in the Philippines.' "To further this objective, the AFP will actively collaborate with its American counterparts, and those from other countries when warranted, to address any security concerns."

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## AFP, PNP Create Joint Civil-Relations Committee

Posted by Lui Claudio on April 10, 2017 at 10:12 AM



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**CAMP AGUINALDO, Quezon City** – The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Philippine National Police (PNP) signed a Joint Letter Directive creating the Joint AFP-PNP Civil Relations Committee (JAPCRC) at the AFP General Headquarters, Friday, April 7.

~~“The JAPCRC shall coordinate and synchronize AFP Civil-Military Operations (CMO) and PNP Community Relations (PCR) to better implement our peace and development programs particularly in conflict-affected communities,” Colonel Edgard Arevalo, AFP Public Affairs Chief said.~~

Major General Melquiades L Feliciano, AFP Deputy Chief of Staff for CMO and Police Chief Superintendent Noel G Constantino, Acting Director for PCR signed the letter directive with key officials from the AFP and PNP in attendance.

The JAPCRC was patterned on the existing Joint AFP-PNP Intelligence Committee (JAPIC) and will support the proposed Revised National Joint Peace and Security Coordinating Center (JPSCC) Organization.

“This serves as a venue for us to strengthen mechanisms for the integration and collaboration of our efforts for joint civil relations operations; with the end view of realizing the Filipino’s aspirations for peace, security, stability, and progress,” PCSupt Constantino said.

The JAPCRC aims to ensure efficient, responsive and coordinated civil relations efforts in support of national security and development objectives. It will also recommend areas where the AFP or the PNP shall take the lead or support role in the conduct of joint civil relations activities.

Another function of the JAPCRC is to coordinate civil relations aspect of all AFP-PNP law enforcement, internal security, and counterterrorism efforts. The functions will be replicated at the area, regional, and provincial levels.

Among the activities to be conducted under the joint effort are strategic crisis communications; creation of joint quick response teams during emergencies; conduct of joint training activities, medical, dental, veterinary, and engineering civic action projects; and joint humanitarian civic assistance.

“Public support and good community relations are crucial to the successful performance of military and police functions. Both the AFP and the PNP acknowledge this and have long sought the support and assistance of the civilian populace in the performance of their different but interrelated mandates,” Colonel Arevalo said.

“It is imperative that the AFP and PNP work closely and support each other in addressing all threats to national peace and security and at the same time, it is necessary for both organizations to maintain their legitimacy among the people they serve,” General Eduardo Año, AFP Chief of Staff said

Through the creation of the JAPCRC, we hope to further establish a stronger and more active relationship with our people and stakeholders in building a better and peaceful nation,” General Año concludes.

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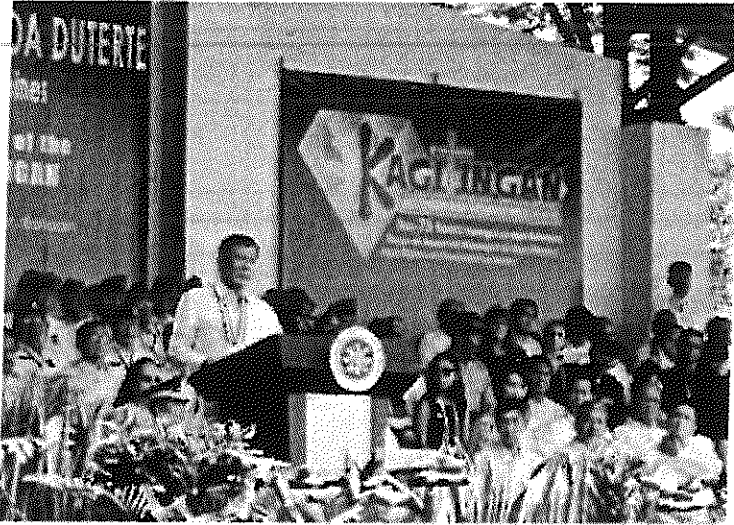


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## Duterte orders DBM to hasten pension release for veterans

Posted by Lui Claudio on April 10, 2017 at 10:18 AM



PILAR, BATAAN — President Rodrigo Roa Duterte promised that his administration will prioritize the entitlements of war veterans as he led the commemoration of the 75th Araw ng Kagitingan in Bataan.

"I assure our veterans [and] their families that we are prioritizing your entitlements," Duterte said in his speech at the Mt. Samat National Shrine on Sunday, April 9.

The Chief Executive instructed the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) and the Department of National Defense (DND) to expedite the release of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) retirees' pension credentials from 2008 to 2013 in the amount of PhP6, 421,000,000.

The government has settled the backlog in disability pensions and made the management of almost 200,000 pension accounts more efficient, according to the President.

In addition, veterans with conditions and their dependents can be assured of free healthcare at the Veterans Memorial Medical Center and 152 veterans-accredited hospitals, Duterte said, adding that he has instructed the said institutions to further improve their services and accessibility.

He likewise said the government has subsidized the education of more than 2,500 dependents of war veterans under the Iskolar ng Bayan program.

"These entitlements do not compare to the sacrifices that you have made. But we want you to know, our nation [and] our people are grateful to you for what you have done and we will do better," he said.

"No matter what we do, we can never do enough to repay you. But I would like for you to know that your government is doing much, much more," he added.

The President then urged the younger generation to recognize the sacrifices of war veterans and treat them with much respect and deep sense of gratitude.

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"We must never forget that we owe them a deep debt of gratitude. Utang po natin sa kanila ang ating buhay," he added.

Prior to the speech, the Chief Executive, Ambassador of Japan to the Philippines Kazuhide Ishikawa, and Charge d' Affaires of the United States Michael Klecheski offered a wreath at the Dambana ng Kagitingan in honor of the fallen soldiers of the Second World War.

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