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OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

# NEWS CLIPPINGS

15 April 2017

Saturday

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

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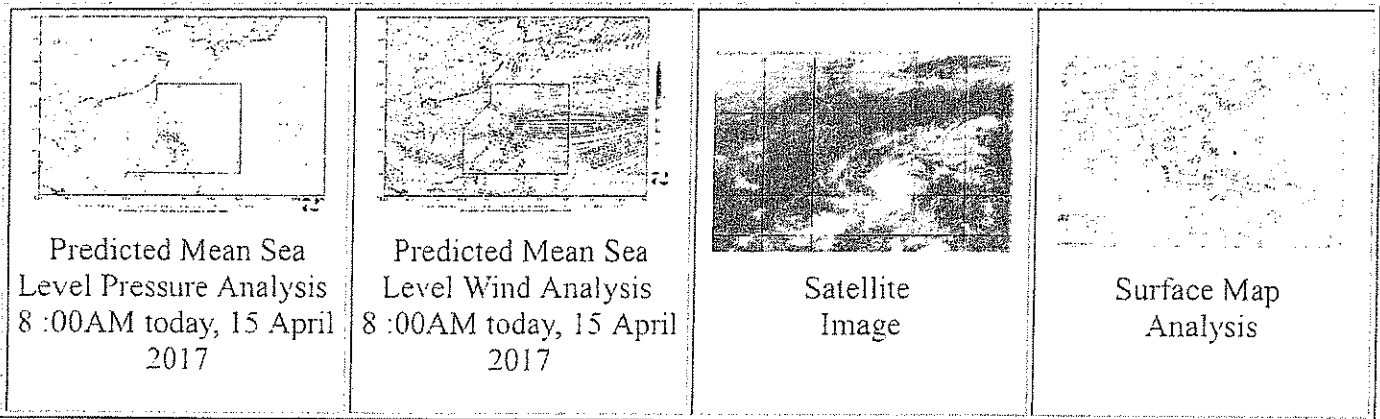


REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES  
**Department of Science and Technology**  
**Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and**  
**Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA)**  
 Science Garden, Agham Road, Diliman, Quezon City 1100

[Print](#)

Issued at: 5:00AM today, 15 April 2017

Synopsis: AT 4:00 AM TODAY, THE CENTER OF TROPICAL DEPRESSION "CRISING" WAS ESTIMATED BASED ON ALL AVAILABLE DATA AT 220 KM EAST OF GUIUAN, EASTERN SAMAR (10.9°N, 127.7°E) WITH MAXIMUM SUSTAINED WINDS OF 55 KPH NEAR THE CENTER AND GUSTINESS OF UP TO 68 KPH. IT IS FORECAST TO MOVE WEST NORTHWEST AT 22 KPH.



Forecast: Rains with Gusty winds is expected over the regions of Bicol and Eastern Visayas and the provinces of Aklan and Capiz. Cloudy skies with moderate to occasionally heavy rains and isolated thunderstorms which may trigger flashfloods and landslides will be experienced over the regions of Caraga and Northern Mindanao. Cloudy skies with light to moderate rains and isolated thunderstorms will prevail over CALABARZON, the province of Marinduque and the rest of Visayas and of Mindanao. Partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms will be experienced over Metro Manila and the rest of Luzon.

Moderate to strong winds blowing from the East to Southeast will prevail over Northern Luzon and Eastern section of Mindanao and coming from the East to Northeast over Southern Luzon and Visayas. The coastal waters along these areas will be moderate to rough. Elsewhere, winds will be light to moderate coming from the East to Northeast with slight to moderate seas.

[In Filipino](#)

[24-Hour Public Weather Forecast in PDF file](#)



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## Philippine Army has 13 new generals

Published April 14, 2017, 10:01 PM

By Francis T. Wakefield

Thirteen senior officers of the Philippine Army recently donned their new star ranks at a ceremony held at Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City.

Promoted to Major General was Arnel B. Dela Vega, commander of the Army's 6th Infantry Division.

Those promoted to the rank of Brigadier General were Felipe B. Bejar Jr., commander of the 51st Engineering Brigade; Perfecto M. Rimando Jr., commander of the 801st Infantry Brigade; Glorivine R. Dida, assistant deputy commander of the 2nd Infantry Division; Fernando T. Trinidad, commander of the 903rd Infantry Brigade; Francisco F. Mendoza Jr., commander of the 802nd Infantry Brigade; Felicisimo C. Budiongan, assistant deputy commander of the Mechanized Infantry Division;

Ramiro Manuel A. Rey, commander of the Special Forces Regimen (Airborne);

Arnulfo C. Matanguihan, commander of the 302nd Infantry Brigade; Nixon M. Fortes, commander of the 103rd Infantry Brigade; Milfredo M. Melegrito, commander of the 702nd Infantry Brigade; Jose C. Faustino Jr., commander of the 501st Infantry Brigade; and Manolo M. Samarita, commander of the 602nd Infantry Brigade.

Lt. Gen. Glorioso V. Miranda, Army chief, led the ceremony with the HPA-based officers, enlisted personnel and civilian employees as audience.

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## 2 NPAs dead, war materials taken in Agusan del Sur clash

From the Manila Bulletin (Apr 14): 2 NPAs dead, war materials taken in Agusan del Sur clash

**Two New People's Army (NPA) guerrillas were killed while a sniper rifle and other war materials were recovered following a clash between rebels and Army soldiers in Agusan del Sur on Maundy Thursday (April 13).**

Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) spokesman Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla, said that the encounter took place in Barangay Mahagsay, San Luis town, Agusan del Sur at 3:30 p.m. Thursday.



(Wikimedia / MANILA BULLETIN)

Padilla said troops responded to a report from concerned civilians that a group of fully armed NPA bandits were harassing their community. It said that the NPAs were forcibly taking foodstuffs and money from the residents.

After a 30-minute fierce firefight, the NPAs scampered out of the encounter area, leaving their two comrades, a sniper rifle, 50 rounds of M60 ammunition, war materiel, 34 sacks of rice, 10 backpacks which contained personal belongings, and subversive documents.

Colonel Cristobal N. Zaragoza, 402nd Infantry Brigade Commander, ordered the engaged troops to conduct pursuit operation to hunt down the bandits.

Major General Benjamin R. Madrigal Jr., the Commander of the 4th Infantry Division, lauded the swift execution of the operation and congratulated the troops for successfully hitting the NPA bandits who have been responsible for many atrocities in Agusan del Sur.

"Time and again, we have proven that no evil will triumph. While most of the Filipinos are solemnly reflecting during this Lenten season, the NPA's are busy doing extortion and other evil activities," Madrigal said.

"Fortunately, our relentless guardians of peace have displayed distinct acts of courage when they foiled the extortion and recruitment scheme of the NPA group in the peaceful lumad community of Barangay Mahagsay," he added.

The 402 Brigade is now coordinating with the concerned local officials for the identification of the two dead NPAs and to provide them decent burial.

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[www.news.mb.com](http://www.news.mb.com)

## **Soldiers seize BIFF gun factory, sustain 6 casualties in encounter**

From the Manila Bulletin (Apr 14): **Soldiers seize BIFF gun factory, sustain 6 casualties in encounter**

Army troops seized a suspected gun factory but suffered some casualties in a Wednesday (April 12) clash with the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) in Maguindanao.

Maj. Gen. Arnel dela Vega, commander of Army's 6th Infantry Division, said the clash happened at 7:30 a.m. in Sitio Pinaginuman, Barangay Elian, Datu Saudi Ampatuan, Maguindanao.



BIFF (MANILA BULLETIN FILE PHOTO)

"Our troops were to help the police in serving warrants of arrest against some individuals when they were fired at by the BIFF," dela Vega told reporters.

Six soldiers were slightly wounded in an ensuing 15-minute firefight with the BIFF guerillas, who reportedly fled after sensing reinforcement by other Army contingents.

After the clash, dela Vega said, the pursuing troops discovered a shanty, which the BIFF allegedly used in fabricating bombs and firearms.

Recovered from the shanty were metal molding equipment, fabricating materials, bullets, electrical wirings, and other gun making components, he said.

Abu Misri Mama, speaking for the BIFF in an interview by a radio station in Cotabato City, confirmed the Wednesday clash with soldiers, but denied that the shanty was a gun factory.

Capt. Arvin John Encinas, 6th ID spokesperson, said the BIFF group was led by brothers Saga and Monib Indong.

Lt. Col. Warlito Limet, 2nd Mechanized Infantry Battalion chief, said sporadic fighting continued up to Wednesday night when soldiers encountered another BIFF band led one Ustadz Boy Roman at barangay Elian, also in Ampatuan town.

The Army officials would not say if the BIFF sustained casualties.

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**In another incident Wednesday night, two men riding on a motorbike lobbed a hand grenade into a detachment of paramilitary troops at Barangay Magaslong in Datu Piang, Maguindanao.**

Nobody was hurt in the blast, which the Army and police believed was motivated by personal grudge involving a militiaman and the unidentified perpetrators.

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

### **3 soldiers hurt in Davao Oriental blast**

By: Frinston Lim - @inquirerdotnet

Philippine Daily Inquirer / 12:24 PM April 14, 2017

DAVAO CITY – Three soldiers were wounded when an improvised explosive device (IED) believed planted by communist rebels hit an army truck in Baganga town, Davao Oriental shortly before midnight on Wednesday, police on Thursday said.

The KM450 troop carrier loaded with soldiers from the army's 104th Division Reconnaissance Company was traveling along a road at Sitio (Sub-village) Jubason, Kinablangan village when an IED went off around 11:25 p.m., according to Senior Supt. Harry Espela, Davao Oriental police chief.

Quoting a military report, Espela said the blast hit and damaged the right portion of the rear tire.

The victims, who were only identified as Privates First Class Potong, Cabag and Perez suffered shrapnel wounds in the nape, cheek and thigh, respectively, but are now in stable condition, Espela said.

The military has launched a pursuit operation against the alleged NPA bombers, the police official added.

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[www.philstar.com](http://www.philstar.com)

## Killing of Abu Sayyaf commander a success and worry for Philippines

By Jim Gomez (Associated Press) | Updated April 14, 2017 - 2:19pm



Armed Forces chief of staff Gen. Eduardo Año, center, gestures beside Philippine Navy Vice Adm. Narciso Vingson, left, and Philippine National Police Deputy Director for Administration Ramon Apolinario during a press conference at Camp Aguinaldo, the military headquarters in Quezon city, north of Manila, Philippines, Wednesday, April 12, 2017. Philippine troops battling militants in a central province killed a key Abu Sayyaf commander who had been blamed for the beheadings of two Canadians and a German hostage and was apparently attempting another kidnapping mission, Año said Wednesday. **AP Photo/Aaron Favila**

MANILA, Philippines — The killing of Abu Sayyaf leader Moammar Askali in Bohol this week was a clear victory for the military, but it also drove home an unsettling reality: that the militants are venturing farther from their jungle hideouts to spread terror.

Armed Forces chief of staff Gen. Eduardo Año said that troops recovered and identified the remains of Askali at the scene of the battle in the coastal hinterlands of Bohol island. Five other Abu Sayyaf gunmen, three soldiers and a policeman also were killed in Tuesday's clashes.

"This is a major blow to the Abu Sayyaf," Año told The Associated Press on Wednesday. "If they have further plans to kidnap innocent people somewhere, they will now have to think twice."

"We are gaining important headway in our fight to degrade the ASG (Abu Sayyaf Group) in regard to our timeline," Año later told a news conference, referring to a military objective to considerably cripple the extremist group of more than 300 armed fighters within six months.

Former Abu Sayyaf militants identified Askali from a photo troops took of the young militant leader after his death, confirming that the gunmen who quietly cruised into Bohol on three motorboats under cover of darkness late Monday before clashing with troops belonged to the Islamic extremist group. Askali, who used the nom de guerre Abu Rami, had partly served as an Abu Sayyaf spokesman in recent years.

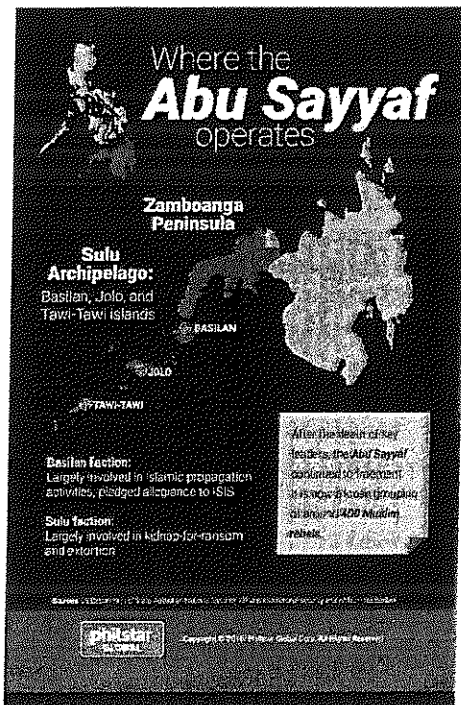
Askali was an emerging hard-line leader of Abu Sayyaf and had pledged allegiance to the Islamic State group. Abu Sayyaf was founded in 1989 as an offshoot of a decades-long rebellion by minority Muslims in the south of

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the predominantly Roman Catholic Philippines. He had received bomb-making training from Malaysian Zulkifli bin Hir, or Marwan, a top Southeast Asian militant leader who was killed in 2015, according to a police profile.

It was Abu Sayyaf's first known attempt to carry out ransom kidnappings deep in the central Philippine heartland, far from the group's jungle lairs in the southern provinces of Sulu and Basilan. Año said the troops were still hunting for at least five Abu Sayyaf gunmen, though fighting had eased Wednesday.



While the bold kidnapping attempt appears to have been foiled, the militants' success in penetrating the bustling region of beach resorts and other popular attractions could raise concerns among tourists and businessmen.

The US Embassy in Manila had earlier advised Americans to take precautions amid "unsubstantiated yet credible information" of possible kidnappings by terrorists in Bohol and other central areas.

The United States and the Philippines both list Abu Sayyaf as a terrorist organization for bombings, kidnappings for ransom and beheadings.

Bohol island lies about 640 kilometers southeast of Manila and is about an hour by boat from Cebu province, a trade and tourism center that has hosted some of the meetings of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the regional bloc the Philippines is leading this year.

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Año said military intelligence operatives had been trying to track the movements of Askali's group for several days after learning of their planned abductions.

The gunmen traveled on motorboats along a river into a village in Bohol's Inabanga town where government forces assaulted them, military officials said, adding that troops recovered four rifles, a homemade bomb and a sack load of bomb-making materials from the slain gunmen.

In past years, Abu Sayyaf militants have crossed the sea border with Malaysia on powerful speedboats and kidnapped scores of foreign tourists, reflecting their growing capability and desperation for money. In 2001, they sailed as far as western Palawan province, where they seized 20 people from a resort, including three Americans, one of whom was beheaded and another shot and killed during an army rescue.

Although they rely mainly on ransom kidnappings, Abu Sayyaf has displayed incredible resiliency and has survived through US-backed military offensives under six presidents.

President Rodrigo Duterte, who took office in June, has ordered troops to destroy the extremists and has threatened to declare martial law in the country's south if the threat posed by Abu Sayyaf and other extremist groups aligned with the Islamic State group gets out of control.

Although weakened by years of battle setbacks, the militants again hogged headlines last year when they separately beheaded two Canadians then decapitated a German hostage earlier this year after ransom deadlines lapsed. Askali was involved in those kidnappings and the captives' gruesome murders, Año said.

The militants are still holding at least 29 captives in Sulu's jungles.

A confidential government threat assessment report obtained by the AP last year said that the militants have started to target slow-moving tugboats crisscrossing the Sulu Sea and the busy sea border between the southern Philippines, Malaysia, and Indonesia in their effort to avoid constant military offensives in the southern provinces where they operate and raise desperately needed funds.

In the first half of last year, the militants raised P353 million (\$7 million) in payments from ransom kidnappings, according to the report.

Associated Press writer Teresa Cerrojano contributed to this report.

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## **AFP scours Bohol encounter site**

From ABS-CBN/ANC (Apr 14): **AFP scours Bohol encounter site**

**Military officials on Thursday scoured the fields of Barangay Napo in Inabanga, Bohol for bodies and remnants of the firefight that ensued between government forces and members of the bandit Abu Sayyaf group earlier this week.**

**High-powered firearms and pocket Qurans were among items recovered from the remains of the Abu Sayyaf who were killed in Sitio Ilaya.**

**Commanders of the AFP Central Command, 3rd Infantry Division, Naval Forces Central, and 302nd Brigade are expected to do more inspections at the encounter site.**

The Philippine National Police Scene of the Crime Operatives (SOCO) was instructed to process the area to aid investigations, Armed Forces chief of staff Eduardo Año earlier said in a press conference.

Eleven Abu Sayyaf members arrived in Bohol from Mindanao on Tuesday to carry out kidnapping plans during the Holy Week, it was thwarted by the government after residents reported sightings of the suspicious men.

**Five Abu Sayyaf men were killed in the firefight, and government forces are still "tracking" 6 others, Año said.**

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## **Año: 'Rami was present when Kantner was beheaded'**

Published April 14, 2017, 10:01 PM

By Francis T. Wakefield

Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) chief of staff General Eduardo Año said that Abu Sayyaf leader Abu Rami was a notorious criminal who was present when German national Juergen Gustav Kantner was beheaded by his companions in Sulu in February 26 of this year.

Año made the revelation at a press briefing at Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City, on Wednesday.

Año said he was involved in the kidnapping of the four victims in Samal Island, the kidnapping of Kantner and his wife who was killed in the yacht late last year, and also the kidnapping of other foreigners.

"So even during the negotiations and when it was announced that the German victim will be beheaded it was Abu Rami who made the announcement in public and in You Tube," Año said.

Año said they are "99 percent" sure that Muamar Askali was among the six terrorist killed during Tuesday's clash.

Año said the confirmation was made after the picture of the Abu Sayyaf leader matched existing file photos of him.

"First, we have sources inside who initially told us that Abu Rami was among those killed during the encounter," Año said.

"And secondly, we compared the picture of Abu Rami and the picture of the slain Abu Sayyaf there in Inabanga and they resembled almost, let's say, 99 percent," he said.

Año, at the same time, said some of those who confirmed that Rami was indeed killed in the encounter were former Abu Sayyaf members who are in the custody of the AFP.

"As far as we are concerned we checked with our sources, cross checked it with other information and we are one to say that it's the same person, Muamar Askali known as Abu Rami," he said.

Año, at the same time, said that things were back to normal in Sitio Ilaya, Barangay Napo, Inabanga, Bohol, following the encounter between government forces and members of the Abu Sayyaf on Tuesday.

He, however, urged citizens to be vigilant and report to authorities if they notice any suspicious persons roaming their area.

"It's important that (residents) share or report to us anything, particularly suspicious people in the area, so we can act on it," he said.

Meanwhile, the AFP mourned the death of three soldiers, including an Army junior officer, and a policeman following the clash against members of the Abu Sayyaf Group in Bohol on Tuesday.

Año praised the government forces who gave their lives to prevent the Abu Sayyaf from sowing terror and conducting kidnapping activities in the area.

Año identified the dead young officer as Army 2nd Lt. Estefito Saldua. Also killed were Sgt. John Dexter Duero, and Corporal Meljune Cajaban, all from the 47th Infantry Battalion of the Philippine Army. Also killed was Police Officer 2 (PO2) Rey Anthony Nazareno.

A soldier and policeman were also wounded in the encounter that took place at Sitio Ilaya, Barangay Napo, Inabanga, Bohol.

"We mourn the loss of our members of the uniformed services, including a very young officer. We also incurred one wounded who is now fortunately out of danger and on the road to recovery." Año told reporters. Año said on the side of the enemy, government forces accounted for six Abus killed in the incident.

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## **ONLINE NEWS**

**15 APRIL 2017**

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

### **CPP says US involved in Abu Sayyaf attack in Bohol**

By: Kristine Angeli Sabillo – @KSabilloINQ  
[INQUIRER.net](http://INQUIRER.net) / 05:11 PM April 14, 2017

The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) on Friday accused the United States of being behind the Abu Sayyaf attack in Bohol.

"The news stories regarding the supposed arrival and presence of members of the Abu Sayaff criminal bandit group in Bohol island smacks of a US yarn," the CPP said in a statement.

It questioned statements from the Philippine government and called the military operations "overkill."

"The Philippine Air Force dropped nine bombs in Barangays Napo, Calenti and Banahao in Inabangan forcing at least 1,200 local residents people to evacuate," it said.

"The AFP media office, known for spinning fake news stories, has produced a highly dubious story of no less than 60 fully armed men who traveled three hundred kilometers by boat from Sulu to Bohol, unhampered by the whole AFP establishment, then upstream to a place unknown to them with only a general plan to 'target tourists,'" the CPP said.

Earlier this week, members of the Abu Sayyaf arrived in Inabanga, Bohol.

Units of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) were later deployed in a bid to neutralize the bandit group. Residents evacuated amid the firefight.

Reports said airstrikes continued until midnight of April 11.

Abu Sayyaf leader Abu Rami was identified as one of those killed.

An Inquirer report said some of the people killed who were identified as bandits were later revealed to be residents.

The CPP said it was suspicious that the US issued a travel advisory days before the incident, warning its citizens against traveling to Cebu and Bohol because of a "terror threat."

"This story is a typical of the tall tales spun by the US Central Intelligence Agency and their conspirators within the Philippine defense and security establishment," it said.

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The CPP, which has been waging the longest communist insurgency in Asia, alleged that the Abu Sayyaf has "long been collaborating with the AFP and the US military."

It claimed that the Abu Sayaff was actually formed by "a group of armed men recruited by the US military to join the Taliban group which waged a CIA-hatched 'jihad' against the then Soviet-supported Afghanistan government."

It said the Abu Sayaff has been used by the US and the AFP to discredit groups in Mindanao that are calling for self-determination or autonomy.

"It has been used to carry out terrorist bombings and other dirty jobs for the CIA to justify its 'war on terror' and the presence of US foreign troops in the country," the CPP said. "Its bandit activities, mainly kidnapping-for-ransom, has been lucrative for the Abu Sayaff ringleaders and their AFP handlers."

The CPP claimed that the recent incursion of the Abu Sayyaf will be used by the US military to increase its presence in the Visayas. /atm

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[www.retiredanalyst.blogspot.com](http://www.retiredanalyst.blogspot.com)

## **Moro rebel leader's brother killed in clash**

From The Gulf Today (Apr 14): Moro rebel leader's brother killed in clash

A brother of a senior leader of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) was killed in a gunbattle with a team of policemen sent to arrest him on orders of the court in Maguindanao province in volatile Mindanao.

Senior Inspector Macille Manzanos, the spokesman of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) police, identified the victim as Mohaimen Abo, the younger brother of Ghazali Jaafar, the MILF vice chairman for political affairs.

Manzanos said Abo, also known as Commander Falcon and Ustadz Mohaimen, allegedly resisted when a police team was sent to arrest him in a village in the town of Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao on Tuesday afternoon.

"Abo resisted by firing at the law enforcers, triggering a brief firefight," Manzanos said, adding the team were armed with arrest warrants issued by two regional courts where he was facing non-bailable criminal charges like murder, frustrated murder, kidnap-for-ransom and kidnapping with homicide.

Police recovered a .45 caliber pistol allegedly used by Abo in the gunfight and also arrested two of his bodyguards, according to Manzanos.

But Jaafar denounced the killing, saying his brother was a bonafide member of the MILF's armed component.

He also accused the police of allegedly violating a truce agreement between the government and the MILF which went into effect in 1997 while their representatives were talking peace in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, the third party facilitator.

Under the agreement, Jaafar said MILF members could only be arrested in co-ordination with the ceasefire committee and the Al-Hoc Joint Action Group of the government and the rebel group.

Aside from being a senior MILF leader, President Rodrigo "Rody" Duterte also named Jaafar as the chairman of the Bangsamoro Transition Commission which has been expanded from 16 to 21 members.

The commission is mandated to draft a Bangsamoro Basic Law aimed at bringing just and lasting peace to resource-rich but troubled Southern Philippines.

The proposed law is to set up a new political entity that is to replace ARMM composed of the provinces of Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur, Sulu, Basilan and Tawi-Tawi as well as Marawi City.

<http://gulftoday.ae/portal/062bfe76-ad4b-4b60-b6f6-8947fd8a0b0b.aspx>

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## Bohol villagers evacuated anew amid Abu Sayyaf threat

From ABS-CBN (Apr 14): Bohol villagers evacuated anew amid Abu Sayyaf threat



*Villagers spend the night at a temporary shelter after alleged Abu Sayyaf members knocked on doors of residents to ask for food. Annie Perez. ABS-CBN Ne*

Residents of Inabanga town in Bohol province were evacuated again Thursday night amid the continuing threat of Abu Sayyaf bandits.

Many of the evacuees are from Barangay Lonoy Cainsican and Lonoy Roma, where a cadaver of an alleged Abu Sayyaf member was found.

Residents said they were asked again to evacuate for a possible military operation.

They received reports that Abu Sayyaf members who are still on the loose knocked on doors of residents to ask for food.

**Joselito Melloria**, a man said to be a resident of Barangay Napo and became an Abu Sayyaf recruit, was also seen with a back injury, according to residents.

Soldiers are still scouring the fields of Barangay Napo in Inabanga for bodies and remnants of the firefight that ensued between government forces and Abu Sayyaf members earlier this week.

High-powered firearms were among the items recovered from the remains of the Abu Sayyaf who were killed in Sitio Ilaya.

Eleven Abu Sayyaf members arrived in Bohol from Mindanao on Tuesday to carry out kidnapping plans during the Holy Week, but were thwarted after residents reported sightings of the suspicious men.

Five bandits were killed in the firefight, and government forces are still "tracking" 6 others.

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