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OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

NEWS CLIPPINGS

21 April 2017

Friday

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

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BALANCED NEWS • FEARLESS VIEWS

TODAY'S WEATHER FORECAST | APRIL 21, 2017 | FRIDAY

LOW PRESSURE AREA
IN THE NORTH NORTHEAST OF BASCO, BATANES
FRIDGE OF HIGH PRESSURE AREA
EXTENDING ACROSS LUZON AND VISAYAS
AFFECTING THE WESTERN
REGION OF MINDANAO
(As of 2:00 PM, Apr. 20, 2017)

SUNRISE	SUNSET
5:39 AM	6:11 PM
MOONRISE	MOONSET
1:28 AM	1:21 PM
NEW MOON	
APR 19 6:57 AM	APR 25 6:16 PM
LOW TIDE	HIGH TIDE
MANILA SOUTH HARBOR	
12:58 AM	5:03 PM
0.52 Meter	0.69 Meter

Partly cloudy skies
Partly cloudy, to at times cloudy with rain/showers only/Thunderstorms

CITY	APR 21	APR 22	CITY	APR 21	APR 22	CITY	APR 21	APR 22
METRO MANILA	☁️ 25-36°C	☁️ 25-36°C	TAGAYTAY	☁️ 22-31°C	☁️ 21-32°C	TACLOBAN	☁️ 25-31°C	☁️ 24-32°C
TUGUEGARAO	☁️ 25-36°C	☁️ 24-36°C	LEGAZPI	☁️ 26-32°C	☁️ 25-32°C	CAGAYAN DE ORO	☁️ 23-31°C	☁️ 24-32°C
LAOAG	☁️ 24-32°C	☁️ 24-32°C	PUERTO PRINCESA	☁️ 26-33°C	☁️ 26-32°C	METRO DAVAO	☁️ 26-34°C	☁️ 25-35°C
BAGUIO	☁️ 16-26°C	☁️ 16-25°C	ILOILO/BACOLOD	☁️ 26-32°C	☁️ 26-32°C	ZAMBOANGA	☁️ 24-33°C	☁️ 25-33°C
SBMA/CLARK	☁️ 25-35°C	☁️ 24-36°C	METRO CEBU	☁️ 25-32°C	☁️ 25-32°C			

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SAGOT KO, PADALA MO!

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CHINA DRIVES AWAY PINOYS FROM SPRATLYS

STORY BY DJ YAP

Lawmaker urges DFA to file a strong protest against China for firing warning shots to drive away Bataan fishermen from Union Bank in the heavily disputed Spratly archipelago **A2**

FROM A1

By DJ Yap
@deejayapINQ

A congressman on Thursday urged the government to file a strong diplomatic protest against China for firing warning shots to drive Filipino fishermen away from Union Bank, in the heavily disputed Spratly archipelago in the South China Sea.

Magdalo Rep. Gary Alejandro, who has filed an impeachment complaint against President Duterte for his defeatist stance in the South China Sea dispute, urged the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) to demand an explanation and an apology from China for the incident.

In a statement, Alejandro condemned "in the strongest terms" the "aggressive acts" of the Chinese Coast Guard, which reportedly fired warning shots to prevent the Filipinos from fishing in Union Bank.

Within PH economic zone

One of five regions in the Spratly archipelago, Union Bank is located 230 kilometers west of the Philippine coast, well within the country's 370-km exclusive economic zone (EEZ), Alejano said.

A large, drowned atoll in the center of the Spratly archipelago, Union Bank has about 20 reefs whose ownership is disputed by China, the Philippines and Vietnam.

China claims almost all of the South China Sea, parts of which are also claimed by Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Vietnam and Taiwan.

China occupies Union Bank, and has built artificial islands on three of the reefs there, all claimed by the Philippines—Mabini Reef (internationally known as Johnson South Reef), Gavin Reef (Gaven Reef) and McKennan Reef (Hughes Reef).

Television reports on Wednesday said the Chinese Coast Guard drove away Filipino fishermen from Marivelles town, Bataan province, from Union Bank on April 9.

The report quoted some of the fishermen as saying the Chinese Coast Guard fired six warning shots to force them to turn around.

Gen. Eduardo Año, chief of staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, on Thursday said the incident was under investigation.

He said the military had received sketchy reports of the incident, which happened near Gavin Reef.

Año said authorities were trying to locate the fishermen, believed to have returned to land, who had been encour-

aged to report to police or Coast Guard officials.

Alejano said the actions of the Chinese Coast Guard "constitute[d] a violation of our sovereignty and territorial integrity that we must all protect and defend."

The incident warrants a strong response from the Philippines, he said.

Alejano urged the DFA to "file a strong diplomatic protest against China and demand an explanation and [an] apology" for the incident.

"Once and for all, let us assert our rights by concrete actions ... Otherwise, other countries, particularly China, will continue to abuse and disrespect us as a country," he said.

Still verifying report

The DFA, however, had yet to verify the harassment report

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"We are currently verifying this report with our security agencies," DFA spokesperson Robespierre Bolivar said in a statement on Thursday

Bolivar gave assurance that once it had confirmed the report, the DFA would raise the matter with Chinese officials in a meeting next month

Last year, the Philippines won a judgment from the UN-backed Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague in a challenge to China's claim to nearly all of the South China Sea

The tribunal invalidated China's claim, declaring that it had no basis in international law and saying it had violated the Philippines' right to fish and explore for resources in the West Philippine Sea, waters within the country's EEZ in the South China Sea

China rejected the ruling, insisting it had "undisputed sovereignty" over the South China Sea but offering a settlement with its rivals through bilateral negotiations

Instead of asserting the Philippine victory, President Duterte, who was elected last year, set it aside, saying the country was no match for China's military might

A self-styled socialist, Mr. Duterte made friendly overtures to China and visited Beijing in October to begin repairing relations that had been frayed by the Philippine arbitral action

Alejano filed an impeachment complaint against Mr. Duterte last month, alleging the President betrayed public trust and violated the Constitution by refusing to challenge China on its incursions into Philippine territory in the South China Sea

—WITH REPORTS FROM JEANETTE I. ANDRADE AND REUTERS INQ

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US: Trump going to Phi

JAKARTA – Donald Trump will attend a series of key summits in Asia in November, his vice president said Thursday, adding it was a sign of America's "unwavering commitment" to the region.

The US president will go to the US-ASEAN and East Asia meetings in the Philippines, as well as a gathering of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) group in Vietnam, Vice President Mike Pence said here.

Former president Barack Obama, who had championed a "pivot to Asia," was a frequent visitor to the Asia-Pacific as he sought to refocus US foreign policy on the region to counter growing Chinese influence.

Trump's decision to attend the meetings could come as a surprise to some, given his fiery "America first" rhetoric and his decision to abandon a Pacific trade pact which was the economic plank of the pivot.

The president's attendance at the meetings was "a sign, I hope to all, of our firm and unwavering commitment to build on the strong foundations that we already share," Pence said during a visit to Indonesia.

The announcement came as Pence visited the Jakarta headquarters of the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and met representatives of the bloc.

The East Asia Summit groups 18 countries including ASEAN member-states, the US, Russia and China. APEC brings together 21 member-states from either side of the Pacific.

It was the latest signal on Pence's tour of Asia that the Trump administration is

Turn to Page 10

seeking to calm nerves after the president's often combative rhetoric unsettled allies.

During stops in South Korea and Japan, Pence played down protectionist declarations and reaffirmed US treaty commitments to the security of the two countries as tensions rise over North Korea's nuclear and missile programmes.

President Duterte has said he likes Trump, and compared himself to the US president, saying they are both "pragmatic"

This is in sharp contrast to his view of former US president Obama, whom he has cursed and told to "go to hell."

Pence will depart Indonesia today for Australia.

– AFP

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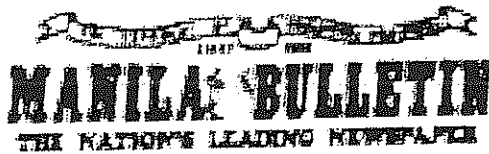
The
**Standard
TODAY**

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TURNOVER CEREMONY. Pfc. Samuel Garay (center left) and Sgt. Solaiman Calocop (center right) are guarded by members of New People's Army guerrillas, the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines, during a turnover ceremony to government officials and peace advocates Wednesday in Matanao, Davao del Sur. The group of the children was not identified by the cameraman. AFP

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NPA's bomb shop uncovered in Masbate

By **DANNY J. ESTACIO**

CAMP NAKAR, Lucena City — The military has uncovered a bomb workshop of the New People's Army (NPA) in Barangay San Antonio, Milagros, Masbate recently.

Lt. Col. Redentor E. Cabanizas, commander of the 2nd Infantry

Battalion of the army's 9th Infantry Division, said the bomb facility of the NPA was found last Saturday during clearing operations after a gun battle with the rebels in the area.

Cabanizas reported to the Southern Luzon Command (SOLCOM) that the facility has the capacity to produce hundreds of Improvised

Explosive Devices (IEDs), including landmines.

He said the NPA's use of landmines is a clear violation of the Ottawa Convention (Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention), prohibiting any group from using anti-personnel mines or bombs that cause death and injury of people.

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TODAY

Page. A1

Take no Sayyaf prisoners — Du30

By John Paolo Bencito

FOR President Rodrigo Duterte, the only good Abu Sayyaf is a dead one.

“Do not give me prisoners. I don’t need them,” he said Wednesday night. “If there’s a fight and they surrender, you refuse. You decline the offer of surrender.”

“Let’s continue fighting. Eventually they will run out of bullets. I have plenty of soldiers to spare,” he added as he divulged that the recent clash in Bohol was timed by the ASG to embarrass the government, which is hosting meetings of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

“The Abu Sayyaf [is there] because there is an Asean meeting now, and they went there maybe to kidnap [some people]... I told the Navy if you see them [on a boat], blast them off,” he said.

Earlier in the day, Duterte offered a P1-million bounty for each of the six Abu Sayyaf bandits who escaped the deadly encounter with security forces in Inabanga, Bohol, last week.

The President even called up on civilians to kill the jihadists, as he ordered an intensified crackdown on the terrorist group, even in their lairs in Sulu.

The President had earlier told security forces to finish off the Abu Sayyaf as another of the terrorist group’s sub-leaders, Alhabisi Misaya, was spotted in Negros Oriental, constituting a threat to nearby Apo Island, Sumilon Island and Siquijor.

Last week, Abu Sayyaf bandits planning a terrorist attack clashed with police and troops in nearby Inabanga, Bohol, leaving

Next naae

Take...

From A1

OFFICE OF THE AF

nine people dead, including the leader of the operation, Abu Rami, three soldiers and a policeman.

The Palace played down Duterte's call to civilians to kill terrorists, however.

"It's not a policy direction, okay. It's not a policy. There's no paper to support that. But what I'm saying is that this is his intention to raise security," Presidential Spokesman Ernesto Abella said Thursday.

In the same press briefing, Abella said that while the introduction of a national ID system "seems to be the general direction" that the country is headed to address security concerns, it is not an urgent concern for the President.

"[President Duterte] is open to the idea of a national ID system but at the moment it is not included in his legislative priority agenda," he said.

During a meeting with the Fili-

pino community in Saudi Arabia last week, Duterte said the idea of the Philippines having a national ID system was good.

Duterte was responding to a query from an overseas Filipino worker who was seeking the establishment of a national ID system similar to the one in Saudi Arabia.

"We're working on it because it's good."

Several proposals have been made in past Congresses to establish a national ID system, but these failed because of strong opposition by sectors who raised concerns about privacy.

The military welcomed Duterte's announcement of a P1-million cash reward for the remaining Abu Sayyaf bandits who survived the clash in Bohol.

"The offer of the President was a welcome move and we thank the Commander-in-Chief for this. Hopefully, this will encourage informants and other concerned citizens to help expedite the arrests of these bandits," Armed Forces of

the Philippines spokesman Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla said.

The military is still hunting the stragglers from the group led by ASG sub-leader Muanmar Askali alias Abu Rami, who were intercepted by military forces at Sitio Ilaya, Barangay Napo, Inabanga town last April 11.

In the clash, Askali and three other bandits were killed along with three soldiers and a police officer. Two elderly civilians were also reported killed in the fire-fight.

The AFP earlier said Askali's group was out to kidnap local and foreign tourists in the province as part of their fundraising efforts.

Manila Auxiliary Bishop Broderick Pabillo on Thursday advised Filipinos not to take Duterte's call to kill terrorists seriously because killing is not the solution to criminality.

Also on Thursday, Joint Task Force commander Brig. Gen. Cirilito Sobejana said aging ASG leader Radullan Sahiron was ready to surrender because of the

incessant military pressure.

"There is no definite date yet for his surrender but he has expressed willingness to surrender and as reported to us, he is weak, tired and weary due to their constant movement from one place to another as our focused military operation against them is unceasing due to our constant rotation of our forces," said Sobejana in Filipino.

Sobejana declined to identify the ASG chief's emissary but said the latter is a close and respected friend of the bandit chieftain.

He also declined to give additional details as efforts are still ongoing to ensure that Sahiron's surrender will materialize.

"We believe that once Radullan surfaces [and surrenders], his followers and other [leaders] will follow," the military official added.

One of the conditions set by the ASG leader is that the government will not turn him over to the US government.

Sahiron leads the ASG in Sulu after most of the founding leaders

of the group were killed.

The US Federal Bureau of Investigation is offering a \$1 million reward for his capture.

The total number of surrendered Abu Sayyaf members has reached 16, following the order of President Duterte to finish off the bandit group in the six-month period ending June 30.

Over 40 Abu Sayyaf members have been killed in the island provinces of Basilan, Sulu, and Tawi-Tawi since January.

Justice Department officials on Thursday said one of the two suspected Islamic State (ISIS) terrorists arrested here last month and scheduled for deportation was still in the country because of an "air-line ticket problem."

Justice Undersecretary Erickson Balmes confirmed that Syrian national Rahaf Zina remains in the country as the Bureau of Immigration is arranging her flight back home with the assistance of the Syrian Embassy.

With Vito Barcelo, PNA

21 April 2017



Pahina. 6

Sayyaf pasabugin na! -- PDU30

Dahil sa inihatid na ligalig ng bandidong grupong Abu Sayyaf sa bansa kung saan pinakahuli ang paglusob at pakikipagsagupa sa tropa ng gobyerno sa Bohol ay hayagang sinabi ng Pangulo na huwag nang hayaang mabuhay ang mga ito.

“And I told the Navy if you see them (ASG), the boat, blast them off,” bahagi ng talumpati ni Pangulong Duterte sa grand launch ng Cine Lokal sa SM Mall of Asia sa Pasay City kamakalawa ng gabi.

Nagbigay din ng direktiba si Pangulong Duterte sa tropa ng gobyernong

mapapaengkwestro sa rebeldeng grupo na huwag pasukin ang mga ito.

“If there’s a fight and they surrender, you refuse, you decline the offer of surrender. Let’s continue fighting eventually they will run out of bullets. I have plenty of soldiers to spare. I have a stock of. I have acquired. Meron na tayo.” pagbibida pa ng Pangulo.

Binigyang-diin ng Pangulo na hindi na dapat pang mahuli at ikulong ang mga Abu Sayyaf.

“Do not give me prisoners. I don’t need them,” giit pa ng Pangulo.

Naniniwala ang Pangulo na kaya sumalakay sa Bohol ang Abu Sayyaf ay dahil sa planong pagdukot.

PIM reward vs ASG welcome sa AFP

Sang-ayon ang pamunuan ng Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) sa naging alok na P1 million reward ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte sa sinumang makapagbibigay ng impormasyon at eksaktong lokasyon para sa pagtunion sa mga nalalabi pang bandidong Abu Sayyaf sa Bohol.

Ayon kay AFP spokesperson Brig/Gen Restituto Padilla, ‘welcome move’ ang nasabing

alok at kaniyang pinasalamatan ang Commander-in-Chief ukol dito.

Bilang na ang araw!

Tiniyak ng Department of National Defense na madarakip na ngayong linggo ang pito pang miyembro ng bandidong ASG na nasa Bohol.

Ang nasabing mga ASG ay ang mga natirang nakatakas sa naganap na engkuwentro kamakailan sa Inabanga, Bohol.

Ayon kay Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana, positibo itong araw na lamang ang bibilangin para bumagsak sa kamay ang mga bandido. (Betchai Julian/Aries Cano)

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Military: Abus in Bohol now in 'survival mode'

By Mario J. Mallari and Ted Tuvera

The remaining Abu Sayyaf terrorists in Bohol are now focused on "survival" instead of sowing terror and conducting kidnapping in the province where there is ongoing Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) meet.

At the same time, the military said that the P1-million bounty offered by President Duterte for each head will surely boost the ongoing manhunt operations.

"At this point, their goal is survival, to escape. There is no intention to kidnap or conduct bombing...they are just for self-preservation, to escape Bohol," said Capt. Jojo Mascareñas, civil military operations officer of the Army's 302nd Brigade.

Mascareñas stressed that the Abu Sayyaf men are still in the province.

"They are now finding ways to leave, escape Bohol, but we will make sure that they will not leave here without us capturing or neutralizing them," he said.

Mascareñas, however, warned that the hunted Abu Sayyaf men are still armed and "capable to cause harm to anybody."

Based on intelligence information, he said government troops are pursuing six to seven ASG members who were part of the group of terrorist sub-leader Muamar Askali, alias Abu Rami, which landed in Inabanga town on April 10.

The following day, combined police and military troops engaged the Abu Sayyaf Group in Barangay Napo, resulting in the killing of Askali and three other Abu Sayyaf men and a local couple, whose link to the ASG is still being determined.

On the other hand, four government troops, including a junior Army officer, were also killed in action.

Mascareñas also said that the P1-million bounty offered by President Duterte for each of the Abu Sayyaf bandits on the run in Bohol is a huge boost to the ongoing manhunt operations.

"Even ordinary people will now have the interest to locate the group," he said.

Duterte made the offer on Wednesday during his visit to Bohol where he was briefed on the security of the ongoing Asean meet there.

According to Mascareñas, government forces have not stopped operating against the Abu Sayyaf men.

"From day one up to now, we have not stopped. Our soldiers no longer come down from the mountains," Mascareñas said.

Meanwhile, presidential spokesman Ernesto Abella, at a Palace briefing yesterday, clarified that the Duterte's recent pitch to pay locals to track down suspected Abus "dead or alive" in Bohol is just an expression to emphasize the need for public vigilance against the terrorists.

"I think the statement was in a

sense... a dramatization of making sure that security is raised up in the area," Abella said.

"The President, he has a way of underlining what he wants to do... It's not a policy direction, okay. It's not a policy... There's no paper to support that," he added.

Abella noted that Duterte's message intends to boost the moral of active civilian defense against the Abu Sayyaf's sudden presence outside their common lairs in Basilan and Sulu.

"It doesn't mean to say that every house and you know will be having arms. I'm sure it simply - I'm assuming that part of the civil defense, in civil defense would be pushed up," he said.

Asked if how serious the President really is in arming civilians, the Palace official said: "That's something that will be left to him (Duterte)."

Meanwhile, sustained military operations could be taking its toll on Abu Sayyaf top leader Radullan Sahiron, who is supposedly sending surrender feelers to the government.

Brig. Gen. Cirilito Sobejana, commander of Joint Task Force Sulu, said that a close friend of Sahiron is relaying his supposed intent to surrender.

Sobejana described the emissary as a "well-respected, traditional leader" - apparently in Sulu.

"There are feelers. Accordingly, as reported to us he (Sahiron) is weak, tired and weary because they are moving from one place to

another," Sobejana said.

"On our part, we don't stop, we don't get tired. We rotate our forces just like in basketball - those who are tired are being replaced, so continuous," he added.

Sobejana said that he is directly in contact with the "emissary" but admitted that the matter is still a work in progress.

"We are working on it...on our part, we want to validate the sincerity of Radullan...we have to get other sources to corroborate the report," Sobejana said.

Sobejana said that Sahiron's surrender would solve 70 percent of the Abu Sayyaf problem in Sulu.

"Considering that he is a respected leader, his followers will follow suit...we can place 60 to 70 percent of the problem (would be) solved," Sobejana said.

Among the possible replacement of Sahiron would be Yasser Igasan, the religious leader of the ASG, and Hatib Sawadjaan, a sub-leader.

Asked if he thinks that Sahiron is seriously considering surrender, Sobejana said "because of their present condition, on the run. They run short of logistics...they are outside of their comfort zones, they no longer enjoy the support coming from the community, so there is truth."

The military official also cited Sahiron's age - who is in his 70s - reported.

Sahiron is wanted by the United States with \$1-million reward for his neutralization.

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Sayyaf sa Bohol, pagod at gutom na—AFP intel

Pagod at gutom na ang mga natitirang miyembro ng Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) na patuloy na tinutugis ng militar sa Bohol, bukod pa sa karamihan sa mga ito ay sugatan, ayon sa Armed Forces of the Philippines-Central Command (AFP-CentCom).

Ayon kay Lt. Col. Adolfo Escuelas, military intelligence battalion head ng CentCom, batay sa huling intelligence information ay nananatili sa Bohol ang mga bandido ngunit pawang pagod, gutom at sugatan ang mga ito.

Sinabi ni Escuelas na ang mga terorista, kabilang ang Boholano na si Joselito Milloria, alyas "Alih", ay wala

nang bitbit na backpack dahil hindi na kayang mga itong magtatakbo habang pasan ang kani-kanilang bag.

Naka-red alert pa rin ang Bohol kahapon, ang ikalawang araw ng mga pulong ng Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Summit sa Panglao Island, habang matindi rin ang ipinatutupad na seguridad sa Cebu.

Suportado naman ng AFP ang paghahayag ni Pangulong Duterte ng tig-P1 milyon patong sa ulo sa bawat isa sa mga bandidong natitira sa Bohol, sinabing makatutulong ito upang kaagad na maaresto ang mga ito.

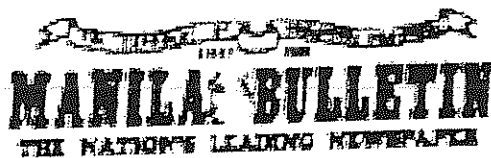
Sa kanyang pahayag sa

paglulunsad ng "Cine Lokal" festival sa Pasay City nitong Miyerkules, sinabi pa ni Pangulong Duterte na dapat tanggihan ng militar ang sumungang susukong bandido.

"Do not give me prisoners. I don't need them. If there's a fight and they surrender, you refuse, you decline the offer of surrender," sinabi ni Duterte sa militar. "Dead or alive man 'yan, may reward, pero mas gusto ko 'yung dead kasi 'yung alive, magpakain pa ako ma'am, magastos masyado."

**Mars Mosqueda, Jr.,
Fer Taboy,
at Genalyn Kabiling**

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ASG leader ready to surrender

Military: Sahiron tired of life on the run; Sayyaf men in Bohol tired, hungry

By PNA and MARS W. MOSQUEDA JR.

One of the hunters of Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) leader Radullan Sahiron has confirmed the will-

ingness of the bandit chief to surrender due to old age, fatigue, and incessant military pressure.

Brig Gen Cirilito Sobejana, commander of Joint Task Force ►17

ASG leader ready...

◀1

Sulu, disclosed this Wednesday. "There is no definite date yet for his surrender but he has expressed willingness to surrender and as reported to us, he is weak, tired and weary due to their constant movement from one place to another as our focused military operation against them is unceasing due to our constant rotation of our forces," said Sobejana in Filipino.

While Sahiron has already sent surrender feelers, Lt. Col. Adolfo Escuelas, military intelligence battalion head of the Central Command (Centcom) of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, disclosed yesterday that Abu Sayyaf members who are still at large in Bohol are now tired and very hungry, and most of them are injured.

Sobejana declined to identify the ASG chief's emissary but said the latter is a close and respected friend of the bandit chieftain.

He also declined to give additional details as efforts are still ongoing to ensure that Sahiron's surrender will materialize.

"We believe that once Radullan surfaces (and surrenders), his followers and other (leaders) will follow," the military official added.

Should this develop, 70 percent of the ASG problem will be solved, the Joint Task Force Sulu commander stressed.

One of the conditions set by the ASG leader is that the Philippine government will not turn him over to the US

government

Sahiron is the leading figurehead of the ASG in Sulu after most of the founding leaders of the group were killed. The US Federal Bureau of Investigation has set a \$1-million reward for the capture of Sahiron.

Lt. Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr., Western Mindanao Command (Westmincom) commander, first broke the news of Sahiron's plan to surrender last week.

Sobejana said that one of the conditions set by the government is that the ASG chief should also convince his followers to surrender also.

Since President Duterte ordered the military to finish off the bandit group in six-month period, the total number of Abu Sayyaf members who have surrendered has reached 16. The deadline will lapse on June 30. Over 40 Abu Sayyaf members have been killed

in the island provinces of Basilan, Sulu, and Tawi-Tawi since January.

Meanwhile, Escuelas said the eight militants in Bohol, including Boholano Joselito Milloria, alias Alih, no longer carry backpacks because they have become too weak from being constantly on the run. They were identified as Joselito Milloria, certain alias "Richard," alias "Ubayda," alias "Poy," alias "Dah," alias "Saad," and alias "Um Amra."

The military welcomed the ₱1-million reward offered by President Duterte for the arrest of eight Abu Sayyaf members.

Bohol remains on red alert as of Thursday, the second day of the meetings of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in Panglao Island.

Bohol Governor Edgar Chatto urged fishermen in the coastal towns of Bohol to join authorities in keep-

ing an eye on suspected Abu Sayyaf members.

"Our fishermen will be our watchdogs. They should be able to participate in the defense of the province," Chatto told reporters.

Sea assets of the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) are also patrolling Bohol to secure the summit meeting, its spokesman, Commander Armand Baliilo, said. He said the deployment of maritime patrol also aims to assist the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) in its efforts against members of local terrorist group Abu Sayyaf in Inabanga town.

In Cebu, security has been tightened in ports, with authorities strictly checking the baggage of leaving and arriving passengers. (With reports from Raymund F. Antonio and Francis T. Wakefield)

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ASG chief Sahiron willing to surrender

One of the hunters of Radullan Sahiron has confirmed the willingness of the Abu Sayyaf Group leader to surrender due to old age, fatigue, and incessant military pressure.

"There is no definite date yet for his surrender but he has expressed willingness to surrender and as reported to us, he is weak, tired, and weary due to their constant movement from one place to another as our focused military operation against them is unceasing due to our constant rotation of our forces," said Joint Task Force Sulu commander Brig. Gen. Cirilito Sobejana.

He declined to identify the ASG chief's emissary but said that he is a close and respected friend of Sahiron.

Sobejana said efforts are still ongoing to ensure that Sahiron's surrender will materialize.

"We believe that once Radullan surfaces (and surrenders), his followers and other (leaders) will follow," Sobejana added.

Should this develop, 70 percent of the ASG problem will be solved, the Joint Task Force Sulu commander said.

One of the conditions set by the ASG leader is that the Philippine government will not turn him over to the US government. Sahiron is the leading figurehead of the ASG in Sulu after most of the founding leaders of

the group were killed.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation has set a \$1 million reward for the capture of Sahiron.

Sobejana said that one of the conditions they set is that the ASG chief should also convince his followers to surrender.

Sixteen ASG members have surrendered following the order of President Duterte to finish off the bandit group in six months. The deadline will lapse on June 30.

Over 40 ASG members have been killed in Basilan, Sulu, and Tawi-Tawi since January.

Meanwhile, an alleged ASG member was killed while 34 suspected drug personalities were arrested in a joint law enforcement operation conducted by the Armed Forces of the Philippines and Philippine National Police in Patikul, Sulu Wednesday.

Sobejana identified the slain ASG member as Jah Adul, alias "Jah."

He said the operation was conducted by the Army 45th Infantry Battalion and the Sulu in Barangay Danag.

Sobejana said the suspects are said to be combined members of the ASG and drug personalities operating in the area.

He said of the 34 drug personalities captured in the joint law enforcement operation at about 4 a.m., 33 are male while the other is female. **(PNA and Francis T. Wakefield)**

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Abu Sayyaf being funded by drug money – military

By ROEL PAREÑO

ZAMBOANGA CITY – Aside from narco politics, the country may be suffering from narco terrorism.

Joint military and police forces killed a suspected Abu Sayyaf militant and arrested 34 others during an anti-illegal drug operation in a remote village in Patikul, Sulu.

Lt. Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr., commander of Western Mindanao Command (Westmincom), identified the slain Abu Sayyaf militant as Abu Jah.

A soldier was wounded during the firefight, he said.

Troops and policemen were able to arrest 34 people suspected to be involved in illegal drugs.

Galvez said they were tipped off by an informant of a place in Barangay Danag where the Abu Sayyaf were allegedly engaging in the illegal drug trade.

"This development can somehow prove that the Abu Sayyaf involved themselves in the drug trade to sustain their operations against the government and conduct terror attacks," Galvez said.

Galvez believes local drug syndicates are funding the Abu Sayyaf for protection for their illegal activities.

Troops from the Army's 45th In-

fantry Battalion and the provincial police launched the joint operation that led to the arrest of the 34 drug suspects.

The troops also seized an M16 rifle, three .45 pistols, five hand grenades and various drug paraphernalia at the site.

The 34 suspects were brought to the Sulu Provincial Police Office for questioning, officials said.

Meanwhile, a suspected Abu Sayyaf militant was arrested in Jolo town last Friday.

Samla Halil, a follower of Abu Sayyaf sub-leader Alden Bagade, was arrested by troops and policemen during a joint operation in Barangay Tulay.

President Duterte has ordered the Armed Forces of the Philippines to get seven Abu Sayyaf bandits "dead or alive."

He also dangled a P1-million bounty for every bandit captured or killed.

The Abu Sayyaf is still holding several foreigners hostages, and is reportedly plotting terrorist attacks on several tourist destinations. The plots prompted several foreign governments to issue travel advisories on the Philippines. – With Lino dela Cruz

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Abu bandit linked to drugs killed, 34 followers arrested

By **NONOY E. LACSON**

ZAMBOANGA CITY – An Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) bandit linked to a Sulu – based illegal drugs syndicate was killed while 34 of his cohorts were arrested when their group clashed with government forces in Barangay Danag, Patikul, Sulu at dawn Wednesday.

Armed Forces of the Philippines – Western Mindanao Command (AFP-WestMinCom) spokesman Capt. Jo-Ann Petinglay yesterday said the fierce gun battle broke out between the ASG bandits and government forces from the 45th Infantry Battalion.

A soldier was slightly wounded and immediately transported to the Kuta General Teodulfo Hospital in Busbus, Jolo, Sulu.

Petinglay said the ASG bandit, suspected to be involved in the illegal drugs trade in Sulu, resisted arrest, which set off the skirmish at around 4 a.m.

The body of the ASG bandit was retrieved by government forces in the area of engagement during clearing operations.

Likewise recovered from the site were an M16 rifle, three .45 caliber pistols, five hand grenades and drug-using items.

The 34 apprehended individuals, along with the recovered items were brought to the Sulu Provincial Police Office for investigation and documentation, she added.

"This development can somehow prove that the Abu Sayyaf bandits involve themselves in the drug trade

to sustain their operations against the government and the conduct of their terror attacks, and they may have been funded by drug syndicates who support their schemes," Lt. Gen. Carlito G. Galvez, Jr said.

"Rest assured that your armed forces will continue to conduct combat operations against the terrorist group and work with the local government and other law enforcement agencies in the fight against the proliferation of illegal drugs in this side of the country," AFP-WestMinCom said in a statement.

Meanwhile, another ASG bandit was arrested last Friday by elements of the Marine Special Operation Group (MARSOG) and the 52nd Special Action Force in Barangay Tulay, Jolo, Sulu at 2:45am.

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'All-out war' na naman daw konta Abu Sayyaf

MAKAILANG beses na nating naririnig sa pamunuan ng AFP, PNP at maging kay Pangulong Rody Duterte mismo ang salitang "all-out war" laban sa bandidong Abu Sayyaf.

Panahon palang ng kampanya sa presidential election ay naririnig na natin kay Duterte ang pag-wipe out sa bandidong grupo, nakatulong ito ng malaki para ihalal siyang 16 milyong Pinoy.

Nang makaupo si Duterte, sinabi niyang isang linggo lang ubos ang ASG.

Ganito rin ang ipinahayag noon ng makailang beses nina Defense Sec. Delfin Lorenzana at Chief PNP "Bato" Dela Rosa.

Ngunit simula Hulyo 1, 2016 hanggang ngayon, sampung buwan na si Duterte sa puwesto, ay nakailang beses nang namugot ng kaniyang mga bihag ang teroristang ASG. May hawak pa nga raw itong 27 bihag ngayon sa Mindanao.

Noong Abril 11, dumayo pa ang teroristang grupo sa Inabanga, Bohol. Nakipagbakbakan pa ang mga ito sa mga sundalo at pulis nang matunugan ang kaniyang pagpasok. Siyam ang patay, 4 rito ay identified members ng ASG na sina Moumar Askali alias Abu Rami, alias Abu Safyan, Edimar Isnain at isang hindi pa nakikilala. Isa naman sa mga batang opisyal ng Army, na produkto ng PMA Class 2005, ang nasawi.

Sa pagbisita ni Pangulong Duterte sa Bohol kamakalawa, nagalok siya ng P1-M pabuya sa sinumang makahuhuli patay o buhay sa mga bandido na dumayo sa lalawigan para lang umano mangidnap.

Again, nagpahayag si Bato ng all-out war vs Abu Sayyaf. Bilang na raw ang araw ng mga ito. Hehehe...

Sa totoo lang, hindi na natin mabilang ang ganitong pahayag ni Bato laban sa mga terorista. Nakabibingi na nga. Nakasasawa nang pakinggan.

Kahapon, may lumabas na balita na nakalabas na ng Bohol ang mga nakatakas na Abu Sayyaf, na pinamunuan ng tubong-Bohol na si Joselito Milloria. Nasa Palawan na raw ang mga ito, gamit ang dalawang speed boats. Paano kaya nila nalusutan ang mahigpit kuno na pagbabantay ng Coast Guard at Navy sa karagatan ng Bohol?

Kung talagang nakalusot sa matinding operasyon ng militar at pulis sa Bohol ang mga bandido at nasa Palawan na nga ang mga ito ngayon, delikadong makapangidnap pa ang mga ito at madala nila sa kaniyang baluarte sa Mindanao. Sus Ginoo!!! Maghanda na kayo dyan sa Palawan.

Patunay lang ba ito na mas mautak at maliksi ang mga bandido kesa government forces? Tsk tsk tsk...

Baka matapos lang ni Duterte ang kanyang termino ay nandyan parin ang demonyong grupo. Yawa!

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AFP watching other sites for Sanyaf presence

By JAIME LAUDE

Aside from Bohol, security forces are now on the lookout for the possible presence of Abu Sanyaf bandits in other areas of Central and Western Visayas.

Just like the group of slain Abu Sanyaf leader Abu Rami who were spotted in Bohol, security officials are monitoring Alhabsi Misaya and his men who have reportedly left their lair in Sulu.

Zamboanga City-based Western Mindanao Command (Wesmincom) commander Lt. Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr., however, declined to give details but admitted Misaya and his men have fled Sulu.

“Our security forces are not taking any chances as Misaya and his men could just be out there waiting for an opportune time to avenge the death of Abu Rami in Bohol by taking hostages,” an official said.

Misaya’s group has been tagged behind the series of high profile kidnapping in the Sulu Sea to as far south as Sabah in Malaysia.

Another source said Misaya and his men could have been lying low following the killing of Abu Rami.

Earlier military reports claimed the Abu Sanyaf may be targeting tourists and foreign mining personnel for kidnapping. This prompted the previous leadership of the Palawan-based Western Command (Wescom) to further bolster its coastal security defenses.

On top of this, air assets of the command were always on standby for possible pursuit operations on the high seas against the fleeing bandits, while marine detachments

were also set up on islets that used to serve as rest and refueling points of the bandits.

Security officials led by Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana and Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) chief Gen. Eduardo Año have assured the public about the security and safety of Bohol following the killing of Abu Rami last week.

The security situation in Bohol has since returned to normal following last week's clash, with soldiers and policemen now running after the Abu Sayyaf "stragglers."

To hasten the arrest of the remaining six to seven bandits, President Duterte has offered a P1-million cash bounty for each for the bandits.

While his order to security forces was to produce the terrorists dead or alive, Duterte said he would prefer to see them dead.

Lorenzana, however, said he wanted the remaining Abu Sayyaf remnants to be captured alive for valuable information on their other plots.

Bohol Gov. Edgar Chatto said the bounty would boost efforts to flush out the remaining terrorists on the run.

"That will facilitate the arrest or surrender of the remaining terrorists who are now still in Inabangal and in hiding, trying to evade security forces hunting them," Año added.

With the P1-million reward, Año said the bandits now in hiding should not only be wary of the sniffing dogs that the military has deployed to track them down, but also local residents who will be encouraged to provide information for their arrest.

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Pahina. 2

Pinoy fishermen pinalayas ng Chinese Coast Guard sa West PH Sea

Nakaranas umano nang pangha-harass ang mga mangingisdang Pinoy sa West Philippine Sea matapos na paputukan ng "warning shot" ng Chinese Coast Guard.

Sinabi ni AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Eduardo Año na nakarating na sa kaniya ang balita sa nasabing harassment at kasalukuyan na niya itong ipinabe-beripika kay AFP Western Command (AFP-Wescom) Commander Lt. Gen. Raul del Rosario.

Base sa report, nagreklamo ang isang grupo ng mga mangingisda mula sa Mariveles, Bataan matapos umano silang palibutan ng speedboat ng Chinese Coast Guard malapit sa Union Reef o Union Bank sa West Philippine Sea saka paputukan ng warning shots para pinalayasin sa pinagtatalunang teritoryo.

Ang insidente ay nangyari umano may ilang araw na ang nakakalipas pero kahapon lamang tumatang matapos

na makauwi sa kanilang bahay ang mga hinarass na mangingisda.

Nabatid na nagsasagawa ng maritime construction site sa nasabing lugar ang Chinese Coast Guard kaya bantay sarado ito.

Maraming beses na ring dumanas ng pambu-bully ang mga mangingisdang Pinoy na pinaulanan ng water cannon ng Chinese Coast Guard sa Panatag Shoal (Scarborough Shoal) sa West Philippine Sea. **Joy Cantos**

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Troops seize Sayyaf camp in Basilan

By ROEL PAREÑO

ZAMBOANGA CITY – Government troops seized an Abu Sayyaf camp in a remote village in Sumisip town, Basilan on Sunday.

At the same time, troops recovered assorted war materials and battle dress attires in another Abu Sayyaf camp in the nearby town of Maluso, Western Mindanao Command chief Lt. Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr said.

Galvez said troops from the Army's 68th Infantry Battalion under Joint Task Force Basilan (JTFB) chief Col. Juvymax Uy discovered the Abu Sayyaf camp at Barangay Cabcaban in Sumisip town.

Galvez said the troops reported the camp was hastily abandoned by the rebels, who were apparently alerted by troop movements in the area.

Government troops initially encountered the militants in same area last April 11 that left eight militiamen killed and 11 others, including six soldiers and five militiamen, wounded.

The soldiers described the camp as having three guard posts and 38 bunkers.

Army rangers and militiamen also recovered a 7.2mm bullet-served single shot rifle, a shotgun, assorted ammunition, radio transceiver, camouflage uniforms at a suspected Abu Sayyaf camp in Barangay Abong Abong, Maluso town.

Galvez said the troops also stumbled upon an arms cache while tracking down the militants along the mangrove area of Langas Island off Maluso town last Tuesday.

He said the troops seized an M16 rifle with a magazine and an M1 Garand with an ammunition clip and a bandolier, all wrapped in a sack.

Villagers told the military that they earlier noticed two unidentified men dragging the sack.

One of the men had his arm wrapped with a bandage.

The military suspected the two suspects were among the followers of Abu Sayyaf group sub-leader Furuji Indama who was wounded during a firefight with the troops Tuesday last week at Barangay Cabcaban.

Galvez said the troops are under orders to continue pursuit operations and seize all the known hideouts of the Abu Sayyaf in the province.

On the other hand, a ranking Abu Sayyaf militant surrendered in Basilan on Wednesday.

Officials said Nasser Sagap alias Sinbad is a follower of Indama in Basilan.

Task Force Basilan commander Uy said Sagap turned himself in and surrendered his Garand rifle before the troops in Barangay Bohe Pahu, Ungkaya Pukan town.

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AFP verifying reports PHL fishers harassed off Union Bank

From the Philippine News Agency (Apr 20): **AFP verifying reports PHL fishers harassed off Union Bank**

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) is verifying reports that alleged members of the Chinese coast guard have harassed Filipino fishermen fishing off Union Bank last week.

"We are still validating that story. We also heard that but it's hard to give an official statement without getting first the facts and verifying the alleged incident. In coordination with other agencies particularly the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), we will validate it and thereafter take the proper actions," said AFP chief-of-staff Gen. Eduardo Año on Thursday.

Año said Union Bank, a submerged feature, is near Gaven Reef, a feature holding some Chinese structures.

Reports said that the incident took place somewhere off Mariveles, Bataan.

The harassed fishermen came from La Union.

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Troops find abandoned Abu Sayyaf camp in Basilan



Troops found the abandoned camp while on a tracking operation against the bandit group.

ZAMBOANGA CITY, Philippines — Government troops seized an Abu Sayyaf camp during operations Sunday in the hinterland of Sumisip town in Basilan, a military official said Thursday.

The ground forces also recovered assorted war materiel and camouflage attire belonging to the Abu Sayyaf group in the nearby town of Maluso on the same day, said Western Mindanao Command (Westmincom) chief Lt. Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr.

He said the elements of the 68th Infantry Battalion under Joint Task Force Basilan chief Col. Juvymax Uy were on a tracking operation when they discovered the Abu Sayyaf lair at Barangay Cabcaban, Sumisip town Sunday afternoon.

Galvez said the troops reported the camp was hastily abandoned by the Abu Sayyaf militants who detected the approaching soldiers.

The government troops initially encountered the Abu Sayyaf in the same area on April 11. Eight militia members were killed and 11 others — six soldiers and five militiamen — were wounded in the clash.

The soldiers described the abandoned camp as having three guard posts and 38 bunkers.

Separate forces, composed of Army Rangers and militia also recovered a single-shot rifle, a shotgun, assorted ammunition, a radio transceiver, and battle dress attire (BDA) uniforms belonging to the Abu Sayyaf at uphill Barangay Abong Abong, Maluso town.

Galvez said soldiers from the 15th Special Forces Company also stumbled on an arms cache while tracking down the Abu Sayyaf militants along the mangrove area of Langas Island off Maluso town last Tuesday.

They found an M16 rifle with a magazine, and an M1 Garand with an ammunition clip and a bandolier wrapped in a sack. Locals told the troops they noticed two people bringing the sack with the suspicious items.

According to Uy, the civilians also said one of the two had his arm wrapped with a bandage.

The military suspects that the two suspects were among the followers of Abu Sayyaf group sub-leader Furuji Indama, who was himself wounded in the encounter Tuesday last week at Barangay Cabcaban.

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Upwardly mobile Philippine terror group

The Abu Sayaff Group bids to extend its kidnapping-for-ransom racket into new central region tourist areas outside of its usual southern stronghold

Abu Sayyaf Group, the Philippines most lethal and disruptive terror organization, is expanding its reach across the island nation. The expansion comes in apparent response to President Rodrigo Duterte's military drive to eliminate the group entirely within this year.

It's an increasingly important government imperative since ASG openly affiliated with Islamic State, raising the prospect the Islamist group could shelter and support fighters fleeing or returning from the battlefields of Iraq and Syria. ASG finances itself through kidnapping-for-ransom activities that have often targeted Western nationals.

Duterte has sought public support for both his peace initiatives and counterinsurgency campaigns to prevent ISIS from joining forces with local Islamist groups, many of which have fought against Manila for decades. Dozens of small armed groups have recently declared their allegiance to ISIS' global jihadist cause.

Earlier this month, the Philippine defense establishment was caught off-guard when for the first time in ASG's history it's fighters launched a week-long surprise attack in the central Philippines – an upward migration to a traditionally peaceful region outside of the group's volatile and wild southernmost stronghold in the Sulu peninsula.

Security officials reported that around 11 heavily armed ASG members sailed from Sulu and landed in the early dawn on the central island of Bohol in apparent search for possible kidnapping targets. The central island region, including Bohol and Cebu provinces, is home to several sites and destinations popular with foreign tourists.

A week before ASG's attack, the US embassy in Manila had warned its nationals to in the region be vigilant when traveling in the central region due to heightened risks of possible ASG kidnapping activities in Cebu and Bohol. The Australian foreign ministry also recently released a travel advisory on the rising risks to its nationals in the Philippines.

Renowned for its kidnapping-for-ransom activities, and more recently piracy in the Sulu Sea, ASG's head-on attack with government forces was staged well outside its traditional areas of operation. The gun battle reportedly killed six ASG fighters and four government soldiers near the once peaceful village of Napo Bohol's Inabanga town.

The fighting displaced around 3,200 villagers who fled their home to avoid being caught in the crossfire. Many have stayed in evacuation centers due to fears of possible indiscriminate ASG reprisals.

Those fears seem justified. ASG sub-leader Muammar Askali, also known as Abu Rami, the son of a police officer who was previously a teacher in Sulu, was shot and killed in the firefight. Rami was believed to be responsible for beheading kidnapped Western tourists whose relatives failed or refused to pay ransom money for their release.

He is held responsible for the kidnapping of two Canadians, a Norwegian and a Filipina on Davao City's Samal Island in September 2015. Rami's group later beheaded Canadians Robert Hall and John Ridsdel when ransom negotiations failed. Norwegian Kjartan Serkingstad and Filipina Maritess Flor were freed after a huge ransom was paid to Rami's group.

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While Rami's death has been trumpeted by security forces as a win in the fight against terrorism, some Sulu residents will view his demise with a measure of remorse. The Philippine Inquirer, a local English newspaper, quoted a local source saying that Rami had used some of his ransom money to feed impoverished communities where he resided.

Rami was reportedly being groomed to eventually take-over ASG's leadership, which could explain his daring maneuver to expand the group's franchise to Bohol.

Government sources say that Rami's group had collected at least US\$12 million since it accelerated and expanded its kidnap-for-ransom activities beginning in 2012. Those funds have reportedly afforded ASG's leaders and top operatives increasingly luxurious lifestyles in one of the sprawling country's most impoverished regions.

Philippine defense officials claim to have killed 116 'terrorists' in the country's restive southern regions since Duterte handed down last year a June 2017 deadline to eradicate ASG. His government has deployed 10,000 battle-tested soldiers to Basilan and Sulu in pursuit of that still elusive goal.

Indeed, ASG's apparent recent expansion to the central Philippines has sent a dangerously different message that, rather than being contained, the terror group is instead expanding its kidnapping-for-ransom franchise into new regions popular with Western tourists and retirees.

Last week, 11 alleged ASG members surrendered to security officials in the southernmost province of Tawi-Tawi after government forces overran their remote secret hideouts. Tawi-Tawi's southernmost town is situated just 30 kilometers from Malaysia in a maritime region that has recently become a globally recognized piracy hotspot.

But while government forces claim certain successes in known ASG-infested areas, it's increasingly unclear where the shadowy terror group might strike next.

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2 suspected MNLF members found with guns

TWO suspected members of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) were taken into custody by the police after they were caught at a checkpoint for bringing firearms without supporting documents.

Around 3:55 p.m. Tuesday, April 17, Alexander Mercado, 52, and Mc Arthur Veloso, 35, both residents of Barangay Katubao, Kiamba, Sarangani Province, were taken to Toril Police Station after they were caught by the police and Task Force (TF) Davao.

It was reported that the two were about to enter Davao City on a blue Ford Nissan Pick-up with plate number LCR-823 from Sarangani.

The two were in possession of two calibre .45 pistols loaded with a magazine containing six bullets.

Also recovered were 65 live ammunition without firearm licenses and permit to carry.

The two are facing charges for violating Republic Act 10591 or Comprehensive Firearms and Ammunition Regulation Act at the court.

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