

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



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NEWS CLIPPINGS

29 April 2017

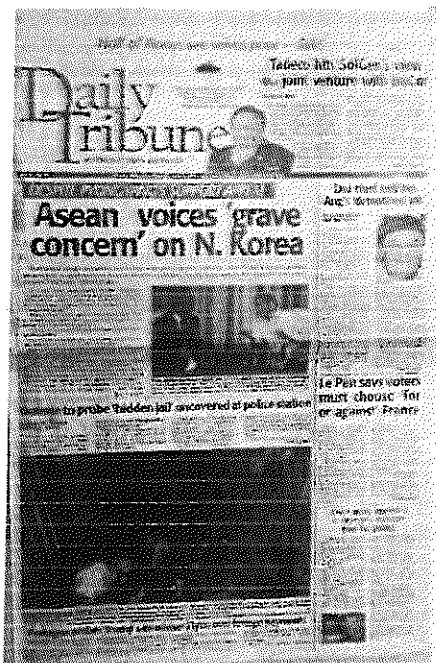
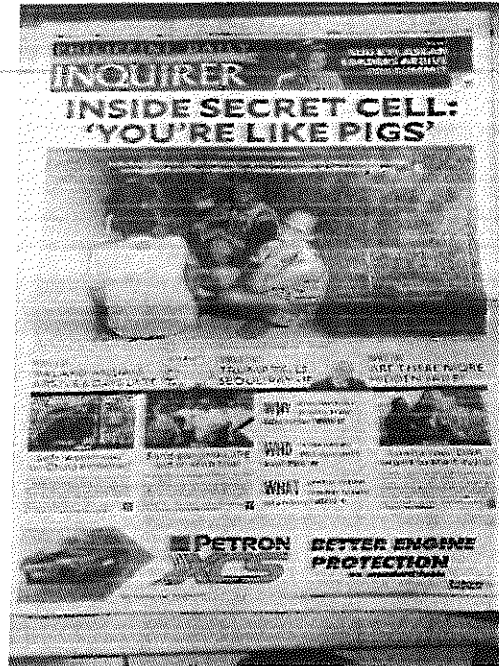
Saturday

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

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

NEWS HEADLINES

29 APRIL 2017



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

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YOH

BALANCED NEWS • FEARLESS VIEWS

TODAY'S WEATHER FORECAST | APRIL 23, 2017 | SATURDAY

TAIL-END OF A COLD FRONT AFFECTING NORTHERN LUZON (As of 5:00 PM, Apr. 28, 2017)

PHILIPPINE AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY (PAR)

SUNRISE	SUNSET
5:35 AM	6:13 PM
MOONRISE	MOONSET
8:03 AM	9:12 PM
NEW MOON	FIRST QUARTER
APR 26 8:16 AM	MAY 5 10:47 AM
LOW TIDE	HIGH TIDE
MANILA SOUTH HARBOR	MANILA SOUTH HARBOR
7:22 PM	11:25 AM
-0.19 Meter	1.12 Meter

Partly cloudy to at times cloudy with rainshowers and/or thundersstorms
Cloudy else with rainshowers and/or thundersstorms

	APR 23	APR 24	APR 25	APR 26	APR 27	APR 28	APR 29	MAY 1
METRO MANILA	25-35°C	26-35°C	22-32°C	22-33°C	25-32°C	25-33°C		
TUGUEGARAO	24-34°C	24-35°C	24-33°C	25-33°C	25-33°C	24-32°C		
LAOAG	24-33°C	25-33°C	25-33°C	26-33°C	26-33°C	26-33°C		
BAGUIO	16-24°C	17-25°C	26-33°C	26-33°C	24-34°C	24-33°C		
SBMA/CLARK	25-34°C	26-34°C	26-32°C	25-33°C				

SAGOT KO, PADALA MO!

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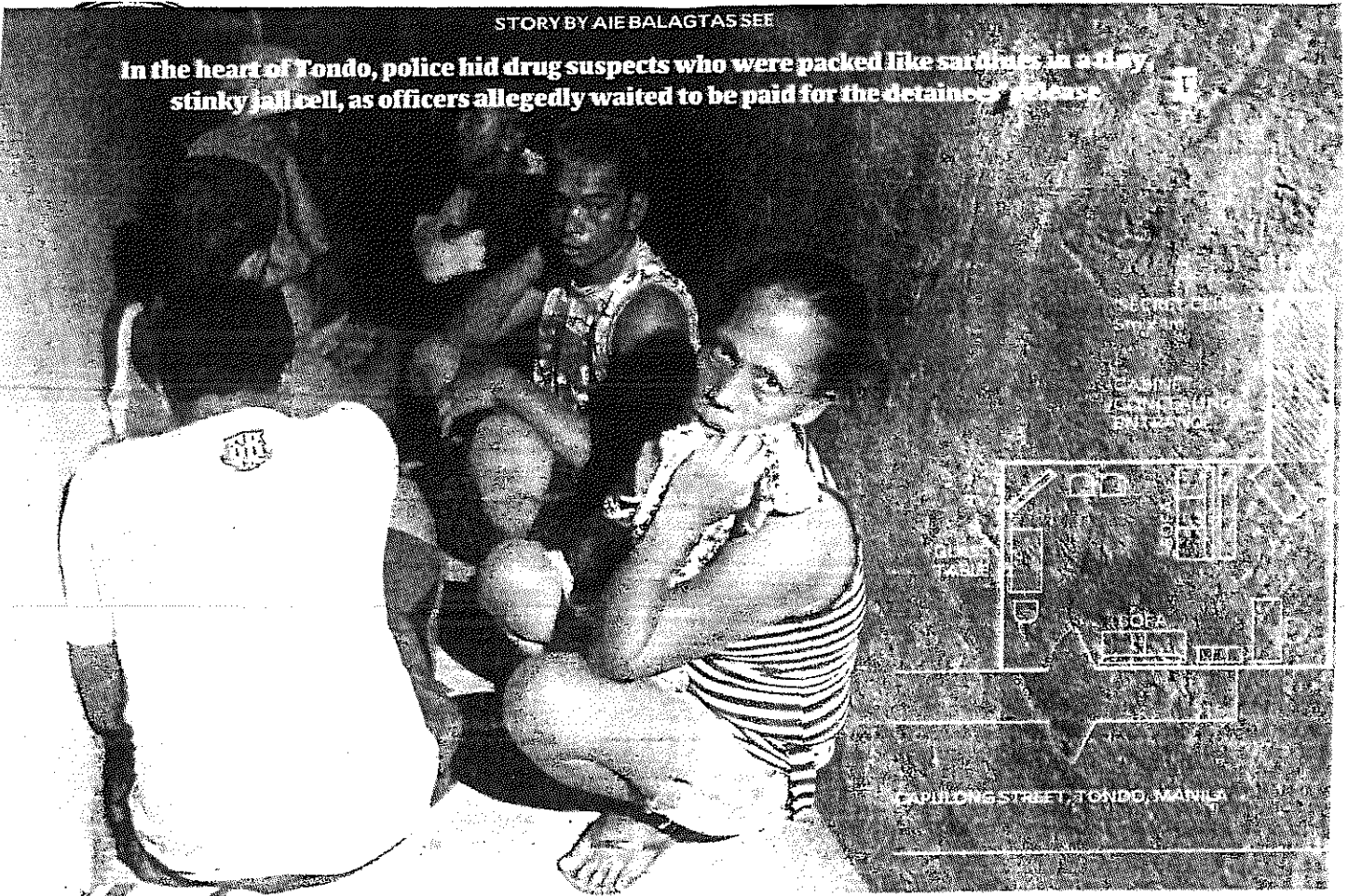
PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER

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Inside secret cell: 'You're like pigs'

STORY BY AIEBALAGTASSEE

In the heart of Tondo, police hid drug suspects who were packed like sardines in a tiny, stinky jail cell, as officers allegedly waited to be paid for the detainees' release.



INTO THE LIGHT A woman detained in the secret jail of a Tondo police station squats with other drug suspects on the floor of a narrow cell found by a team from the Commission on Human Rights

behind a wooden shelf (see sketch, inset). About a dozen men and women were found huddled inside on Thursday night. —RAFFY LERMA

FROM A1

By Aie Balagtas See
@ABalagtasSeeINQ

It's hard to keep things private inside the secret jail cell in the heart of Tondo, where detainees urinate, defecate, eat, bathe, and sleep in a space that's roughly 1 meter by 5 meters.

The Commission on Human Rights (CHR) called the lockup a holding area for suspects who had complained that they were being used by drug enforcement officers as milking cows. Supt. Robert Domingo, the station chief, denied the allegations.

Inside the cramped, dark passageway where Raxabago police station hid and packed drug suspects like sardines, Beatrice (not her real name) saw three different penises in the four days she was kept there.

Beatrice admitted she was a drug pusher. She started selling drugs to fund her schooling. Three of her family members sold "shabu" (methamphetamine hydrochloride) too.

Raxabago officers arrested her last month. She said at that time she committed no violations. She just happened to be on their list of targets. They picked her up and brought her to their office on Capulong Street.

The cops did not bother to get her full name and there was

no record of her in the blotter. They just ordered her to come with them to the station for violating the Dangerous Drugs Act.

From the office's front door, the officers told her to stand in front of a brown wooden bookshelf on one corner of the drug enforcement unit (DEU) office.

She did not understand why she had to stand there until an officer removed a hidden latch in one of the shelf's racks. Then, the bookshelf swung open like a door and led to the dungeon-like secret cell.

"There were about 20 people there at that time. I couldn't believe it. There were men and women. Some were sitting, some were standing. You can't lie down because you won't fit," she said.

The secret cell was kept and maintained by the DEU on Capulong Street. The office looked like a typical police office. There were also couches, a computer, a TV. Up on the walls were the prints of the mission and vision of the Philippine National Police, neatly framed.

On another wall was a copy of the Miranda Doctrine, which protects and ensures the rights of an arrested suspect. She never heard the officers read it to her. Close to it were portraits of the Virgin Mary and a figure of Michael the Archangel, leader of God's army of angels.

Another wall separates the

religious figures and the bookshelf filled with documents, also known as the secret door.

"Once inside, you can hardly move and breathe. There's no window. There's no light. The urinals were not working," Beatrice said. "If someone stands, you have to sit. If someone sits, you have to stand. There's no space. Nothing."

The male and female detainees were separated by metal bars. Technically, there were two cells behind the bookshelf. Female detainees stay close to the shelf, while the male detainees are cramped close to a garbage dump filled with plastic bottles, among others. Another metal divider separates the trash heap from the male inmates.

It's in that garbage dump that these detainees dispose of their feces and urine. So technically, they sleep beside their excrement.

"When someone defecates, sometimes the officer outside would shout at us asking who had relieved himself. 'You're like pigs! We can smell it outside, what more inside,'" she said.

When men piss or take a bath, they do so in full view of everyone. But the women use a green towel-like cloth as makeshift bath curtain as cover.

Fellow female inmates hold the towel up and face the men to ensure no one's peeping.

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Thursday Boisner, the CHR National Capital Region chief, said four former detainees went to their office to complain against the police.

Domingo, the station commander, denied any wrongdoing and insisted the suspects were kept there because he needed to "maximize" the use of available space.

He initially denied there was a secret cell. But Boisner relentlessly searched for it until he saw the odd bookshelf.

Telling time

Inside the dark cell, there was one way to tell what time it was—chowtime—breakfast, lunch and dinner.

There's no clock or a window to show the time of day. The meals given to certain inmates three times a day serve as the only sign that there is still life outside.

"Certain inmates", because not all detainees get to eat, according to Ezra (not his real name). The police station does not provide food to people they arrest.

"No family visit, no food. Some steal other inmates' food. Some depend on the kindness of others," Ezra told the Inquirer.

'Meet bulldog'

There are times secrets are heard behind the door and there are times you have to press your ear against the wall to listen to what's going on on the other side.

Beatrice said she had heard men cry and shout "aray" (ouch!) after meeting "Bulldog." Bulldog is a wooden paddle



used to hit suspects' thighs, Beatrice said. Only men have been beaten this way.

Some of the detainees have been in and out of the secret cell several times. "They keep doing their illegal activities so the cops keep rearresting them. No cases were filed because, like me, they paid in exchange of their release," she said.

The hellish experience sank some of the detainees to bankruptcy, and dragged them even deeper into the illegal

drug business.

"They are buried deeper in debt and then they go back to (drug) dealing because they have to recoup what they had paid," Beatrice said.

When Beatrice first arrived, she thought she'd die. But a fellow inmate told her: "You don't have to worry as long as you have money."

She had paid P40,000 for her freedom. Her family had to sell their house to raise that amount. INQ

Secrets

The secret cell keeps the secrets of the DEU office, too, the detainees interviewed by Inquirer said. These allegedly include torture and under-the-table negotiations for a suspect's release, according to CHR's Gilbert Boisner.

Beatrice said suspects detained there were often involved in illegal activities, such as drug dealing and drug use. They're a mix of legally and illegally arrested suspects, according to the detainees.

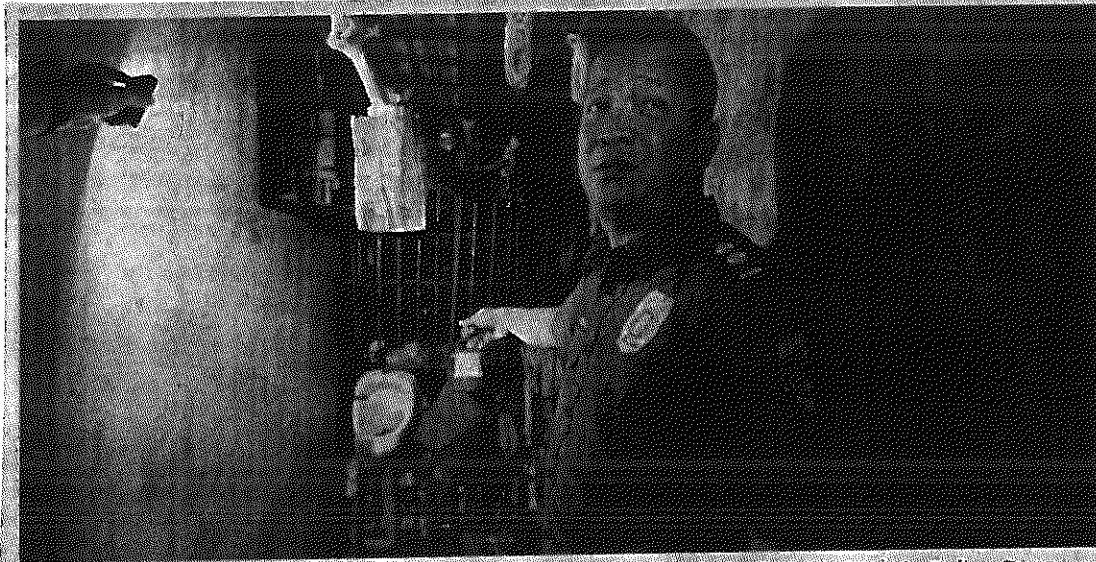
The suspects are held usually for one week, the time given to the suspects to raise money for their release—from P40,000 to P200,000 per head.

"If you fail to provide money within one week, they will file a case against you and transfer you to the regular jail cell at the station's main entrance," Beatrice said.

A team of CHR lawyers uncovered this secret cell during a surprise inspection late on

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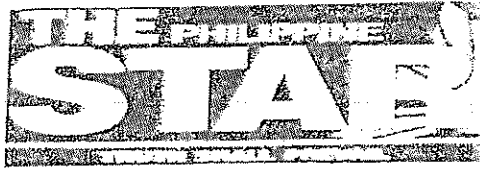
—PHOTOS BY RAFFY LERMA

'JUST MAXIMIZING SPACE' Supt. Robert Domingo (above), chief of the Manila Police District Station 1, shows the media the narrow jail cell that he says he built to "make the most" of the station's limited space. A woman detainee (below) tearfully recalls how the police allegedly forced them to pay their way out of the harrowing conditions inside the secret cell.

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Rody to Asean: Let us work as partners



By ALEXIS ROMERO

President Duterte yesterday highlighted the need for inclusive development in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) as he urged member countries to work together to make the grouping a model in regional integration.

"Let us work together as partners in engaging the world. Let us ensure that our ASEAN narrative remains strong and that the lessons we learned and the values we hold dear as a community are told in full and said with resonance," Duterte told the 14th ASEAN Leadership Forum yesterday.

Duterte urged his fellow ASEAN leaders to ensure that the process of forging a "common regional destiny" remains inclusive.

He said the Philippines shares ASEAN's view that inclusiveness is vital in pursuing regional and international agenda.

Duterte said inclusiveness can be attained if ordinary people understand the importance of the regional bloc in their lives. He said such effort could turn ASEAN into an "effective model for regional integration."

"Citizens' participation is a key in governance and is the bedrock of any strong nation.

In the Philippines, we encourage our peoples to contribute in setting national programs and directions," Duterte said.

"In my administration, citizen feedback is essential to ensure that the wheels of government work and work well for our people," he added.

Duterte stressed the importance of making the people understand how ASEAN

works.

"It is equally important that we make our peoples understand how important ASEAN is; how its past gains have directly contributed to their well-being; and how the realization of ASEAN's goal will make their lives better," he said.

"Getting our peoples to own the ASEAN story as their

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story and to see their future in the ASEAN future would be among the focus of our efforts. We need to cultivate their sense of ownership by putting ASEAN in their consciousness, let them feel that they are a part of efforts to achieve common aspirations.”

Duterte said diversity is one of the strengths of the regional bloc, which he lauded for promoting “positive change” in the lives of its people.

The President said diversity, which he said would have

been the “perfect storm” that could have paved way to strife, has not deterred ASEAN members from working together to attain common goals.

“To be sure, there are many different opinions and positions, as many issues and challenges that we face. But as a country and as a people, we value diversity and differences,” Duterte said.

“We are confident that this is the source of greater strength and a firmer resolve for a government and people de-

termined to transform society, bring reforms and create positive change,” he added.

Duterte said ASEAN would continue to pursue its international engagement to advance common interests like inclusive and innovative growth of our economies, the preservation of heritage and culture; pursuit of the stability and security, and addressing threats like terrorism, violent extremism and criminality like illegal drug trade.

“The ASEAN story is re-

markable. Its success in the past 50 years is evident in how the association has become the driver of regional community building efforts and fulcrum upon which the regional security and architecture balances,” Duterte told the delegates.

“Through the years, ASEAN has demonstrated success in building peace and security, facilitating economic growth, and social development and engaging the larger world community,” he added.

Photos show (clockwise, from top left) Thai Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-o-cha arriving at the NAIA yesterday; Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak speaking at the Prosperity for All Summit in Pasay City; and other Asean leaders being welcomed at the airport: Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc, Myanmar State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi, Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen, Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and Laos Prime Minister Thongloun Sisoulith.

RUDY SANTOS, EPA, REUTERS

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29 April 2017

The Manila Times

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Warring MILF groups displace NCotabato folk

BY JULMUNIR I. JANNARAL

SHARIFF AGUAK, Maguindanao: Two warring groups belonging to the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) engaged in hostilities have displaced a big number of residents in Pikit, North Cotabato since Wednesday.

Local officials have already sent emissaries to convince the leaders of the warring Kedtag Group and Buaya Group to reconcile their differences to prevent further adverse effects on the dislocated villagers.

Dozens of Moro families were displaced

when these two groups figured in running gun battles in Barangay Kabasalan in Pikit on Wednesday.

Chief Insp. Donald Cabigas, chief of the Pikit police station, said Kedtag is a senior official of the MILF's 118th Base Command while Buaya

belongs to the group's National Guards Division.

The rival factions are fighting for control of strategic patches of farmlands in Barangay Kabasalan.

Cabigas said local officials are now trying to resolve the conflict with the help of religious leaders and Moro elders in the municipality.

The Philippine Army's 602nd Brigade, which has jurisdiction over Pikit and neighboring towns in North Cotabato, has called on the joint government-MILF ceasefire committee to help resolve the dispute between Kedtag and Buaya.

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PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER

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HELD FOR 2 MONTHS

NPA REBELS RELEASE BUKIDNON POLICEMAN

DAVAO CITY—Four days after it lost two members in a fire-fight in Davao Oriental province, the New People's Army (NPA) on Thursday released in Bukidnon province a policeman it held captive for more than two months.

PO2 Gerome Anthony Natividad was released "unharmred and in fine shape" in Barangay Dominorog, Talakag town in Bukidnon on Thursday noon, said Bishop Felixberto Calang of Iglesia Filipina Independiente, who belonged to one of the groups who brokered the release.

Natividad was taken by communist rebels on Feb. 9 when the NPA set up a roadblock in Barangay Tikalaan in Talakag.

Earlier, the NPA said it would only release Natividad if the Philippine Army and the Philippine National Police suspended their operations in Bukidnon.

Stand-down

The Army's 4th Infantry Division initially refused but Cagayan de Oro City Mayor Oscar Moreno, head of the Regional Peace and Order Council, had convinced the military to order a stand-down of its troops for six days in the area where the release was to take place.

"We drew up a plan for the military stand-down three days prior and three days after the date of release to avoid an encounter between the NPA custodial force and government

soldiers," Moreno said.

Third-party facilitators turned Natividad over to Kalilangan town officials in Bukidnon. From there, he was taken to the Talakag town police office, his area of assignment before he was abducted.

2 rebels dead

His release came four days after two NPA rebels died in an attack on a military base in Cateel town, Davao Oriental. The camp in Sitio Odiongan in Aliwagwag village is near an ecotourism park featuring multitiered waterfalls that tourists visit.

Roel Agustin II, spokesperson of the NPA subregional command in Compostela Valley, said the NPA lost two fighters in the attack.

A soldier, he said, was also killed, but the military denied this.

Agustin said the NPA staged the attack to punish the troops of the 67th and 72nd Infantry Battalions for their supposed crimes against farmers and *lumad* in Davao Oriental.

He said the ecotourism program in Aliwagwag Falls had displaced hundreds of farmers and indigenous peoples.

Maj. General Rafael Valencia, commander of the Army's 10th Infantry Division, assured that military and local officials were implementing measures to ensure the safety of visitors in Davao Oriental following the attack. —JIGGER JERUSALEM AND FRINSTON LIM INQ

29 April 2017

The Manila Times

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NPA rebels release captured police officer

ZAMBOANGA CITY: A policeman taken captive by the New People's Army (NPA) rebels on February 9 in Talakag, Bukidnon has been released while the rebels honored two of its fighters who were killed in a clash with government troops in Davao Oriental.

Officials said rebels on Thursday handed over Police Officer 2 Anthony Natividad to a group of third party facilitators led by Bishop Felixberto Calang.

The rebels said Natividad's release was delayed by continuous military offensives against the NPA and put the life of the policeman in grave danger. Natividad thanked the rebels for treating him well during his captivity.

He was the third "prisoner-of-war" released by the rebels after two army soldiers – Sergeant Solaiman Calocop and Private First Class Samuel Garay – were also freed by the NPA on April 19 in Davao after 75 days in captivity. Both are members of 39th Infantry Battalion seized by rebels on February 2.

Jorge Madlos, a rebel spokesman, said continuing offensive military and police operations impeded the NPA from releasing their "prisoners."

He said the NPA is also set to release three other captured soldiers in Bukidnon and in the CARAGA region.

Meanwhile, the NPA honored two of its fighters who were killed in a clash with government troops in Cateel, Davao Oriental.

One soldier was slain and three others were wounded in the fight-

ing, said the rebels on Friday.

Roel Agustin 2nd, a rebel spokesman, said NPA forces attacked military posts and overrun them in the village of Aliwagwag catching soldiers of the 67th and 72nd infantry battalions by surprise.

"An M14 automatic rifle and several military gears were seized by Red fighters while one enemy was killed and three others were wounded during the firefight. Two Red fighters, including Patrick Simeon, were martyred during the engagement," he said.

Simeon, 20, was a youth activist in Metro Manila before he joined the NPA in 2014, Agustin added.

"The NPA in southern Mindanao region and the revolutionary movement in the region conferred highest honors to the two Red fighters who had bravely given their lives to the cause of the national democratic struggle," he said.

Agustin also assailed Davao Oriental's tourism program in Cateel that displaced hundreds of poor families and natives from the area to pave the way for the development of Aliwagwag Falls.

"It has displaced hundreds of peasant and *Iumad* families in Aliwagwag and adjacent villages in the towns of Cateel and nearby Compostela. In the name of the deceitful development program, farms and communities were adversely affected to give way to the privatized tourist destination spots," he said.

There was no immediate statement from the military on Agustin's allegations. **AL JACINTO**

29 April 2017

Tempo

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NPA releases kidnapped cop

By MIKE U. CRISMUNDO

BUTUAN CITY – A policeman who was abducted by the New People's Army more than two months ago in Bukidnon was released by the rebels Thursday in Talakan town of the same province.

The NPA custodial force belonging to the Mt. Kitanglad-South Regional Operational Command presented Police Officer 2 Antony P. Natividad to the public during a brief program held at the barangay's covered court just beside the national highway in Barangay Dominorog.

Natividad was captured by the NPA rebels last February 9 as policemen were setting up a roadblock in Barangay Tikalaan, in Talakag, Bukidnon.

The release of Natividad was witnessed by local government unit officials in the municipalities of Pangantucan and Kalilangan as well as Cagayan de Oro and religious leaders led by Bishop Felixberto Calang.

From there Natividad was immediately brought to Kalilangan Municipal Police Station for debriefing and will then be sent to the provincial command of Police Provincial Office in Bukidnon before he gets his chance to meet his relatives.

Meanwhile, another NPA cap-



POLICE Officer 2 Antony Natividad gets to hug his loved ones after more than two months in captivity by the New People's Army in Bukidnon. (Froilan Gallardo)

tive, Private First Class Erwin R. Salan of the Army's 30th Infantry Battalion (30th IB) is also set to be released anytime by the rebels.

The family of the abducted soldier was happy as well as Lt. Col. Rico Amaro, commanding officer of the 30th IB when they learned about Salan's imminent release.

Salan was abducted by some 15 armed NPAs while conducting forest clean up drive together with youth volunteers within the vicinity of Lumondo Falls, in Barangay Budlingin, Alegria, Surigao del Norte last January 29.

Ka Oto, spokesperson of the guerilla-Front Committee 16 of the CPP-NPA Northeastern Mindanao Regional Committee said

they will release Salan anytime.

The Front 16 Committee spokesman said their tactical operations against government forces have been halted since last Tuesday noon until midnight of May 5 in the municipalities of Placer, Tubod, Bacuag, Alegria, Gigaquit and Claver, all in Surigao del Norte to pave the way for the safe release of PFC. Salan.

29 April 2017



Pahina. 6

1 bihag pinawalan, 3 pa hawak ng NPA

ZAMBOANGA CITY— Pinalayang mga rebeldeng komunista ang isang parak na bihag nito sa Bukidnon province, ngunit 3 iba pang mga "prisoners of war" ang hawak nito sa magulong rehiyon ng Mindanao.

Kinumpirma kahapon ng pulisya ang paglaya ni PO2 Anthony Natividad na binihag ng New People's Army nitong Pebrero 9 sa bayan ng Talakag sa Bukidnon province.

Pinakawalan si Natividad kamakalawa sa isang grupo ng mga third party facilitators sa pangunguna ni Bishop Felixberto Calang.

Inakusahan pa ng NPA ang militar ng pananabotahang paglaya ng parak dahil ayaw umanong itigil ng mga sundalo ang kanilang atake sa mga rebelde. Dapat umano ay mas maaga pang napakawalan si Natividad.

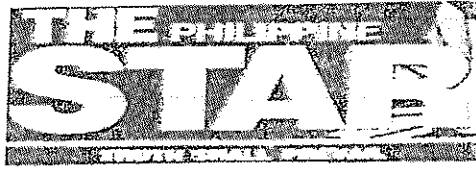
Kamakailan lamang

ay 2 sundalo rin na sina Sergeant Solaiman Calocop at Private First Class Samuel Garay ang pinalaya ng mga rebelde sa Davao matapos ang 75-araw na pagkakabihag sa kanila.

Nadakip ang dalawang parehong miyembro ng 39th Infantry Battalion noong Pebrero 2.

Nakatakda na ring palayain ang 2 sundalo sa CARAGA region. (Al Jacinto)

29 April 2017



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2 Sayyaf men surrender

ZAMBOANGA CITY – Two Abu Sayyaf bandits surrendered in Patikul, Sulu on Thursday.

Husain Nasirin, 22, a resident of Sitio Darayan in Barangay Buhanginan, and Hasir Asara, 24, of Sitio Kankitap, Barangay Danag also turned over their rifles, said Brig. Gen. Cirilito Sobejana, Joint Task Force Sulu commander.

The bandits are members of the group led by Hairulla Asbang, who died while being treated in a hospital for gunshot wounds he sustained in a recent encounter with government troops.

Asbang was tagged in the kidnapping of Canadians John Ridsdel and Robert Hall, Norwegian Kjar-tan Sekkingstad and Filipina Marites Flor at a resort on Samal island in 2015. The two Canadians were beheaded for failing to pay ransom of P300 million each. Sekkingstad and Flor were freed reportedly after payment of ransom.

– Roel Pareño

29 April 2017



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Jonas' case: 10 yrs of hope

By **Jaymee T. Gamil**
@JGamilINQ

The mother of abducted activist Jonas Burgos, who is still missing after 10 years, refused to give up hope her son would be found or his fate at least known, but she feels like giving up on one thing she had thought could help in her search—a meeting with President Duterte.

Edita Burgos admitted she once was raring to have an audience with Mr. Duterte because she saw the President as a “man of action.” She now doubts if “it’s worth it.”

“I’m not sure if we will continue to seek out his time,” Edita said, citing stories of Mr. Duterte keeping his VIP visitors, even “relatives of favored senators,” waiting.

“How much more those who aren’t favored, like me?” said Edita.

She said she believed armed forces chief Gen. Eduardo Año “is already so angry at me.”

“One word from him and the President may no longer see us,” Edita said. “But we will try other avenues.”

Año was chief of the Intelligence Service Group when Jonas was abducted from a Quezon City restaurant, believed to be by military personnel, on April 28, 2007. Año was among respondents named by the Burgos family in criminal complaints filed at the Department of Justice.

Edita, however, said she should not even be begging for Mr. Duterte’s help because it was the President’s duty as “father” of the nation, to help all Filipinos.

“Because you are the President, the father of the country, look for one of your disappeared ‘sons,’ as well as your other disappeared ‘children,’” Edita said.

Edita said she would not tire of talking about her son’s case, talking with “those who will listen so I can tell them Jonas is still missing, he is not yet home.”

Jose Luis Martin Gascon, chair of the Commission on Human Rights, said finding Jonas, or knowing what happened to him, was part of the search for justice.

“If we don’t hold perpetrators to account, then what will happen is what is happening now: impunity,” he said.

At a rally in front of Camp Aguinaldo, the armed forces headquarters in Quezon City, at least 40 activists wore masks representing Jonas.

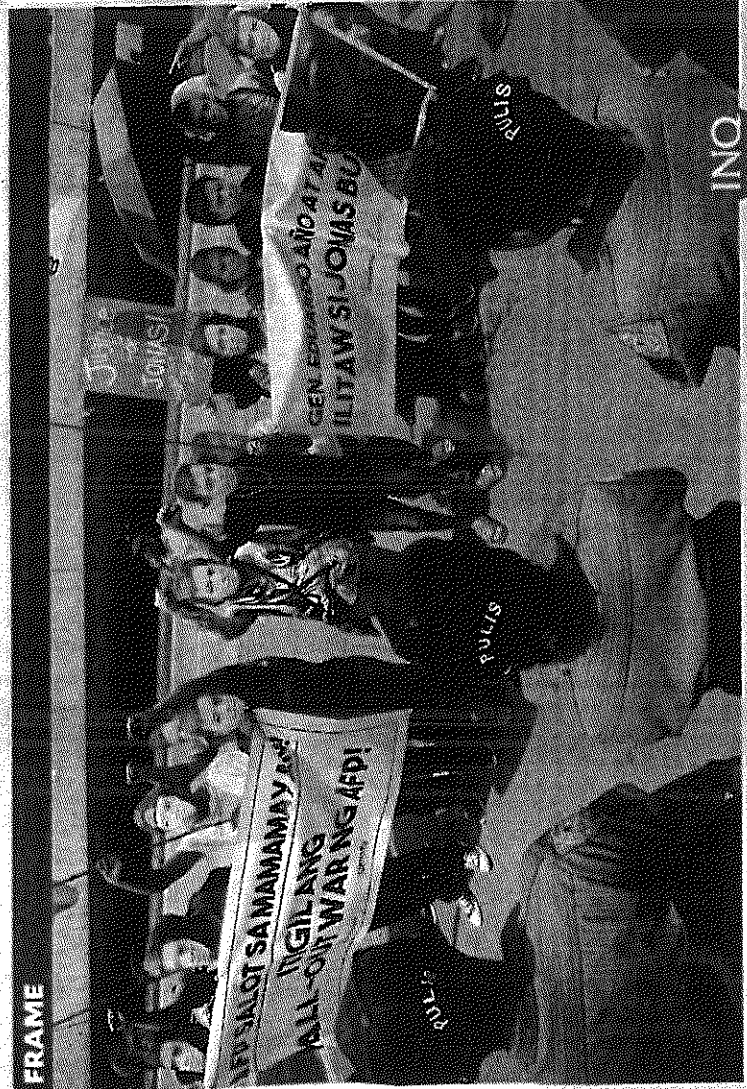
“Let Jonas’ face be marked in their memories,” said Concepcion Empeño, chair of the group Desaparecidos (Disappeared) and mother of abducted student Karen Empeño, also a victim of forced disappearance.

—WITH A REPORT FROM PHILIP TUBEZA INQ

OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS – Email add: oacpa.army2012@gmail.com – Tel no. (02) 845-9555 Local: 5285, 5295



Protesters wear masks representing Jonas Burgos at Camp Aguinaldo to demand military accountability for his disappearance. Burgos remains missing 10 years after he was abducted by suspects believed to be military men. The official being blamed by activists for Burgos' disappearance, Eduardo Año, was intelligence chief at the time and is now armed forces chief.—NINO JESUS ORBETA



WHERE'S JONAS? Members of the group Desaparecidos mark the 10th anniversary of the disappearance of farmer-activist Jonas Burgos, demanding answers from the military in a rally outside Camp Aguinaldo on Friday.—NINO JESUS ORBETA

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Desaparecidos members lambast, blame Año for disappearance of Burgos at rally

By Mario J. Mallari

April 28, 2007.

All wearing masks with the face of Jonas Burgos, members of the rights group Desaparecidos yesterday blasted Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Chief of Staff Eduardo Año whom they blamed for the disappearance of the peasant leader since 2007.

Members of the Desaparecidos, along with other militant groups, held a rally in front of Camp Aguinaldo, the general headquarters of the AFP, to mark the 10th anniversary of Burgos' disappearance.

"Let Jonas' face be marked in their memories. Let it disturb them," said Concepcion Empeño, chairman of Desaparecidos and mother of abducted University of the Philippines student Karen Empeño.

"After three regimes and a decade, let this be a testament that we continue to look for him, and demand justice for Jonas and all the military abducted and made to disappear," Empeño added.

The group singled out Año, one of the military officials linked to the disappearance of Burgos on

April 28, 2007. "General Eduardo Año rose to his position as AFP chief of staff with the blood of those killed and disappeared under their reign. He continues to enjoy power over the military and escape from accountability. Tell us, Gen. Año, after ten years, where now is Jonas?" Empeño said.

Año was an intelligence officer of the Philippine Army when Burgos was allegedly abducted by Army personnel inside a mall in Quezon City.

Edith Burgos, mother of Jonas, charged Año, then Bulacan military commander and now AFP deputy chief of staff for civil military operations (J7), Maj. Gen. Melquiades Feliciano and Army Maj. Harry Baliaga for arbitrary detention.

She also accused former AFP chief of staff and now incumbent National Security Adviser Hermogenes Esperon, and former Philippine National Police Chief Avelino Razon of lying to her and the public by formulating a story that the New People's Army was behind the abduction of her son.

Baliaga was tagged as the one

who led several men in "kidnapping" the younger Burgos.

Of those charged by Mrs. Burgos, only Baliaga is currently under arrest facing kidnapping case.

For his part, AFP spokesman Brig Gen Restituto Padilla Jr. stressed the military had been fully cooperative to the court in connection with Burgos' case.

"The Armed Forces is fully cooperating with the courts on the matter of this case but cannot comment on it further since the case is already being tried and the matter is sub-judicte," Padilla said.

"The Armed Forces submitted itself to the court and it cooperated with the court," he added.

Desaparecidos said all families of desaparecidos demand that justice be served for Jonas, representing thousands of desaparecidos abducted and disappeared under different regimes. With Jonas came a face for the many faceless desaparecidos who thirst for justice and all the families who want to know what happened to their loved ones.

"But with these military officials in power, and while the military

remains as the State's implementor of the worst abuses and injustices, what justice could we, families of desaparecidos, expect from this?" Empeño asked.

The group also chastised the AFP for its declaration of all-out war against the people.

"The AFP continues to mouth peace, even naming its new counter-insurgency program as Oplan Kapayapaan. How dare the AFP talk peace when, since President Duterte assumed presidency, the AFP has unleashed its terror against persons and communities standing ground to defend their rights. State forces do not sow peace. They silence the likes of Jonas and those who stood for their rights. This has to stop," Empeño said.

The group called on the people to demand the accountability of the AFP for its crimes.

"As long as the military remains as the main instrument in suppressing the people's aspirations for genuine peace and justice, we should continue searching. This is our tribute to missing. We will continue to hound them, in the name of justice," Empeño said.



All wearing masks with face of Jonas Burgos, rights group Desaparecidos held a protests rally in front of Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon City yesterday on his 10th year of disappearance still seeking for justice. ANALY LABOR

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MNLF to help expose Sayyaf protectors

By PERSEUS ECHEMINADA

The Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) has offered to help the Duterte administration address the problem with Abu Sayyaf bandits.

MNLF spokesman Emmanuel Fontanilla said they are willing to share information on the involvement of some law enforcers and government officials in the illegal activities of Abu Sayyaf bandits.

"Police and military action against Abu Sayyaf bandits will not address kidnapping... unless their protectors are ex-

posed," Fontanilla said.

He said kidnapping by Abu Sayyaf bandits involves government assets who pinpoint target areas and personalities.

"Kidnapping has become a lucrative business because the victims, particularly foreigners, pay ransom for the release of their relatives. The ransom runs

to millions of dollars," Fontanilla said. "Everyone who kidnaps, shelters and negotiates for ransom gets his share."

He earlier raised the possibility that the attempt of the Abu Sayyaf to kidnap tourists in Bohol could be part of a plot to embarrass President Duterte during the country's hosting of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations summit.

"The Abu Sayyaf would be hitting two birds with one stone – taking hostages for ransom and at the same

time embarrassing President Duterte before the international community," Fontanilla said.

He said police Superintendent Maria Cristina Nobleza could be the key to identifying government officials with links to the Abu Sayyaf.

Fontanilla said the arrest of Nobleza and her alleged Abu Sayyaf lover Reneer Lou Dongon confirmed rumors in Sulu and Basilan on the alleged collusion of the Abu Sayyaf with some people in government.

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ASG's days are numbered

More than two weeks after the first encounter between Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) members and government troops in Inabanga, Bohol, the province's police chief said it will only take a few more days before the remaining terrorists will be arrested.

Senior Supt. Felipe Natividad, Bohol Provincial Police Office director, said the remaining ASG members are already tired and hungry and no longer have the leadership and guide to traverse the terrain of Inabanga and Clarin towns.

"They will be arrested very soon," Natividad told reporters.

He said the remaining three ASG men have not left the province of Bohol because of the tight security measures in possible exit areas in the province.

Natividad said there were reports of armed men knocking on doors of houses in Clarin asking for food and clothing but these reports have not been confirmed.

There were also reports of suspicious men buying boat tickets in Anda town but Natividad said these were also not confirmed.

Authorities continue to scour the hilly portions of the adjacent towns of Clarin, Inabanga, and Tubigon in search for three remaining rebels identified as a certain "Alyas Asis Kaifar Sawadjaan," a certain "Alyas Um Ammra a.k.a. Alyas Abu Omar," and a certain "Alyas Ubayda."

Police Regional Office-7 Director Noli Taliño earlier said that the rebels who survived the Inabanga and Clarin encounters were already on "survival mode" with one of them possibly armed.

In Cebu, the Armed Forces of the Philippines Central Command said it is taking reports of Abu Sayyaf sightings in Cebu with a grain of salt because these could just be the rebels' tactic to divert government's attention from Bohol. **(Mars W. Mosqueda, Jr.)**

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Phl, Indonesia to step up fight vs terror, kidnapping

By CHRISTINA MENDEZ

The need for intensified joint effort against terrorism, piracy and kidnapping dominated the discussions yesterday between President Duterte and Indonesian President Joko Widodo.

"We recognized the need to address both traditional and emerging threats and expressed readiness to step up cooperation against terrorism, violent extremism, piracy at sea and transnational crimes, including the trade of illicit drugs," Duterte said after emerging from his meeting with Widodo at the Reception

dress both traditional and emerging threats and expressed readiness to step up cooperation against terrorism, violent extremism, piracy at sea and transnational crimes, including the trade of illicit drugs," Duterte said after emerging from his meeting with Widodo at the Reception

No mention of Mary Jane during Rody, Widodo meeting. Story on Page 5.

Turn to Page 8

Hall of Malacañang

"We reaffirmed the importance of our bilateral relations and signified our resolve to sustain the momentum of all our engagements, particularly in defense and security, trade and investments, agriculture, and sub-regional development connectivity," Duterte said.

While the two leaders did not tackle the South China issue, Widodo pressed for the ratification of the agreement on Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

"Regarding maritime limitation, we agreed to conclude the EEZ agreement ratification this year and encourage an immediate conclusion of the Continental Shelf Delineation," Widodo said.

In his speech, Duterte also acknowledged the Philippines' and Indonesia's close to 70-year-old formal diplomatic ties.

"Throughout close to seven decades, we have seen vast transformation in our countries and in our region," he said.

"It is in this context of opportunities and challenges in our modern era that I met President Widodo to chart a path of collaboration to achieve greater peace, progress and prosperity," Duterte maintained.

He also thanked Widodo for Indonesia's sustained support for the peace process in Mindanao. "With Indonesia's assistance and that of our friends, we are hopeful of turning the potentials of Mindanao into reality," he said.

Duterte also noted Indonesia's role in the development of Mindanao.

"In pursuit of just and lasting peace and development in Mindanao, we also sought to strengthen the BIMP-EAGA to bring progress where they are needed most," he said.

"I am pleased with the signing of the Joint Declaration on the Establishment of Sea Connectivity between Davao, General Santos and Bitung," Duterte said. The two leaders will grace the formal opening of the new roll-on, roll-off route tomorrow in Davao City.

"This will facilitate trade and movement of goods. This deserves full support from both our governments," he said.

Widodo and his wife Iriana Widodo arrived at about 1:45 p.m. at Villamor Airbase in Pasay City yesterday.

Durian diplomacy

In showing deep appreciation for the Philippines, Widodo noted how delicious Davao's durian is.

"Sobrang masarap," Widodo said in Filipino, adding he was excited to visit Davao tomorrow.

Duterte had also charmed Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe by treating him to a snack of durian during the latter's official visit early this year.

"Mr. President, it is very favorable that you and I have so much in common. We were both mayors of medium-sized city," Widodo pointed out.

"I believe that you and I

are not fancy people. I believe that you and I are driven by a healthy common sense and by our love for our people," he added.

"I am excited that we will be launching the new RORO, Roll-on, Roll-off, between Davao, General Santos and Bitung in North Sulawesi," Widodo said.

Prior to this, Widodo thanked the Philippines for the fruitful state visit.

"President Duterte, my delegation and I are extremely happy to be here. Thank you from the bottom of our heart for the warm and graceful welcome you and your government have extended to us," he said.

"Our people have long been good friends. We share our love for rich fruits and for television drama," Widodo added.

He also noted there are many Filipino executives and managers working in Indonesia while many Indonesians especially executives have come to Manila for studies.

Also yesterday, Duterte and Widodo witnessed the signing of a memorandum of understanding on agriculture as well as the joint declaration on the establishment of sea connectivity between Davao-General Santos-Southern Mindanao and Bitung in North Sulawesi.

On maritime security, Widodo noted that his country, the Philippines and Malaysia have agreed to launch maritime patrol cooperation as soon as possible.

On combating transnational crimes, Widodo said they also agreed to conduct a joint working group on counterterrorism this year expanding the

coverage of the 2014 MOU on Counterterrorism Cooperation and strengthened intelligence information cooperation.

Inclusive growth

Earlier yesterday, Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak said Southeast Asian countries needed to ensure their economic growth is inclusive, or risk marginalized populations turning to violent extremism or even overturning political systems.

Speaking at an event for entrepreneurs during the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) summit, Najib said the region was posting strong growth that could see ASEAN become the world's fourth-largest economy, but that growth needed to be equitable.

"We do not want our citizens to be marginalized in the age of extremism and radicalization," he said.

"We know that those who see no hope in their own societies are more prone to the siren calls of terrorists who can and exploit their vulnerability and fill them with their lies."

Islamist extremism is expected to be high on the agenda during this week's meetings, with fears for Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines about piracy and the rising threat of Islamic State.

Of particular concern is the ease in which militants can acquire weapons, seek refuge with existing rebel groups and move between the many islands spanning the three countries.

Najib lauded the success of ASEAN, which is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year, in expanding its collective GDP to about \$2.7 trillion now, from \$87 billion four decades ago.

ASEAN has 10 members: Thailand, Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, Singa-

pore, Brunei, Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines.

He warned that economic disparity was dangerous at a political level too, fuelling anger and populism that was causing problem in Western Europe.

"The neglected underclass of those who felt left behind by economic growth, prosperity and globalization can overturn elections and political systems," he said.

Economists frequently point out huge income gaps among the 620 million people of Southeast Asia, a region that has one of the world's largest concentrations of billionaires, according to *Forbes* magazine.

Najib said awareness of ASEAN needed to be better promoted among its citizens to "make it feel real, relevant and tangible." Trade integration was lagging, he said, with too many trade tariffs still in existence.

Their removal, and harmonized customs standards, needed to be "vigorously pursued," he said.

Vice President Leni Robredo echoed Najib's call for leaders to pay more attention to their poor.

"For many years, many thought income inequality was alright. But the voiceless and the powerless are now raring to be heard, and with technology and social media, their frustrations are being felt on a global scale," she said in a speech. "They are rejecting globalization, democracy, traditional media."

Stronger coast guard

In anticipation of the launch of the Davao-General Santos-Bitung ASEAN roll-on, roll off (ro-ro) service, the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) will build up its forces in Mindanao.

"Most likely we would add personnel because this is a pet project of President Duterte so we should secure it well... We would study all possible measures that

could be implemented to ensure the safety of travelers and smooth transport of cargo," PCG spokesperson Commander Armand Balilo yesterday said.

He admitted pirates and bandits continue to pose threat to sea travelers in the area.

"We would increase our monitoring system and add fast boats. Our troops would be visible. And if there would be a security operation they should be able to respond immediately or if there is a threat they should be able to repel" the aggressors, he also said.

The PCG would vigorously inspect vessels along the sea route to conducting ship inspection, ensuring that there is no overloading of passengers and cargoes, and study the proposal for sea marshals to ride the ro-ro ships and go with them until it reaches port of destination.

He said that the government is also planning to open another trade route, this time between Palawan-Malaysia.

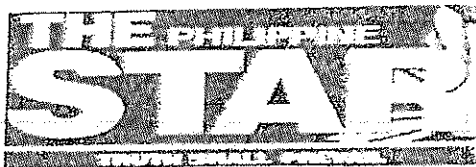
With the opening of these new trade routes between the Philippines and neighboring ASEAN nations, "we see the importance of the role that the Philippine Coast Guard would play in terms of assuring the safety and security of the passengers and cargoes," said Balilo.

But for Mindanao Development Authority deputy executive director Romeo Montenegro, security and piracy would not be much of a problem for the new ro-ro service.

He said security issues had been addressed in past meetings between the Philippines and Indonesia and pointers had been drawn from the tack used for the "more problematic Sulu Sea area."

"But for Davao-Bitung we are not seeing any such issues ever since in terms of security or piracy ever emerging out of this Celebes Sea," Montenegro said in a press briefing at the ASEAN International Media Center. - **With Evelyn Macairan, Pia Lee-Brago, Reuters**

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Chinese navy vessels to visit Davao

Three Chinese military ships will arrive in Davao City tomorrow for a four-day goodwill visit, the Philippine Navy announced yesterday.

Missile destroyer *Chang Chun*, guided missile frigate *Jin Zhou* and *Chao Hu*, a replenishment vessel of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) Navy task group 150, are expected to arrive at around 9 a.m. at the Sasa

wharf.

Capt. Ramil Roberto Enriquez, Naval Forces Eastern Mindanao commander, will lead the welcome ceremonies.

The Chinese fleet is headed by Rear Admiral Shen Hao, deputy commander of the East Sea Fleet of the PLA Navy and concurrent commander-in-chief of the Navy task group 150.

Meanwhile, the defense

department said it sees nothing wrong with the visit of the Chinese ships to Davao, instead of Manila.

"Aside from being a confidence-building activity, we'd like to assume that it is a gesture on their part to underscore warming relations between the two countries," said Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana.

– Michael Punongbayan,
Jaime Laude

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Standard
OF THE PHILIPPINE ARMY

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China warships to drop anchor at Davao port

By Macon Ramos-Araneta

THREE Chinese naval vessels will arrive at the Sasa Wharf in Davao City for a three-day visit on April 30 to May 2, an official said Friday.

Naval Forces Eastern Mindanao public affairs office chief Lt. Jetmark Marcos said the three ships are from the China People's Liberation Army Navy Task Group 150.

The vessels are the Chang Chun (DDG-150), a guided missile destroyer; the Jin Zhou (FF-G532), a guided missile frigate; and the Chao Hu (890), a replenishment ship.

The flotilla will be headed by Rear Adm. Shen Hao, deputy commander of the East Sea Fleet of the PLA Navy and concurrent Commander-in-Chief of the PLA Navy Task Group 150.

Marcos made his statement even as Senator Panfilo Lacson on Friday urged President Rodrigo Duterte to raise the arbitral ruling on the South China Sea favoring the Philippines during the Association of Southeast Asian Nations summit here.

He said studies showed that arbitrary rulings were normally defied if not ignored by the losing claimants of contested territories.

But in the course of time the losing countries almost always eventually gave up and complied with the ruling due to international pressure.

"We should not miss the Asean summit to avail ourselves with that opportunity, lest we would regret it," Lacson said. With PNA

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OPAPP forms IP peace panel

ANTONIO L. COLINA IV

DAVAO CITY – The Office of the Presidential Adviser on Peace Process (OPAPP) has created a separate five-member Indigenous Peoples (IP) panel which will be tasked with presenting issues affecting lumad communities that will be taken up in the peace negotiations of the government (GPH) with the Moro and Communist rebels.

During the Peace Table Conversations Among Key IPs of Mindanao at the Davao Medical School Foundation (DMSF), Presidential Adviser on Peace Process (PAPP) Jesus Dureza said the new panel will be a government-commissioned body from whom the GPH panel will get inputs on the concerns which lumads may want to be included in the peace talks.

He said the IP panel will engage all lumads across the country.

“The government (GPH) panel will engage with you (lumads) directly. I agree to open a peace table for the lumad – separate panel. So, OPAPP will organize a panel like what we did with (Nur) Misuari, chair of the MNLF” he said.

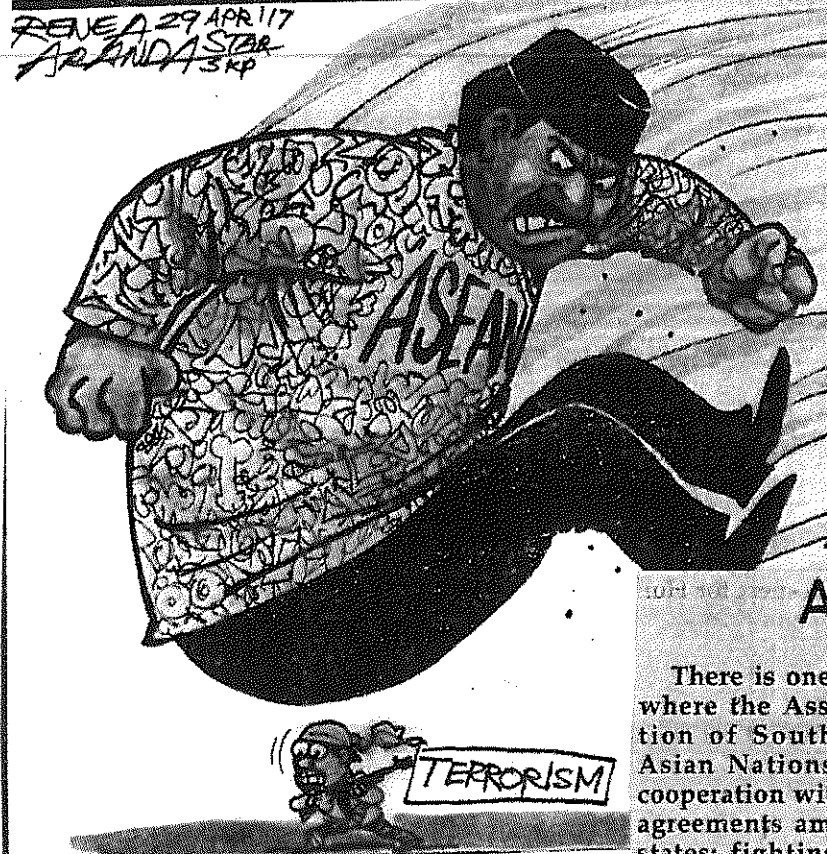
Dureza put to task the new government panel to create a terms of reference that will define their functions and the mechanisms how they can participate in the peace negotiations.

Reuben Dasay A. Lingating, former chairperson of the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), will chair the new IP panel, composed of members such as Leonor Quintayo, Era Espana, Judith Maranes, and Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) deputy governor Deonato Mokudef as members.

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Areas of cooperation

EDITORIAL

There is one area where the Association of Southeast

Asian Nations can strengthen cooperation with hardly any disagreements among the member states: fighting extremism and the related threats of piracy and kidnapping for ransom.

The sea lanes of Southeast Asia are vital to international commerce, but they are also among the most dangerous. Pirates roam the seas, and around Philippine waters, the Abu Sayyaf has turned kidnapping for ransom into a thriving industry, threatening tourism, fishing and maritime logistics even in neighboring countries.

Security experts have warned that the Islamic State has made inroads into the region through the Abu Sayyaf and its cousin the Maute group. The bandits are also confirmed to have links with other terror cells in the region, notably the al-Qaeda-inspired Jemaah Islamiyah, which was responsible for several deadly bomb attacks in Bali and Jakarta, Indonesia.

A new fund-raising scheme for the Abu Sayyaf, according to security officials, is drug trafficking. If this is confirmed, it has the

potential to spill over into other ASEAN states, particularly

those that have long grappled with cross-border trafficking of prohibited drugs including opium and heroin. This risk gives urgency to stepping up regional cooperation in law enforcement and other security-related matters.

Weak law enforcement, inefficient border checks and inadequate maritime patrols in several ASEAN states including the Philippines have facilitated the movement of contraband across the region. Pirates, drug dealers and terrorists can transport everything with relative ease around the region, from foreign hostages to endangered marine turtles to guns and illegal drugs.

This is not an insurmountable problem. ASEAN has mechanisms in place to facilitate stronger cooperation in monitoring and preventing security threats as well as apprehending terrorists and other criminals. Whether or not IS has truly gained a solid foothold in the region, Southeast Asia is suffering from extremist violence, piracy, kidnapping for ransom and drug trafficking. ASEAN must intensify efforts to prevent such problems from spreading.

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

ONLINE NEWS

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www.rappler.com

10 years later, search for Jonas Burgos continues

By: Carmela Fonbuena

Protesters decry the promotion of Armed Forces chief General Eduardo Año, but he is adamant he never knew Jonas Burgos



SURFACE JONAS BURGOS. Protesters troop to Camp Aguinaldo on Friday, April 28, to bring a message to AFP chief General Eduardo Año. Photo by Darren Langit/Rappler

MANILA, Philippines – Protesters wearing Jonas Burgos masks on Friday, April 28, trooped to the military headquarters in Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon City to bring a message right at the doorstep of Armed Forces chief of staff General Eduardo Año.

"General Eduardo Año at (and) AFP, *ilitaw si* (surface) Jonas Burgos," read a banner signed by rights group Karapatan and Desaparecidos.

It's the 10th year since the abduction of Burgos from the Ever Gotesco mall in the same city by alleged military intelligence agents, one of whom was positively identified by a witness.

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"It has been 10 years and Jonas Burgos is still missing. Though cases have been filed, perpetrators have remained unpunished. From the Arroyo regime to the current administration, the disappearance of Jonas remains a continuing proof of the climate of impunity in our country," said Jigs Clamor, Karapatan deputy secretary-general.

The quest for justice by the Burgos family is a reminder, according to Karapatan, of "prevalent injustice and lack of accountability of state security forces responsible for rights abuses and government negligence."

Año: I do not know Jonas Burgos



MASKED PROTESTERS. Protesters wearing Jonas Burgos masks gather at the gate of Camp Aguinaldo to commemorate the 10th year of his disappearance. Photo by Desaparecidos

Año was back then the chief of the Philippine Army's Intelligence Service Group (ISG). He was among those tagged by the family as responsible for the disappearance of Burgos, the son of one of the country's icons of press freedom.

"Año headed the Army Intelligence Security Group in 2007, and is mainly responsible for the hunt-down operations that led to the enforced disappearance of Jonas. We deplore the appointment of Año, whose track record is lined with human rights violations in the course of his rise in the military ranks," said Carol Araullo of progressive group Bayan.

It's a tag that Año laments to this day. "While I commiserate with Mrs. Burgos, they should accept the truth that I was not in any way involved in the disappearance of Jonas Burgos and in any of their allegations. I do not even know him," Año told Rappler.

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For years, Mrs. Edita Burgos tried to block Año's promotion, but to no avail. He climbed the military hierarchy – becoming chief of the Intelligence Service of the AFP (ISAFP), commanding general of the 10th Infantry Division, and head of the Army before his appointment as chief of the entire military.

Military's desperation

An investigative report published in 2007 by now Rappler managing editor Glenda Gloria showed the military's fingerprints all over the disappearance of Burgos, who was a communist leader in Bulacan.

"That he's a rebel doesn't make his abduction right – using brute force off the battlefield and inside a mall, under the full glare of onlookers. That he's a rebel – and still missing – illustrates the lengths to which desperate people would go to crush a stubborn rebellion knocking at the doors of Metro Manila," wrote Gloria, a longtime observer of the Philippine military.

He was abducted at a time when the military notorious for alleged extrajudicial killings of political activists, under the notorious counter-insurgency campaign Oplan Bantay Laya.



PEACEFUL PROTEST. Cops guard the gate of the military headquarters Camp Aguinaldo from the protesters. Photo by Darren Lantig/Rappler

Charges were filed against several military officers, including Año, but most have since been dropped.

"In all investigations conducted by PNP, NBI and CHR, my name was never mentioned. It was surprising that I was included in the complaint in 2011. These communist militants

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have been living on their own world and they would only accept their own version of the truth," Año said.

What remains is a case against First Lieutenant Harry Salasoa Jr of the military's 56th Infantry Battalion, the unit that then responsible for the area where Burgos allegedly operated in the province.

The military said it is cooperating fully with the courts hearing the case. "The armed forces is fully cooperating with the courts on the matter of this case. But I cannot comment on it further since the case is already being tried and the matter is subjudice," said military spokesperson Brigadier General Restituto Padilla.

The case of Burgos is a rare instance of enforced disappearance that was able to specifically identify alleged perpetrators. The courts have been slow, but the search for justice continues. – [Rappler.com](#)

www.retiredanalyst.blogspot.com

(Update) Chinese naval flotilla to drop anchor in Davao City

From the Philippine News Agency

With the warming of ties between the Philippines and the People's Republic of China, three Chinese naval vessels will arrive for a three-day goodwill visit at the Sasa Wharf in Davao City from April 30 to May 2.

Naval Forces Eastern Mindanao public affairs office chief Lt. Jetmark Marcos said the three ships are from the China People's Liberation Army (PLA) Navy Task Group 150.

They are the Chang Chun (DDG-150), a guided missile destroyer; the Jin Zhou (FF-G532), a guided missile frigate; and the Chao Hu (890), a replenishment ship.

The customary welcome ceremony and port briefing will be conducted upon the arrival of the Chinese ships at Sasa Wharf.

The meeting point procedure will be held at a vicinity north of Davao Gulf.

The flotilla will be headed by Rear Adm. Shen Hao, Deputy Commander of the East Sea Fleet of the PLA Navy and concurrent Commander-in-Chief of the PLA Navy Task Group 150.

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AFP, MMC Foundation renews medical partnership

From the Philippine News Agency

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To ensure that active-duty soldiers get the best health care possible, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) has formally renewed its partnership with the Makati Medical Center (MMC) Foundation for the second time around.

Renewal took place last April 25 along with the subsequent memorandum of agreement (MOA) signing ceremonies participated by MMC Foundation chair Manuel "Manny" Pangilinan and AFP chief-of-staff Gen. Eduardo Año.

Signing took place at AFP general headquarters in Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City.

Through its Health Heroes Program, the MMC Health Services department agreed to help coordinate and facilitate the health management and care of the qualified AFP officers and enlisted personnel.

This means that soldiers can now have access anew to the best health care facilities in all 21 AFP partner hospitals throughout the country, military public affairs office chief Col. Edgard Arevalo said in a statement.

This flagship program is a renewal and expansion of the MOA signed by the AFP, AFP Medical Center, and MMC Foundation last June 19, 2013, providing for the organizational strengthening of the above-mentioned medical facility.

It was also renewed for the first time on Sept. 10, 2015, providing for an expansion of the Private Public Partnership program for organizational strengthening in an additional 19 AFP hospitals and military medical treatment facilities.

The pact will allow MMC to share its technical resources and open their hospital facilities to training, coaching, workshops, conferences, and mentoring sessions free to all AFP and partner military hospitals resident doctors and management staff.

This also means that through their partner hospitals, MMC Foundation will give or donate more hospital equipment, beds, supplies and fixtures to improve all military hospitals throughout the country.

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DND always open to visits by foreign navies

From the Philippine News Agency

DND always open to visits by foreign navies

The Department of National Defense (DND) is always open to goodwill visits by foreign navies.

This was stated by DND public affairs office chief Arsenio Andolong Friday when sought for a comment on the three-day goodwill visit of three ships from China People's Liberation Army (PLA) Navy Task Group 150 in Sasa Wharf, Davao City on April 30 to May 2.

"The DND is always open to goodwill visits to our country by foreign navies. Just like the US, Vietnam, Russia, and New Zealand, we welcome China's initiative to visit our country. Aside from it being a confidence building activity, we'd like to assume that it is a gesture on their part to underscore the warming relations between our countries," he said.

When asked to comment on the fact the visit will happen on President Rodrigo Duterte's home town, Andolong stressed that it is always the option of the visiting naval force to visit any port they choose.

"They have the option to visit any port which is convenient for them. I don't want to assume anything beyond that. Perhaps the crew wants to see what Davao is like," he added.

The three visiting Chinese ships are the Chang Chun (DDG-150), a guided missile destroyer; Jin Zhou (FF-G532), a guided missile frigate; and, Chao Hu (890), a replenishment ship.

The customary welcome ceremony and port briefing will be conducted upon arrival of the Chinese ships at Sasa Wharf.

The meeting point procedure will be held at a vicinity north of Davao Gulf.

The flotilla is headed by Rear Admiral ShenHao, the Deputy Commander of the East Sea Fleet of the PLA Navy and concurrent Commander in Chief of the PLA Navy Task Group 150.

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<http://www.pna.gov.ph/>

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<http://www.pna.gov.ph/>

'Balikatan' to center on landing supplies for 'typhoon-battered' Aurora

MANILA, April 28 -- In keeping with this year's focus on humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) exercises, the "Balikatan" naval maneuvers on May 8-19 will center on bringing aid to a "typhoon-devastated" Casiguran, Aurora province, spokesperson Maj. Frank Sayson said Friday.

These Civil-Military Activities from the Sea (CMA-S) will be carried out by naval units of the Philippine Navy, Coast Guard and US Navy.

"Our ships with the US and the Philippine Coast Guard will navigate from Subic Bay and will pass through Zambales, Isabela (waters) and then proceed to Casiguran, Aurora to conduct civil assistance coming from the sea, based on the scenario that all entry points in extreme Northern Luzon are blocked due to a strong typhoon," Sayson told the Philippine News Agency (PNA) in an interview.

The culminating event for the CMA-S drills is the landing of relief items and supplies in Casiguran on May 15.

The event will be witnessed by members of the media and distinguished personalities, he added.

"I cannot tell you yet how many assets will be committed by the participants but definitely, the Armed Forces of the Philippines will be fielding many for this activity," Sayson said.
(PFN/PNA)

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<http://www.inquirer.net/>

Chinese Navy vessels to dock in Davao City for goodwill visit

By: Frances Mangosing

Three Chinese Navy vessels will be in the Philippines for a goodwill visit from Sunday (April 30), to Wednesday (May 3), the Eastern Mindanao Command (EastMinCom) said in a new advisory issued on Friday.

The vessels will dock at Sasa Wharf in Davao City, the hometown of President Rodrigo Duterte.

The three vessels are Chang Chun (DDG 150), a guided missile destroyer; Kin Zhou (FFG 532), a guided missile frigate; and Chao Hu (890), a replenishment ship.

The flotilla will be headed by Rear Adm. Shen Hao, the deputy commander of the East Sea Fleet of the People Liberation Army (PLA) Navy and the concurrent commander-in-chief of the PLA Navy Task Group 150.

A welcome ceremony and a port briefing will be conducted on the arrival of the vessels.

Director Arsenio Andolong, spokesperson of the Department of National Defense, said visit of the vessels could mean a gesture of China to highlight warming ties with the Philippines..

"The DND is always open to goodwill visits to our country by foreign navies," Andolong said. "Just like the US, Vietnam, Russia and New Zealand, we welcome China's initiative to visit our country."

Asked for comment about the choice of port of visit, as most foreign visiting navies dock in Manila or Subic, Andolong said that China has the option to dock at any port convenient for them.

"I don't want to assume anything beyond that," he said. "Perhaps the crew wants to see what Davao is like."

It is not clear whether President Rodrigo Duterte will visit the Chinese ships. During the visit of Russian vessels twice this year, the President toured the ships in an attempt to seek closer relations with Moscow.

When Duterte assumed office in 2016, he distanced himself from the United States, the Philippines' traditional ally, and moved closer to its rivals China and Russia.

Last month, he said he would invite a Chinese naval ship to visit the country. /atm

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Zamboanga City mayor nakiusap sa publiko na tumulong sa laban vs ASG

Posted By: Bombo Marilyn Delos Santos

ZAMBOANGA CITY – Umaapela ng tulong sa publiko si Zamboanga City Mayor Maria Isabelle Climaco sa mga miyembro ng kapulisan o militar at iba pang mga “persons in authority” kontra sa may posibleng may link o nagbibigay ng suporta sa grupo ng teroristang Abu Sayyaf at sa iba pang mga armadong grupo.

Ang pahayag ni Climaco ay kasunod sa napabalitang tangkang pag-rescue sana ng isang police official sa mga miyembro ng Abu Syayaf sa kasagsagan ng pagtugis sa mga ito ng tropa ng pamahalaan sa Bohol.

Nagpahayag din ito ng pagkadismaya sa nasabing insidente at umaasa ang lubos na katapatan ng mga otoridad sa lungsod upang maiwasan na magawa ng Abu Sayyaf ang kanilang masamang plano sa lungsod.

Sinabi ni Climaco na sa pamamagitan ng pagbibigay ng mga importanteng impormasyon ay malaking tulong na ito na mapanagot ang mga tiwaling ospisyal kung mayroon man.

Inihayag ng lady mayor na ang “loyalty” ng mga miyembro ng kapulisan ay kailangan magsisimula sa kanilang city director.

“Loyalty to the republic has to start from the City Director down to the lowest rank in the police and it will require a lot of intelligence gathering on the ground in order to determine loyalty to service.”

Ang Zamboanga City ay isa sa mga lugar sa Western Mindanao na nagiging target ng mga armadong grupo kung saan ay marami na ring mga kasapi ng Abu Sayyaf ang naaresto rito at ilang insidente na rin ng krimen ang nangyari katulad na lamang ng pagpapasabog ng bomba.

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Balikatan benefits Ormoc City children, community

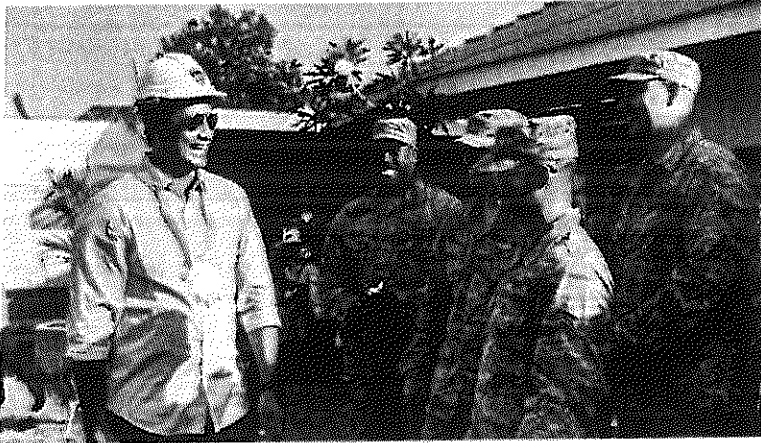


Photo By Staff Sgt. Peter Reft | The Honorable Richard Gomez, mayor of Ormoc City, speaks with U.S. Air Force engineers during a groundbreaking ceremony for Balikatan 2017 in Ormoc City, Leyte, April 25, 2017. Leaders from the Armed Forces of the Philippines, U.S. military, and Ormoc City gathered to commemorate the beginning of engineering projects for new classrooms at Margen Elementary School in Ormoc City. Balikatan is an annual U.S.-Philippine military bilateral exercise focused on a variety of missions, including humanitarian assistance and disaster relief and counterterrorism. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Peter Reft)

ORMOC CITY, Leyte - The only things shining brighter than a clear-sky sun for residents were the eyes and smiles of children as they mingled with Philippine Soldiers and U.S. military engineers during groundbreaking ceremonies at the Don Carlos Elementary School and Margen Elementary School, here, April 25, 2017.

Leaders from the U.S. military, Philippine Army, and Ormoc City conducted the ceremonies to kick off engineering civic action programs that will give students new classrooms.

"What we're doing here now is building classes, social, and civic activities, and I'm very happy that the visiting forces are here together with us now, said the Honorable Richard Gomez, Ormoc City mayor. "This is a wonderful event and we're very grateful Balikatan is happening here in Ormoc City."

The classroom construction projects are possible thanks to the combined efforts of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and U.S. military engineers.

"Balikatan is a Tagalog word meaning 'shoulder-to-shoulder,' and it is the spirit of cooperation," said Philippine Soldier Col. Lowel R. Tan, deputy commander of the 802nd Infantry Brigade, 8th Infantry

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Division.

More than 40 engineers from the AFP, U.S. military, and Australian Army will work shoulder-to-shoulder to build Margen Elementary a new classroom which will increase the school's capacity by approximately 100 students.

"This is all humanitarian service where we can foster and build relationships with the Philippine forces, and we can teach each other new things in order to build this classroom for Ormoc," said U.S. Air Force Maj. Scott Kelly, site commander at Margen Elementary School. "The cross cultural and technical skills learning we get during Balikatan is unmatched."

The learning experience between Balikatan participants will go a long way to enhance future humanitarian assistance efforts. These projects also benefit the children of Ormoc City.

"We are so grateful to have the building for our children because they will have a more comfortable classroom, and we can see their eagerness in coming to school because of it," said Maria Nodalo, a teacher at Margen Elementary School.

www.sunstar.com.ph

Movement of 3 Abu Sayyaf members 'monitored'

And then there were three. Even though the military has admitted that looking for the three remaining Abu Sayyaf members in Bohol is like "looking for a needle in a haystack," getting out of the island has proven difficult for the bandits with almost everyone on the lookout for them. (SunStar Foto/Alan Tangcawan)

SEARCHING for the three remaining Abu Sayyaf members is like looking for a "needle in a haystack."

This was how Capt. Jojo Mascariñas, spokesperson of the 302nd Brigade of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, described the manhunt in Bohol for Asis, Abu Omar or Saad and Ubayda after they discovered that the three are looking for ways to escape, individually.

"It was much easier if we are hunting a group because we can isolate them from the community. But with this, we are looking for three separate persons and our troops will have a hard time," Mascariñas told SunStar Cebu in a phone interview.

The military official said that the three may have already discarded their only firearm so they can approach residents in far-flung sitios in Inabanga and Clarin for help.

Fact from fiction

Recently, a man suspected of being Ubayda asked a farmer for food in Buenos Aires, Tubigon. Mascariñas also appealed to the public to only provide firsthand information and not hearsay.

"It's hard for us to segregate true information from a bogus one because of the influx of reports. Our troops go from one town to another to verify. Just imagine if only a few are positive and the rest are negative and just rumors," he said.

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Mascariñas said residents can conduct a citizen's arrest if they're sure they're dealing with an Abu Sayyaf member after authorities plastered posters with the three men's pictures all over the island.

"But be careful," he added.

Authorities continue to monitor the bandits' movement. Two of them were sighted on board a bus from Talibon to Trinidad last Tuesday afternoon.

Positively identified

Bohol Provincial Police Office Director Senior Supt. Felipe Natividad said they're encouraging bus liners in Bohol to put up the posters with the Abu Sayyaf men's pictures inside their vehicles.

"We are receiving reports. We're talking to the conductors, the drivers and there are a lot of people helping us now so it will take us time to verify all of the information," he said.

Natividad said the bandits are having a hard time blending in with the community. "They are not being supported by the people. They're all angry at them, even the Muslims in Bohol. They don't consider the Abu Sayyaf as Muslims because Muslims are good people," Natividad said.

According to the Military Intelligence Group (MIG) 7, Asis and Abu Omar were recognized when they rode a bus last Tuesday. The conductor, the inspector and the driver confirmed their identities through a poster at the Talibon Bus Terminal.

The Coast Guard and local police have been coordinating after the two men reportedly got off in Trinidad.

Assurance Police have set up a checkpoint in the town, while the Coast Guard is checking departing ferry passengers.

According to the latest update from the Special Investigation Task Group-Bohol (SITG), two of the Abu Sayyaf members were sighted in Barangay Buntod last Thursday night, while the other one was spotted in Barangay Cantuyok yesterday morning.

Both barangays are in Clarin. Natividad said they are verifying information that an Anthony "Tony" Yosup, allegedly Melloria's contact, got on board a boat in Cagayan de Oro and sailed to Jagna, Bohol.

"There are many names that are cropping up. There's a certain Alden Yosup, there's an Anthony and then there's a Saad. We are still verifying the information," he said.

Natividad assured the public that the remaining three Abu Sayyaf members in Bohol will find it difficult getting out of the island.

"The stragglers are still in Bohol, unable to escape, tired and in hiding while possibly waiting for or arranging rescue efforts," the SITG-Bohol said.

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www.ibtimes.sg

Duterte's military operations kill 162 militants including pirate leader since 2016

The Philippine government's Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) has announced that a total of 162 Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) fighters, including a leader of its piracy wing, have been killed as a result of the "search and destroy" military policy campaign of the Duterte government, started in 2016.

Among those killed last week was Commander Muamar Askali, also known as Commander Marwan, an Abu Sayyaf sub leader known for his maritime piracy and kidnapping Western tourists, Malaysian sailors and Indonesian traders in the Southern Philippine border. Marwan, along with 10 other heavily armed militants, sailed off from Southern Philippines to its central region to reportedly disturb the ASEAN summit held this week.

Response to failed talks

The military offensive commenced in July 2016 after a failed proposed peace dialogue between the ASG leaders and the Duterte camp. Since assuming presidency, Duterte has frequented Sulu and Basilan, the cradle of the ASG, to send a diplomatic message to the fighters to release the Canadian and Norwegian hostages but the ASG beheaded two Canadian captives defying the president's call. The ongoing fierce battle also costed the lives of 29 foot soldiers, most of whom were victims of ambush attacks of the ASG.

Before the military offensives, Duterte had appealed to the ASG that the war in Basilan and Sulu is a futile exercise. Moreover, he urged the militants to stop the war for the sake of the children of the provinces. But Duterte's message fell on deaf ears and as a result of the dialogue deadlock, the leader sent 10,000 highly trained scout rangers and battle-tested marine soldiers to wipe out the ASG.

Despite the heavy casualties suffered by the ASG, it still managed to hold 23 hostages - five Filipinos and 18 foreigners, including a Japanese and few Europeans.

Many residents in the Southern Philippines were surprised about how ASG could intensify their kidnapping activity despite the heavy military pressure. The militant group has been using the Philippine-Malaysia border to prey on their prospective kidnap victims because of the long coastline that makes it hard for marine security authorities to patrol the ocean.

The ASG raked in at least USD 10m in their 'kidnap for ransom' since 2012 and reportedly used some of the ransom money to bribe village officials, community residents and politicians to mislead military soldiers to run after them.

Focus on Asean maritime security

Duterte also announced that it would like to collaborate with Malaysia and Indonesia to form a more intensive security plan in the border. ASEAN maritime security will also be among the priority topics to be discussed in the ASEAN summit to be held in Manila from April 26-29, 2017.

While the ASG remains a security threat to the Philippine-Malaysia border, the Philippine government is no longer relying on military offensive but it is also exploring the use of development efforts to stop terrorism and soon it will collaborate with her two neighboring countries (Indonesia and Malaysia) to prevent piracy and kidnapping activities in the border.

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