

Army Vision: By 2031, a world-class Army that is a source of national pride



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NEWS CLIPPINGS

31 December 2017

Sunday

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

TABLE OF CONTENTS

31 DECEMBER 2017

PAGE NR.	TITLE	WRITER	NEWSPAPER
1	Weather Forecast	-	PDI p.A4
HEADLINES			
2-3	New year, new tax: Diesel, LPG prices up	Jess Diaz	Phil Star p.1
4-6	Expect wet, stormy new year in South	Jeannette Andrade, Jaymee Gamil & Joey Gabienta	PDI p.A1
ARMY RELATED NEWS			
7	4 sundalo sugatan sa aksidente	-	Balita p.5
AFP RELATED NEWS			
8	30% of Marawi battle zone cleared of bombs	Jaime Laude	Phil Star p.10
9	Reds show true color as enemies of the state	John Paolo Bencito	Mla Stardard p.A2
10	Red are in deed enemies of the state and people-Palace	Argyll Cyrus Geducos	Mla Bulletin p.2
11	CPP NPA binira ng Palasyo	Tina Mendez at Jose Rodel Clapano	Bulgar p.2
12	Photo- Guerillas	Czar Dancel	Tempo p.3
EDITORIAL/COMMENTARY			
13	Accomplishments and sorrow	-	Phil Star p.10
14	Militar ang kalaban	Atty. Jose Sison	Ngayon p.7
15	Kontrobersyal at maaksiyong 2017 para sa 'Pinas	Dianara Alegre at Elaine Dorothy Cal	Balita p.2
ONLINE NEWS			
16	Security tightened after authorities nab NPA leader	-	News.mb.com.ph
17-18	AFP troops deter harassment of communities by NPA units	-	www.mb.com.ph
19	Troops, NPA clash hours before start of New Year ceasefire	-	www.gmanetwork.com
20-21	AFP to observe Dec. 30 to Jan. 2 ceasefire with Reds	-	www.philstar.com
22-23	Palace on CPP's 2018 goal oust Duterte: They're really enemies of the state	-	www.philstar.com
24	Boy hurt in Cotabato grenade blast	-	www.gmanetwork.com
25	Martial law extensions 876.67% more than original declaration-Lagman	Lira Fernandez	www.interaksyon.com

31 December 2017



Page: 44

www.panahon.tv /PanahonTV

BALANCED NEWS + FEARLESS VIEWS

TODAY'S WEATHER FORECAST | DECEMBER 31, 2017 | SUNDAY

PHILIPPINE AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY (PAR)

TAI- END OF A COLD FRONT AFFECTING THE EASTERN SECTION OF SOUTHERN LUZON AND VISAYAS NORTHEAST MONSOON AFFECTING NORTHERN AND CENTRAL LUZON AS OF 5:00 AM - DECEMBER 30, 2017

SUNRISE	SUNSET
 6:21 AM	 5:37 PM
MOONRISE	MOONSET
 3:53 PM	 2:00 AM
NEW MOON	FIRST QUARTER
 DEC 16 2:30 PM	 DEC 26 9:20 PM
LOW TIDE	HIGH TIDE
MANILA SOUTH HARBOR	
 3:46 AM -0.08 Meter	 10:23 AM 0.27 Meter

- Partly cloudy to at times cloudy with rainshowers
- Partly cloudy to at times cloudy with rainshowers and/or thunderstorms
- Cloudy skies with rainshowers and/or thunderstorms
- Light rains

	JAN 1	JAN 2	JAN 1	JAN 2	JAN 1	JAN 2		
METRO MANILA	 23 - 29 °C	 24 - 30 °C	TAGAYTAY	 18 - 29 °C	 18 - 29 °C	TACLOBAN	 24 - 30 °C	 24 - 30 °C
TUGUEGARAO	 20 - 24 °C	 22 - 27 °C	LEGAZPI	 25 - 29 °C	 25 - 30 °C	CAGAYAN DE ORO	 23 - 31 °C	 23 - 31 °C
LAOAG	 20 - 29 °C	 21 - 30 °C	PUERTO PRINCESA	 25 - 30 °C	 25 - 31 °C	METRO DAVAO	 25 - 31 °C	 25 - 32 °C
BAGUIO	 15 - 20 °C	 15 - 20 °C	ILOILO/ BACOLOD	 26 - 28 °C	 26 - 30 °C	ZAMBOANGA	 24 - 32 °C	 24 - 33 °C
SBMA/ CLARK	 24 - 30 °C	 24 - 29 °C	METRO CEBU	 25 - 30 °C	 25 - 30 °C			

MONDAY - FRIDAY
11 AM & 5 PM

WEEKDAYS
6 AM, 6:30 PM & 9 PM
WEEKENDS
6 AM

3 | December 2017



Page: ___/___

New year, new tax: Diesel, LPG prices up

By JESS DIAZ

The new tax on diesel, liquefied petroleum gas, kerosene and bunker fuel for electricity generation and higher taxes on other oil products are scheduled to take effect tomorrow.

The new and higher levies are expected to cause a domino effect on transport fares, cost of electricity and consumer prices.

Also scheduled to take effect at the start of the New Year is the reduction in income tax.

The levies and income tax cut are contained in Republic Act No. 10963, or the Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion (TRAIN) law.

There is no excise tax at present on diesel, kerosene, cooking gas and bunker fuel.

The tax on diesel and bunker fuel starts at P2.50 per liter in 2018, going up by P2 to P4.50 in 2019 and by P1.50 to P6 in 2020.

The levy on cooking gas will be P1 per kilogram next year, increasing by another P1 to P2 in 2019 and another P1 to P3 in 2020.

The tax on kerosene starts at P3, going up by P1 to P4 in 2019 and another P1 to P5 in 2020.

Existing impositions on other oil products like gasoline, asphalt, waxes and aviation fuel will likewise go up.

Turn to Page 4

New year From Page 1

The tax on gasoline, for instance, will increase from P4.35 per liter to P7 in 2018, to P9 in 2019 and P10 in 2020.

Also going up are levies on cars for the mass market, while those on luxury vehicles will go down.

The income tax cut will benefit at least 7.5 million salaried workers, according

to Quirino Rep. Dakila Cua, who chairs the House ways and means committee, and his Senate counterpart, Sen. Sonny Angara.

The TRAIN law increases the tax-free income of employees to P250,000 a year or P20,833 a month.

Angara cited concrete examples of how the law

would greatly benefit wage earners.

He said under the present tax code, a taxpayer who is single is entitled to a personal annual tax exemption of P50,000 or P4,167 a month.

"This will increase to P250,000 in January, or an additional annual income of P200,000 that will not be subject to tax. The adjustment will translate into an additional monthly tax-free income of

P16,667," he said.

Angara said in the case of a working couple, they will enjoy a combined tax-free income of P500,000 a year or P41,667 a month. At present, they are only entitled to exemptions of up to P200,000.

"This means that they will have an additional annual tax-free income of P300,000 or P25,000 a month," he added.

He also pointed out that the monthly income of P20,833

that is not subject to tax under the TRAIN law is equivalent to the entry-level pay in public schools. Thus, most public school teachers will no longer pay income tax.

Even critics of the new law concede that it would benefit millions of salaried workers.

However, they said what wage earners will gain from reduced income tax will be more than offset by new and higher taxes on oil products,

expanded coverage of the 12-percent value added tax and other levies.

They pointed out that the net impact of the combination of lower income tax, on one hand, and new and higher taxes and other measures, on the other hand, is that the same group of taxpayers who will benefit from TRAIN and the public in general would pay an additional P130 billion a year.

31 December 2017



Page: A1

EXPECT WET, STORMY NEW YEAR IN SOUTH

STORY BY JEANNETTE L. ANDRADE, JAYMEE T. GAMIL AND JOEY A. GABIETA

Stormy weather is expected over large areas of Mindanao and southern portions of the Visayas as the country welcomes the New Year. The weather bureau says an approaching low pressure area could develop into a tropical storm during the first days of 2018 and follow the destructive path of two recent storms. **A2**

Pagasa: Expect wet, stormy days in the New Year

FROM A1

Stormy weather is expected over large areas of Mindanao and southern portions of the Visayas when the country welcomes the first days of the New Year with an approaching low pressure area (LPA), according to the weather bureau.

In Eastern Visayas and Mindanao, where many provinces suffered from two successive storms in the past weeks, thousands of people who had fled their homes due to floods remained in evacuation centers where they had sought shelter from Tropical Storms "Urduja" (international name: Kai-Tak) and "Vinta" (international name: Tembin).

Evacuation centers

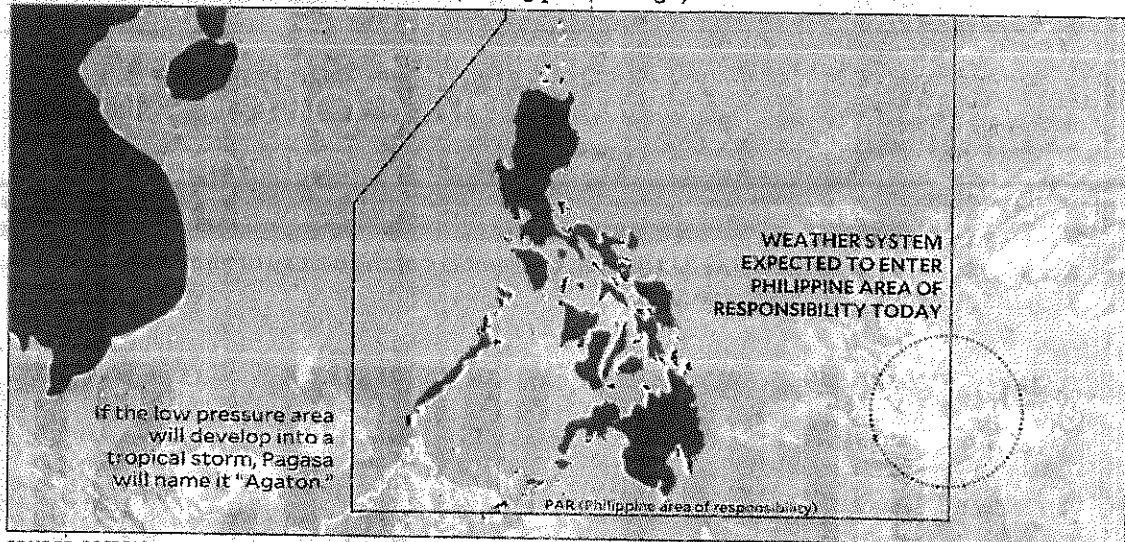
Mina Marasigan, spokesperson for the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) on Saturday said 89,611 individuals from 18,289 families were still in 99 evacuation centers in the provinces of Palawan, Zamboanga del Norte, Bukidnon, Lanao del Norte, Misamis Oriental, Compostela Valley, Davao del Norte, Davao City, North Cotabato, Lanao del Sur and Maguindanao.

More than 4,000 other families displaced by Vinta were staying with relatives, she said.

"We are not expecting these families to return (home) soon," Marasigan said, citing the weather forecast indicating that the LPA would develop into a tropical cyclone which would follow the

PAGASA WEATHER FORECAST

(As of 5 p.m., Dec. 30)



SOURCE: DOST PAGASA

INQ GRAPHICS

same paths of Urduja and Vinta.

The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) on Saturday said the LPA was initially expected to enter the Philippine area of responsibility on Sunday.

More rains in Mindanao

Mindanao is expected to bear the brunt of the rainfall in the next few days. Light to moderate rains and thunderstorms are expected over Mindanao until New Year's Eve, but the rains are expected to intensify occasionally, accompanied by gusty winds, on New Year's Day until Jan. 2.

Light to heavy rains also would be brought to Luzon by the northeast monsoon ("ami-

han") and to the Visayas by the tail end of a cold front beginning New Year's Eve until Jan. 2, Pagasa said.

Cloudy skies with light rains over the eastern section of northern and central Luzon, including Metro Manila were forecast until Jan. 2. Light to moderate rains would be experienced in the Bicol region until Sunday, while the rest of Luzon would have partly cloudy skies and light rains.

'Agaton'

Pagasa said there was a 50 percent chance that the LPA would develop into the first tropical cyclone of 2018. It would be called "Agaton" once it develops into a tropical depression

and forecast to make landfall in eastern Visayas or eastern Mindanao sometime during the first two days of 2018, said weather specialist Gener Quitlong.

Pagasa warned of possible flash floods and landslides in the Davao and Caraga regions, including Bukidnon, Misamis Oriental and the Samar and Leyte provinces.

The southern portions of the Visayas also would be affected by moderate to heavy rains with gusty winds on the first two days of 2018, it said.

Marasigan said the NDRRMC and local governments have prepositioned relief goods and emergency teams but reminded the public, particularly residents in areas previously affected by

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Urduja and Vinta, to be prepared, stay updated and follow evacuation orders by authorities.

Gale warning

Pagasa also issued a gale warning due to the northeast monsoon, saying it would cause rough to very rough waters on the northern and eastern seaboard of northern Luzon, the northern seaboard of central Luzon, the eastern, western and southern seaboard of southern Luzon, and the eastern and western seaboard of the Visayas.

Authorities have reported that Urduja and Vinta left at least 208 people dead, close to 80 missing and 223 injured, most of them from the latter storm.

Vinta also caused P1.2 billion in damage to agriculture in eastern Visayas, the Zamboanga Peninsula and in the northern Mindanao, Davao and Caraga regions.

The Zamboanga Peninsula, northern Mindanao and Davao region suffered P242.7 million in infrastructure damage.

State of calamity

Two more towns in Zamboanga del Norte—Gutalac and Siocon—have been declared under a state of calamity.

Nine other areas devastated by Vinta were previously placed under a state of calamity including the entire Lanao del Norte; Tambulig, Zamboanga del Sur; Labason and Salug municipalities in Zamboanga del Norte; Kabasalan, Zamboanga Sibugay; and the towns of Balabac, Aborlan and Bataraza in Palawan.

The approaching storm has

caused new worries for residents of Biliran, one of the provinces severely damaged by Urduja on Dec. 16.

Merlie Ningasca, 53, said Naval, the provincial capital, was still reeling from the devastation.

Traumatized

"We are scared. We have not fully recovered because of Urduja and yet there are reports that there is another possible storm coming to our place," said the mother of three children.

Landslides wrought havoc to her barangay of Santo Niño, 2 kilometers away from the Naval town center.

Raul Villordon, Naval municipal disaster management officer, said residents now knew what to do when another storm lashes the town.

"They are still in trauma due to what they have experienced when Urduja hit Naval," he said. "They themselves evacuate to their designated evacuation centers like our gym and schools."

The landslides triggered by Urduja's rains killed 25 people in Naval, 20 of them from Barangay Lucsoon where six people remained missing.

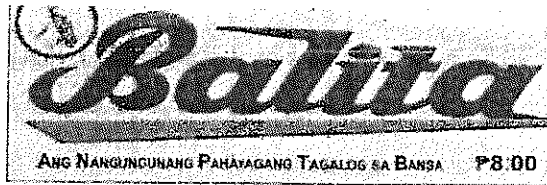
Villordon said the effort to retrieve the missing under tons of debris would continue until all six were recovered.

"That is the desire of their loved ones though we are facing difficulties in recovering them due to bad weather and the boulders that entombed them," he said. —REPORTS FROM JEAN-

NETTE I. ANDRADE, JAYMEE T. GAMIL AND JOÉY A. GABIETA INQ.

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31 December 2017



Page. 5

4 sundalo sugatan sa aksidente

Sugatan ang apat na sundalo makaraang nahulog sa bangin ang sinasakyang Philippine Army truck sa Barangay Kahusayan, Kitaotao, Bukidnon, inilulat kahapon.

Ayon sa report ng Kitaotao Municipal Police, nasugatan sina Sgt. Roel Jandayan, Cpl Edim Salamida, PFC Ebmer Esmerial, at PFC John Paul Valenzuela, mga tauhan ng 88th Infantry Battalion (IB) ng Army.

Nangyan ang aksidente makaraang iwasan umano ng military truck na minamaneho ni PFC Valenzuela ang isang bus hanggang sa bumulusek ang truck sa bangin na may lalim na 10 metro.

31 December 2017



Page: 10

30% of Marawi battle zone cleared of bombs

By JAIME LAUDE

Around 30 percent of the main battle area in Marawi has been cleared of unexploded ordnance and improvised explosive devices (IEDs).

"As of Dec. 15, a total of 2,853 assorted unexploded ordnance and 415 IEDs were recovered by personnel of the Joint Engineer Task Group (JETG) headed by Maj. Gen. Arnold Rafael Depakakibo, Col. Romeo Brawner, Joint Task Force Marawi deputy commander, said.

The unexploded bombs were either dropped by mil-

itary planes or planted by Maute militants and their supporters during the fighting with government troops.

Explosives and Ordnance Disposal Company operatives as well as Army and Air Force K-9 units are assisting JETG personnel in clearing operations.

Brawner said military engineers also finished clearing

operations on 20 kilometers of primary and secondary roads, three bridges, a school and three places of worships, allowing the conduct of post-conflict needs assessment by the Department of Public Works and Highways.

Military engineers are likewise assisting the Housing and Urban Coordinating Council in the construction of temporary shelters for Marawi evacuees.

At least 250 temporary shelters were turned over to families whose houses were destroyed in the fighting.

Brawner said another 250

units are expected to be turned over to another 250 families next month.

"More than 500 military engineers are deployed in Marawi as part of the JETG. The task group is supporting the recovery, reconstruction and rehabilitation operations of Task Force Bangon Marawi," he said.

JETG personnel are also involved in reconnaissance and surveys, road and site clearing, wall breaching and timber cutting operations, as well as construction of ramps and platforms for mechanized assets.



31 December 2017

Manila
Standard

Page: AZ

REDS SHOW TRUE COLOR AS ENEMIES OF THE STATE

By John Paolo Bencito

THE ambitious goal of the Communist Party of the Philippines—seeking the ouster of President Rodrigo Duterte—only shows they are “enemies of the state,” the Palace said Saturday.

“Kung gustong pabagsakin ng CPP-NPA-NDF ang ating Pangulo, pinapabagsak din nila ang gobyerno [If the CPP-NPA-NDF wants to oust our President, they’re overthrowing

the government as well],” Communications Secretary Martin Andanar told state-run Radyo Pilipinas.

“Ibig sabihin [It only means that] they are really enemies of the state

and they are enemies of the people,” he added.

The CPP, during the celebration of the communist movement’s 49th anniversary, warned that Duterte will suffer the same fate as two of his predecessors while the party built “the broadest united front” to overthrow him.

“The Filipino people are suffering gravely under the Duterte regime. The entire Party and all revolutionary forces must exert vigorous efforts to unite the Filipino people in a broad united front to resist and overthrow the fascist Duterte re-

gime, as they did the Marcos dictatorship and the Estrada regime,” the communist party said.

As it celebrates its 50th anniversary next year, the CPP said it want to end the current administration’s “fascist tyranny, all-out economic liberalization and bureaucratic corruption.”

They likewise called on its cadres to “frustrate” the plan of Duterte to defeat the NPA before the end of 2018, and do more attacks on the guerrilla fronts in the eastern Mindanao and other regions, and then in Luzon and Visayas.

31 December 2017

MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

Page: 2

Reds are in deed enemies of the state and people – Palace

By ARGYL CYRUS B. GERECOS

Malacañang is convinced that the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army-National Democratic Front (CPP-NPA-NDF) are enemies of the State following their declaration to resist and overthrow President Duterte on their 50th anniversary in 2018.

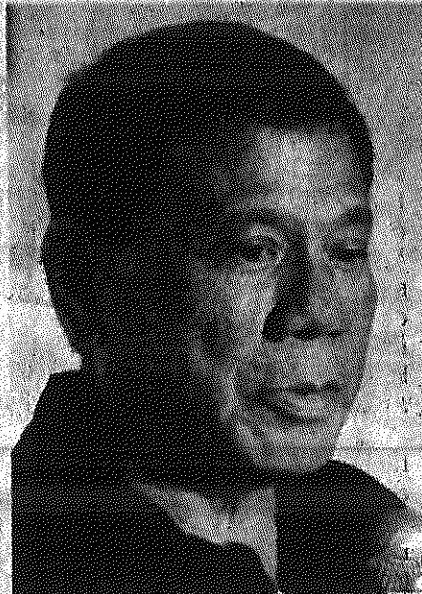
The CPP Central Committee released its plans for its 50th anniversary on Friday, revealing that one of their priorities is to build the broadest united front to overthrow the "US-Duterte regime and its rule of fascist terror."

According to Presidential Communications Operations Office (PCOO) Secretary Martin Andanan, the communists just showed their true colors.

"Kung 'yun ang pagbabanta ng (if that's the threat of the) CPP-NPA-NDF, then it only goes to show that they are really enemies of the state," Andanan said in an interview over Radyo Pilipinas Saturday.

The Palace official added that the NPA is not just making an enemy out of the government, but is also of the Filipino people since the President is duly elected by the people.

"Kung ang isang grupo na organisado ay gustong pabagsakim ang gobyerno ay ibig sabihin hindi lang ho 'yung Pangulo 'yung nilalabanan nila kung di 'yung buong sambayanan na bumoto doon sa Pangulo (If an organized group



PRESIDENT DUTERTE

is out to topple the government, it only means that it is fighting not only the President but also the people who voted for him)," Andanan said.

Recently, the President slammed the CPP-NPA, who he described as egoists, for violating their own Christmas ceasefire.

Duterte has terminated the peace talks with the CPP-NPA-NDF after the NPA staged an ambush in Talakag, Bukidnon last month which resulted in the death of a police officer and a four-month-old baby.

M | December 2017



Pahina. 2

Sa planong patalsikin si Duterte CPP NPA binira ng Palasyo

Binatikos kahapon ng Malakanyang ang Communist Party of the Philippines at ang armadong sangay nitong New People's Army dahil sa layunin nitong pabagsakin si Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte.

Pinuna ni Presidential Communications Secretary Martin Andanar na ang hakbang na ito ng CPP-NPA ay nagpapatunay lamang sa akusasyon ng administrasyong Duterte na kaaway ng estado ang komunistang grupo.

"Kung iyan ang banta ng CPP-NPA-NDF (National Democratic Front), ipinapakita lamang na sila ay mga kaaway ng estado," sabi ni Andanar sa isang panayam sa radyo.

Sa isang pahayag na may petsang Disyembre 26 na ipinoste sa website ng NDF noong Disyembre 27, ipinangako ng CPP na ipagdiriwang nito ang ika-50 anibersaryo nito sa taong 2018 sa pamamagitan ng pagpapabagsak sa administrasyon ni Duterte.

Isa umano sa magiging prayoridad ng CPP-NPA sa taong 2018 ang pagbuo ng pinakamalawak na nagkakaisang prente para patalsikin ang tinatawag nitong US-Duterte regime.

Sa planong ito, ayon kay Andanar, hindi lang ang Pangulo ang kinakalaban ng CPP-NPA kundi pati na rin ang buong sambayanang Pilipino.

"Dahil isang organisadong grupo na nais pabagsakin ang pamahalaan, nangangahulugan ito na hindi lang ang Pangulo ang kanilang kinatapan kundi pati na rin ang buong sambayanang Pilipino na nagluklok sa Presidente sa kapangyarihan," diin ni Andanar.

Sabi pa ni Andanar, "Alam mo naman na nagsabi na ho ang Pangulo natin na sila po ay maituturing na terorista at hinihintay na lang natin iyong pasya ng korte 'di ba? Na sila po talaga ay maging ganap na isang teroristang organisasyon."

Sa anibersaryo ng CPP noong Biyernes, binatikos ng CPP-NPA ang mga patakaran ni Duterte kabilang ang madugong giyera laban sa droga, pagpataw ng batas military sa Mindanao at mga pag-atake sa Bangsamoro, Cordillera, Lumad at iba pang mga katutubo. (Tina Mendez at Jose Rodel Clapano)

3/ December 2017

Tempo

Page. 3



GUERILLAS of the New People's Army are in formation during the 49th anniversary of the communist rebel in Sierra Madre mountains, days after President Duterte ordered a stop to peace talks between the communist rebels and the government. (Czar Dancel)

31 December 2017



Page: 10

Accomplishments and sorrow

President Duterte and Malacañang officials summed up the

EDITORIAL

year that is soon to pass: accomplishments were achieved in several areas, but there was also deep sorrow, all the way to the final week of 2017.

The siege of Marawi embodied this. A city was almost entirely lost as Maute terrorists, inspired by the Islamic State's armies of death, launched an attack. Civilians died and homes were razed over five months of blistering firefights. Soldiers and police commandos lost their lives in the battle to retake the city. But the government forces emerged victorious, killing most of the militants including the Maute brothers and IS "emir" Isnilon Hapilon. President Duterte can also consider it his accomplishment that the Supreme Court upheld his Mindanao-wide martial law, and Congress extended it all the way to the end of 2018.

Before the year was over, the President enacted several of his legislative priorities, particularly the TRAIN or Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion – a critical component of his so-called "Build Build Build" infrastructure program. The annual national appropriation for 2018 was also passed on time.

Despite concerns initially raised by the declaration of martial law all over Mindanao, the country successfully hosted the summit and related meetings of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations as the grouping celebrated its 50th year. The country's

hosting of the Miss Universe contest was also without a hitch.

The year had its share of turbulence: Sen. Leila de Lima was arrested; Andres Bautista was impeached and resigned as elections chairman; Chief Justice Maria Lourdes Sereno is battling impeachment. The President's son Paolo and son-in-law Manases Carpio were implicated in the smuggling of P6.4 billion worth of shabu.

The final month of the year was also marked by deadly disasters. Tropical Storm Vinta left at least 240 people dead and many more still missing in Mindanao as it unleashed flash floods and landslides that buried entire communities. Before Christmas Day, Vinta made a second landfall in Palawan, leaving 11 people dead and at least 27 missing. Vinta followed Tropical Storm Urduja, which killed at least 54 people as it roared across the Visayas. The search for the missing from Vinta had not yet ended when a fire engulfed the NCCC shopping mall in Davao City before Christmas Day, killing 38 people.

Apart from these deaths, it was also a sorrowful Christmas for those who lost their loved ones in the bloody campaign against illegal drugs. The killing of teenagers took the police out of the lead role in the war, and the number of deaths under investigation has since dropped dramatically. This touch of humanity in a complex war can be considered another accomplishment, as the nation prepares for a new year.

3 | December 2017



Pahina. 7



Militar ang kalaban (Unang bahagi)

NOONG Oktubre 24, 2007, ipinatupad ng Supreme Court ang batas na tinatawag na "*Writ of Amparo*". Layunin nito na bigyan ng solusyon ang problema tungkol sa mga extralegal killings at sapilitang pagkawala ng mga tao. Ang extralegal killings ay ang walang-awang pagpatay na hindi dumaaan sa proseso ng batas at hudikatura. Ang sapilitang pagkawala naman ay tungkol sa pag-atesto, pagdampot o pagkidnap ng isang tao ng mismong gobyerno o ng isang organisadong grupo o ng mga indibidwal sa utos mismo ng mga nakatataas. Ang pananahimik ng pamahalaan o ang tikom na bibig ng mga nasa katungkulan tungkol sa sinapiit ng mga taong ito ay ang dahilan kung bakit ipinatupad ang nasabing batas. At mas nabigyan ng linaw ito sa kaso ng magkapatid na sina Manny at Raffy.

Sina Manny at Raffy ay mga residente ng isang barangay sa probinsiya ng Luzon nakilalang pinamumugaran ng mga NPA. Sa katanayan nga, may isang kapatid sila na kilalang NPA lider, si Ka Rody, na kinasusuklamang ng mga tao sa kanilang lugar lalo ang mga pamilya ng kanilang naging biktima sa summary execution.

Isang hapon, natutulog si Manny sa kanyang bahay nang biglang dumating ang anim na sundalong pinamumunuan nina M/Sgt. Roland at Pfc. Diego na nakasuot ng puting t-shirt, patig na pantalon at army boots. Bigla na lang pumasok sa bahay ang grupo at ginising si Manny sa pag-aakalang ito si Ka Rody. Todo tanggi ang ina ni Manny na si Edna at pilit ipinapaliwanag na hindi si Ka Rody ang hinuhuli nila pero pinosasan pa rin ni Sgt. Roland si Manny at dinata sa likod bahay kung saan siya inumpisahan na bugbugin ng mga sundalo. Pagkatapos ay dinata siya sa may kalsada. Humingi siya ng saklolo sa ina pero agad itong hinarang at pinahinto ng tatlong sundalo.

Apat sa kumuha kay Manny ay ang magkapatid na Leo, Cardo, Pablo at Ric. Mga miyembro sila ng CAFGU at sila ang nagsilbing look-out sa tulong ng dalawa pang magkapatid na sina Romy at Doming. Pinirangan nila ang mga mata ni Manny at pagkatapos ay isinakay sa isang puting van na minamaneho ni Sgt. Roland. Matapos ang sandaling biyahe, huminto ang van at kumuha pa ng isang

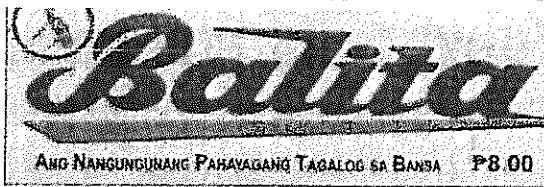
(Sundan sa pahina 7)

IKAW AT ANG BATAS... Mula p. 6

sakay na nakapiring din ang mata. Habang nasa daan ay pareho silang binubugbog. Kalaunan ay nakilala ni Manny na ang kasama niya ay si Raffy na kanyang kapatid. Pareho silang dinukot sa pag-aakalang mga kasapi sila ng NPA dahil sa kapatid nilang si Ka Rody.

(Itutuloy)

3 | December 2017



Page. 2

Kontrobersiyal at maaksiyong 2017 para sa 'Pinas

Nina Dianara T. Alegre at Ellaine Dorothy S. Cal

MILITAR VS MAUTE Ilan lamang ito sa mga maaksiyong eksena sa gitna ng limang buwang bakbakan ng puwersa ng gobyerno at ng Maute-ISIS sa Marawi City. **MARK BALMORES**

Makalipas ang isang taon at anim na traw ang panunungkulan ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte sa bansa, talos buwan-buwan ay may bagong umiiksenang pangyayari sa Pilipinas.

Narito ang ilan sa pinakamalaking kaganapan nitoong 2017 na sumubok at ligit pang nagpalibay ng loob ni Juan'.

Sa pagpasok ng 2017, maagang tagumpay ang sumalubong sa bansa makatapos ng pagtatapos ng Misyon Militar ng mga Al-Qaeda Philippines sa Saranggani noong Enero 5.

Makalipas ang ilang araw, bumitlog ang buwan-buwanang pagkalahimayag sa paglakot sa Lungsod ng Businessman sa Iloilo City sa Angkor City, Pampanan at nagpalayap sa loob mismo ng Camp Crame sa Quezon City. Ang mga suspel mga pulis na nagsantayala umano sa drug war ang pulisya.

Makalipas ang anim na isang buwan, Pebrero 20, naging maikilit ang isang tungkol sa educational field trip makatapos ng bumangga sa poste ng kuryente ang tourist bus ng mga estudyante na naging nag-arating sa sa Janat, Rizal, at nang nasawi.

Hindi naman nagpahuli sa kontrobersiya ang Senado sa pagkakaaresto kay Senator Lela de Lima noong Pebrero 24 kasabay ng umano'y pagkakaaresto sa bahayan ng illegal na droga sa New Bilibid Prison (NBP).

Naging makasaysayan naman ang 30th Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Summit sa Philippine International Convention Center sa Pasay City noong Abril 26-Abril 29. Bilang host country, idinaos din sa bansa ang 50th Golden Anniversary Celebration ng ASEAN noong Agosto 8 na simundaring 31st ASEAN Summit noong Nobyembre 13-Nobyembre 15.

Pagsapit ng Mayo 17, napawalang-sala ang umano'y pork barrel scam queen na si Janet Lim-Napoles sa kasong illegal detention, na isinampa ng whistleblower na si Benhur Luy.

Atang pinakamalaking istorya ng 2017 ay nangyan noong Mayo 23 nang sinalakay ng Maute-ISIS ang Marawi City, Lanao del Sur, na sinundan ng pagdedeklaran ni Pangulong Duterte ng

60-araw na batas militar sa Mindanao.

Nahangpudin sa pagsubok ang Bureau of Customs (BoC) makatapos ng buking nitoong Mayo 26 ang nakapulisit na P6.4 milyon shabu mula sa China, nang masama ang nasabing kontrabando sa isang bodega sa Valenzuela City. Kasunod ng pagkakabunyag ng kurapsiyon sa BoC, naghiitw sa puwesto si Nicanor Faeldon bilang BoC commissioner, kasama ang iba pang opisyal ng kawatunan. Nasindak naman si Juan sa pamamamant at panununog ng nag-iisang armado sa Resorts World Manila sa Pasay, na kinasaw ng 38 kasapi noong Hulyo 2.

Hindi naman nakalutas sa drug raid si Ozam City, Misamis Occidental Mayor Reynaldo Parojinog, at ang kanyang asawa, at 14 na iba pa nang masawi sila sa anti-drug operation sa kanilang komunidad noong Hulyo 30.

Iligat pang naging kontrobersiyal ang drug war nang sumabog ang pagalit ng publiko sa pagkakaaresto ng mga pulis-Caloocan sa mga teenager na sina Kian Loyd delos Santos noong Agosto 16, Carl Angelo Armatz noong Agosto 18, at Reynaldo "Kulot" de Guzman na nang unang nakalutas sa sipasa Nueva Ecija noong Setyembre 5.

Isa rin sa mga pinag-usapan sa buong bansa ang pagkamatay ng hazing victim na si Honoracio "Atto" Castillo, USI law student at miyembro ng Aegis Juris Internatsyonal noong Setyembre 17.

Manuturing namang tagumpay ang pagkalahapang sa Abu Sayyaf leadership Isnilon Hapilon at sa lider ng Maute-ISIS na si Omar Maute sa Marawi noong Oktubre 16. Kinabukasan, idineklara ng Pangulo ang paglaya ng siyudad sa kamay ng mga rebelde hanggang sa iproklama ang pagtatapos ng limang-buwanang digmaan sa lungsod noong Oktubre 23.

At bago malapos ang taon, magkakaroon pang trabahya ang sumubok sa mga Pinoy sa pagbayo ng bagyong 'Unhuk' sa Bicol at Eastern Visayas nitoong Disyembre 19, na kinasawi ng 54 na katao, at 'Yinta' na pumalay naman ng 240 sa Mindanao at Visayas nitoong Disyembre 22. Dalawang araw bago ang Pasko, Disyembre 25, nang masinog ang NCCC Mall sa Davao City, at 38 ang nasawi sa insidente.

15

ONLINE NEWS

31 DECEMBER 2017

Security tightened after authorities nab NPA leader

From the Manila Bulletin (Dec 29):

T'boli, South Cotabato- Authorities have tightened security measures here following the arrest of a high-ranking leader of the New People's Army (NPA) who is facing criminal charges for the abduction a soldier and burning of heavy equipment owned by a private construction firm here.

Chief Insp. Ramil Villagracia, T'boli police chief, identified the suspect as Rey Blase,44, a leader of the NPA-Front 73 operating in the provinces of South Cotabato and Sarangani, who was nabbed by police operatives in his house in Barangay Dumangas here last Thursday.

He said Blase had been charged with kidnapping and serious illegal detention for the abduction of Private Khen Subere, a member of the 27th Infantry Battalion who was seized by suspected NPA rebels while driving his motorcycle in Barangas Dumangas here last April 2015.

Subere was later released in Kiamba, Sarangani by the NPA rebels after a month-long captivity following the intervention of then Davao City Mayor Rodrigo Duterte.

Police said Blasé is also facing arson charges for the burning of heavy equipment owned by a private construction firm in Barangay Edwards, Tboli in April 2015.

Villagracia said additional policemen and Army soldiers have been deployed to secure the police station where the captured NPA leader is presently detained following intelligence information that the NPA rebels were out to rescue their detained comrade.

<https://news.mb.com.ph>

AFP troops deter harassment of communities by NPA units

From the Manila Bulletin (Dec 30):

CAMP BANCASI, Butuan City – Combat troops of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) will continue to protect and defend village communities against harassment perpetrated by the New People's Army (NPA) terrorists, disclosed regional Army spokesman on Saturday.

FILE PHOTO: Tanks of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (Mark Balmores/MANILA BULLETIN)

In a statement to The Manila Bulletin, Capt. Jerry S. Lamosao, regional Army spokesman of 10th Infantry (Agila) Division (10th ID), said the NPA terrorists attempted to harass some far-flung village communities in Compostela Valley (ComVal) and Davao Oriental provinces but were prevented by the combat maneuvering battalions of the 10th ID.

Combat maneuvering troops of the 71st Infantry Battallion (71st IB) recovered 2 units (Anti-Tank) of Improvised Explosive Devices (IED), weighing 30 kilos each, believed to be emplaced by members of SECOM 27 and SRC 2 of the CPP-NPA Southern Mindanao Regional Committee (SMRC) at the vicinity of Sitio Lower Mahayag, Barangay Nuevo Iloco, Mawab, ComVal province at 8:20 a.m. on Wednesday(Dec, 27), the 10th ID spokesperson claimed.

Prior to the recovery of the IEDs, 71st IB commander Lt. Col. Esteveyn E. Ducusin received information from a concerned citizen that IEDs were hidden at the rice field in the vicinity of Lower Mahayag of that same town of Mawab which prompted the battalion commander to dispatch his combat troops to verify that led to the discovery of the IEDs, Capt. Lamosao said.

At 1:50 p.m. on Thursday (Dec. 28), elements of 66th IB were deployed to respond and verify the information from the local residents that there were armed men believed to be NPA terrorists roaming around in their community, prompting the security patrol to proceed to the reported area. They encountered an undetermined number of NPA terrorists for 20 minutes at vicinity Sitio Mabugnao, Barangay Las Arenas, Pantukan town of the same province, the regional Army spokesman said.

Sensing reinforcements from nearby areas were coming, the enemy force withdrew towards the southwest direction of Sitio Mabugnao. There was no casualty on the government side.

As the situation progressed, at 4: 35 p.m. on the same day (Dec. 28), another section of 28th IB encountered some 10 NPA terrorists at the vicinity Sitio Bato-bato, Barangay Tubaon, Tarragona, Davao Oriental, he said.

The firefight lasted for 15 minutes, then the enemy withdrew towards the east direction of Bato-bato. The gun battle slightly resulted in the wounding of one government soldier. The wounded was immediately treated and is now in stable condition, Capt. Lamosao said.

At about 7:45 p.m. of the same day (Dec. 28), a team of 28th IB on board a Military Utility Elf, while traversing Tarragona-Barangay Tuboan road to fetch the slightly wounded soldier was land mined at vicinity Sitio Guibaan, Barangay Tubaon of that same town. The Elf Truck was slightly damaged at the rear portion, he said.

At around 7:50 p.m. on the same day, one Platoon of 67th IB encountered another 10 NPA

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terrorists believed to be members of Pulang Bagani Command 8 (PBC 8), SRC 1 of the CPP-NPA-SMRC while reinforcing the beleaguered troops of 28th IB onboard the Elf truck that was land mined, he said.

The firefight lasted for about 10 minutes. At about 10:45 p.m. on the same day, another one Platoon of 67th IB cleared the road from Maitum area of that same province to the encounter site and linked-up with the Scout Platoon at location of the land mined Elf truck, he said.

"All of the troops are still in the area to prevent or thwart any hostile plan of the enemy to go to the center of the community," Capt. Lamosao added.

Meanwhile, **Maj. Gen. Noel S. Clement, commanding general of the 10th "Agila" Division** condemned anew the harassments by the NPAs.

"Despite the Yuletide season, they (NPAs) continue to harass communities which prompted our forces to conduct security operations. Our units responded to the information and call for help of local populace which led to the encounter. It is the responsibility of our soldiers to protect our citizens and secure the communities from armed threats," said the 10th ID chief, in the same statement sent to The Manila Bulletin.

"While ceasefire resumes at 6:00 p.m. of December 30, 2017 until 6:00 p.m. of January 2, 2018, 10th ID will remain faithful to the government's Yuletide ceasefire and will maintain on active defense and our various units and troops on the ground will remain ready to respond to any violent threat that will be perpetrated by the NPA against our people and vulnerable communities." Maj. Gen. Clement added.

<https://news.mb.com.ph>

Troops, NPA clash hours before start of New Year ceasefire

From GMA News (Dec 30):

Two soldiers were hurt after troops encountered members of the New People's Army (NPA) in Tarragona, Davao Oriental hours before the ceasefires declared by the communists and government took effect on Saturday.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) said teams from the 6th Scout Ranger Battalion were sent to Barangay Tubaon to reports of an NPA harassment.

As the troops were advancing to the village, the NPA members allegedly fired at them and detonated a landmine.

The AFP said the communist guerillas withdrew after a 30-minute firefight.

The military said some members of the NPA could have been wounded in the firefight based on bloodstains seen in the encounter site.

The clash took place at around 6:25 a.m., nearly 10 hours before the unilateral ceasefires declared by the communist group and the government took effect.

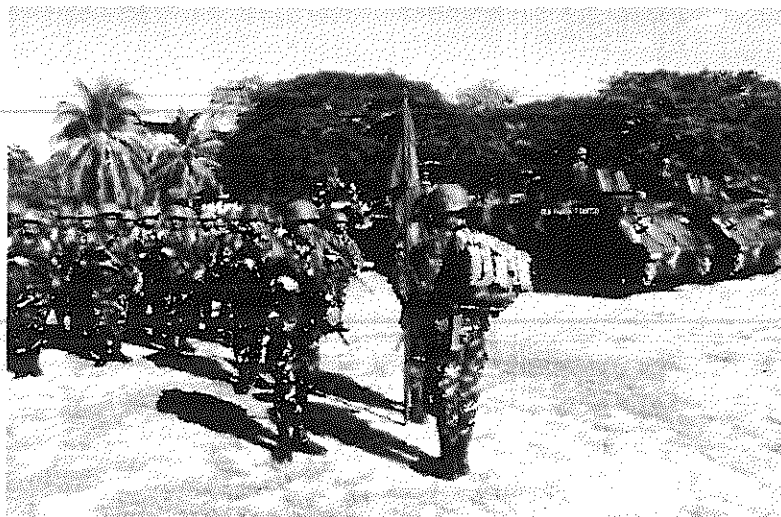
President Duterte has declared a ceasefire from 6 p.m. of December 30 until 11:59 p.m. of January 2. The Communist Party of the Philippines' ceasefire will also take effect at 6 p.m. December 30 until 6 p.m. of January 2.

<http://www.gmanetwork.com>

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AFP to observe Dec. 30 to Jan. 2 ceasefire with Reds

From the Philippine Star (Dec 30):



"The AFP is committed to uphold the SOMO scheduled on 30 December 2017 to 2 January 2018," the military said in a statement. File

The Armed Forces of the Philippines on Saturday said it will observe the suspension of offensive military operations (SOMO) against communist insurgents that was set in time for New Year.

"The AFP is committed to uphold the SOMO scheduled on 30 December 2017 to 2 January 2018," the military said in a statement.

As a matter of "policy and principle," the AFP said that while security forces will follow the temporary ceasefire, troops are still on alert for "treacherous attacks" of the New People's Army — the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines.

"The public can be rest assured that as they celebrate New Year, our soldiers will be there to guard the place as our units on the ground maintain their active defense posture," the AFP said.

"We call on the remaining red fighters to rethink their position and take peaceful path to change for their families and for the betterment of the country," it added.

Malacañang earlier said the ceasefire would only be in effect from 6 p.m. of December 23 to 11:59 p.m. of December 26, and from 6 p.m. of December 30 until 11:59 p.m. of January 2.

The Christmas ceasefire has been a customary move by both sides since the launch of formal talks in the late 1980s under the first Aquino administration.

The communists have been waging a guerilla war for almost five decades in a bid to topple a "bureaucrat" capitalist system that has caused one of Asia's widest rich-poor gaps despite the Philippines' rich natural resources.

Communist fighters are known for collecting "revolutionary taxes" from local businesses in rural areas—

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an activity that authorities qualified as plain extortion. They are also recognized for their deadly attacks on police and military outposts.

In 2002, the US Department of State designated the CPP-NPA as foreign terrorist organizations.

Amid continued hostilities, Duterte, a self-styled socialist, unilaterally scrapped last month the reactivated peace talks between the government and Maoist rebels. Both sides have been in on-off negotiations since 1986.

He said peace talks were called off because of the Left's "pure nonsense" demand for a coalition government, and the rebels' supposed lack of sincerity.

He later declared the CPP and its armed-unit as terrorist groups, raising concerns among activists in the national democratic movement that legitimate organizations could be targeted as supporters of terrorism.

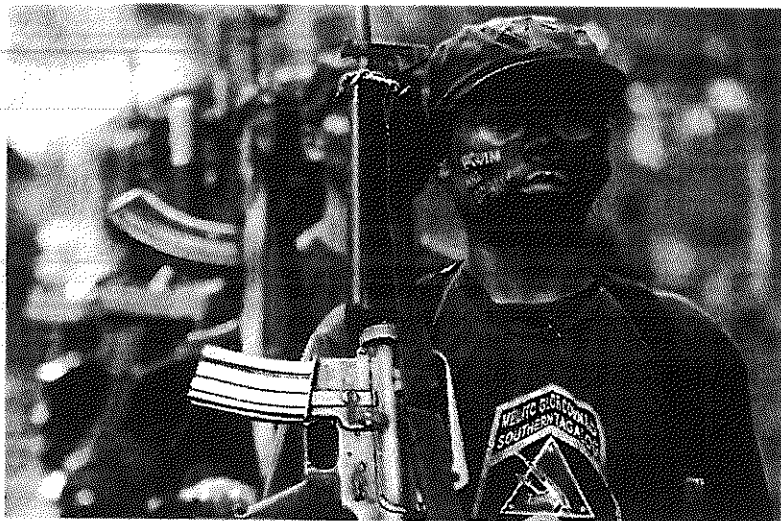
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Palace on CPP's 2018 goal to oust Duterte: They're really enemies of the state

From the Philippine Star (Dec 30):



The Communist Party of the Philippines, during the celebration of the communist movement's 49th anniversary, ordered its armed wing, the New People's army, to intensify guerilla attacks on the entire archipelago next year while building "the broadest united front" to overthrow President Rodrigo Duterte. AP/Aaron Favila, File

Malacañang on Saturday slammed the Communist Party of the Philippines for setting the downfall of President Rodrigo Duterte as the Left's goal for 2018 following the collapse of peace talks.

CPP, during the celebration of the communist movement's 49th anniversary, ordered its armed wing, the New People's army, to intensify guerilla attacks across the entire archipelago next year while building "the broadest united front" to overthrow Duterte.

Responding to the underground Left's threat, Presidential Communications Secretary Martin Andanar slammed the CPP and said communist rebels just proved that they're "enemies of the state" for planning to topple a duly-elected president.

"Kung gustong pabagsakin ng CPP-NPA-NDF ang ating Pangulo, pinapabagsak din nila ang gobyerno (If the CPP-NPA-NDF wants to oust our president, then they're overthrowing the government as well)," Andanar told state-run DZRP radio.

"Ibig sabihin (It only means that) they are really enemies of the state and they are enemies of the people," he added.

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EXPLAINER: Why Duterte's 'red-baiting' of activists is dangerous

In their 49th anniversary message, the CPP warned of a "growing peasant movement" in the country under Duterte's rule, and urged its members to stage more demonstrations in 2018.

"We are looking forward to mark the Party's 50th anniversary next year with even bigger and more momentous victories in the ideological, political and organizational fields," they said.

<http://www.philstar.com>

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Boy hurt in Cotabato grenade blast

From GMA News Online (Dec 30):

A 12-year-old boy was injured in a predawn grenade blast in Cotabato on Saturday.

Citing initial police information, GMA News stringer Garry Fuerzas identified the victim as Datu Esmael Guialel, a resident of Barangay Poblacion in Pikit town.

An initial police investigation showed that at about 1:40 a.m., unidentified men lobbed a hand grenade into a store owned by the boy's family.

Pikit police said that the boy was sleeping when the suspects attacked the store.

The boy was rushed to the Cruzado Medical Hospital, and that he is now in stable condition, the report said.

Authorities are investigating the identities of the suspects and the motive for the crime.

<http://www.gmanetwork.com>

Martial law extensions 876.67% more than original declaration – Lagman

By

Lira Dalangin-Fenandez, InterAksyon

| December 30, 2017, 12:31 PM

MANILA, Philippines — The two extensions of martial law in Mindanao come to a total of 526 days — just short of a year and a half — or 876.67 percent more than the original 60-day period of Proclamation 216 with which President Rodrigo Duterte placed the south under military rule, opposition lawmakers have noted.

The “Magnificent 7” lawmakers in the House of Representatives who have challenged the second extension of martial law — which will run for the whole of 2018 — before the Supreme Court called it “inordinately long” and “a deplorable defiance of the constitutional limitation (on) the duration of martial law and its extension.”

Duterte declared martial law in Mindanao on May 23 when fighting broke out between government forces and extremist gunmen in Marawi City, invoking the constitutional provision that allows him to do so for 60 days. He got Congress to extend this when the period lapsed with fighting still raging.

However, he requested, and the overwhelmingly pro-administration Congress granted, the second extension early this month, well after Duterte declared Marawi “liberated” in late October.

Recent opinion polls show a majority of Filipinos, including Duterte’s fellow Mindanaoans, oppose the second extension.

Albay Representative Edcel Lagman, one of the lawmakers mounting the legal challenge to the second extension noted that among the stringent safeguards in the 1987 Constitution “to deter and foreclose abuses as a result of a martial law imposition is the manifest limitation of the period of martial law and the suspension of the writ of habeas corpus and the extension thereof.”

“The Constitution provides that the declaration of martial law and the suspension of the writ of habeas corpus shall be ‘for a period not exceeding sixty days,’ and any extension thereof may be granted by the Congress upon initiative of the President, in the ‘same manner’ as the original proclamation sought to be extended,” he added.

“This means,” Lagman explained, “that a valid extension must comply with the following requisites: (a) a joint session of the Congress must act on the extension; (b) it must be based on the limited grounds of actual rebellion or invasion when public safety requires it; and (c) it must be only for a reasonably short duration.”

“A full year re-extension, aside from being factually unwarranted, is oppressively long and patently unconstitutional,” he added.