

Army Vision: By 2038, a world-class Army that is a source of national pride



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OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS
NEWS CLIPPINGS

04 February 2017

Saturday

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

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BusinessMirror

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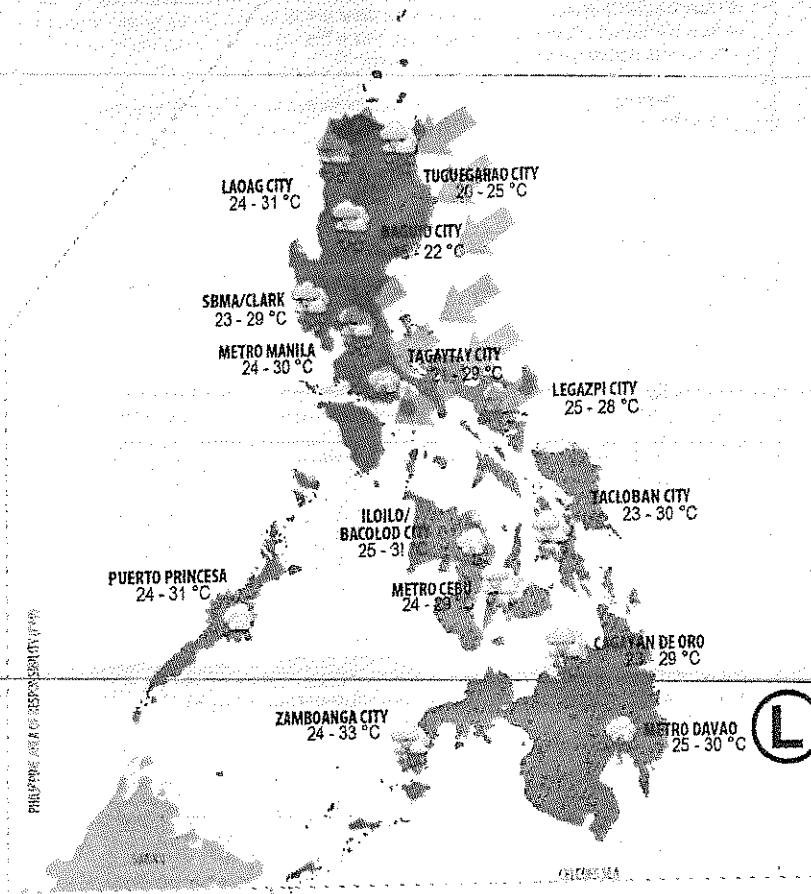


BusinessMirror



TODAY'S WEATHER

FEBRUARY 04, 2017 | SATURDAY
LOW PRESSURE AREA
ESTIMATED AT 815 KMS. EAST OF
HINATUAN, SURIGAO DEL SUR
NORTHEAST MONSOON
AFFECTING LUZON
(As of 11:00 AM - Feb. 3, 2017)



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**3-DAY
EXTENDED
FORECAST**

	FEB 5 Sunday	FEB 6 Monday	FEB 7 Tuesday
METRO MANILA	24-30 °C	23-30 °C	24-30 °C
TUGUEGARAO	21-25 °C	20-26 °C	21-26 °C
LAOAG	24-31 °C	23-31 °C	24-31 °C
BAGUIO	14-23 °C	14-23 °C	15-23 °C
SBMA/ CLARK	23-29 °C	23-30 °C	23-30 °C
TAGAYTAY	21-28 °C	21-27 °C	20-27 °C
LEGAZPI	24-28 °C	24-28 °C	25-28 °C
PUERTO PRINCESA	25-31 °C	25-32 °C	25-31 °C
ILOILO/ BACOLOD	25-31 °C	25-30 °C	25-31 °C

**3-DAY
EXTENDED
FORECAST**

	FEB 5 Sunday	FEB 6 Monday	FEB 7 Tuesday
METRO CEBU	25-30 °C	24-31 °C	25-31 °C
TACLOBAN	23-29 °C	24-29 °C	23-29 °C
CAGAYAN DE ORO	23-28 °C	23-29 °C	23-28 °C
METRO DAVAO	24-31 °C	25-30 °C	25-31 °C
ZAMBOANGA	24-33 °C	24-32 °C	24-33 °C

SUNRISE	SUNSET	MOONRISE	MOONSET
6:24 AM	5:56 PM	11:43 AM	11:39 PM
NEW MOON	FIRST QUARTER	LOW TIDE MANILA SOUTH HARBOR	HIGH TIDE
JAN 28 8:07 AM	FEB 4 12:19 PM	8:56 AM 0.13 Meter	4:02 PM 0.84 Meter

- Partly cloudy with moderate to heavy rain
- Partly cloudy to sunny with moderate to heavy rain
- Cloudy with light to heavy rain
- Partly cloudy
- Clear

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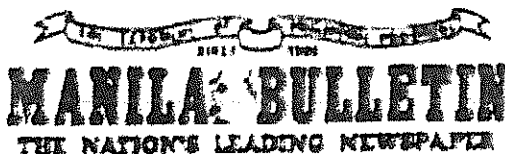


SAGOT KO, PADALA MO!

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7 ASG killed, 5 wounded in Sulu clashes

By **NONOY E. LACSON**

ZAMBOANGA CITY – Seven suspected members of the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) were killed, while five others were wounded and two arrested

in separate clashes with the military in Sulu, this week, the Armed Forces of the Philippines-Western Mindanao Command (AFP-WestMinCom) reported yesterday.

Newly designated AFP- ► **11**

7 ASG killed, 5 wounded... ◀ 1

WestMinCom spokesman Army Capt. Jo-Ann D. Petinglay said local residents at Sitio Kanjawali, Barangay Kan Bulak, Luuk, Sulu, reported the death of seven and wounding of five ASG members following separate clashes with the military's Ranger Battalion. One of the wounded was the brother of ASG sub-leader Alvin Yusop.

Petinglay also said soldiers from the 32nd Infantry Battalion also arrested two suspected ASG members, and seized an M16A1 rifle with five magazines; a caliber 30 BAR with

five magazines; two bandoleers; a backpack containing documents of intelligence value, and worn out combat uniforms after the firefight with the ASG militants at Sitio Kanjawali Thursday afternoon.

She said soldiers scouring the site of the fight chanced upon the two ASG bandits and immediately arrested them. The militants were turned over to the Sulu Provincial Police Office for filing of appropriate charges in court after hand grenades were found in their possession.

Government forces in Sulu are now in hot pursuit operation against the remaining ASG fighters, reportedly followers of sub-leader Alhabsi Misaya.

The encounter with the Misaya ASG faction in Panamao, Sulu, early this week resulted in casualties on both sides.

The operation is a continuing effort aimed at eradicating the ASG upon orders of President Duterte, the military said.

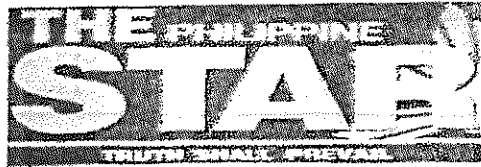
Soldiers were earlier warned that ASG members are keeping their firearms in the area, pretending to be residents whenever soldiers are in the place.

AFP-WestMinCom commander Maj Gen Carlito G Galvez said, "The recent operational success is a result of the growing concern of civilians and residents who are now reporting whereabouts of the ASG members. It only manifests that majority, if not all

the people in Sulu, are joining the fight against the common enemy," he said.

Galvez reminded the operating troops to be more vigilant and always follow the rules of engagement to avoid unnecessary damage to life and properties.

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2 Sayyaf men nabbed

ZAMBOANGA CITY – Two suspected Abu Sayyaf members were arrested in Sulu on Thursday.

The military said soldiers belonging to the 32nd Infantry Battalion clashed with the bandits in Sitio Kanjawali in Barangay Kan Bulak in Luuk town.

Capt. Jo-an Petinglay, spokesperson for the Western Mindanao Command, said the troops also recovered guns and explosives from the bandits.

The suspects, who were not immediately identified, were turned over to the Sulu police for the filing of charges.

Army troopers launched pursuit operations for the bandits following an encounter in Barangay Pugad Manaul in Panamao town that left five bandits killed and seven others wounded. Two soldiers were also wounded.

Petinglay said reports on the ground showed that the brother of Abu Sayyaf leader Alvin Yusop was among the wounded.

Bomb blast hits Basilan hospital

Meanwhile, Abu Sayyaf bandits were tagged in a grenade explosion at a hospital in Lamitan City in Basilan also on Thursday.

The grenade exploded on the roof of an abandoned building at the Lamitan District Emergency Hospital in Barangay Limook at around 9 p.m.

Chief Inspector Allan Benasing, Lamitan police chief, said no one was reported hurt in the blast, but it triggered panic even among residents around the hospital.

John Bravo, hospital administrator, told a local radio station that the explosion occurred during a power outage.

Bravo said they were not aware of any threat against any of their personnel.

Abu Sayyaf bandits were also suspected to be behind two separate bomb attacks in Lamitan City last week.

– Roel Pareño

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1917 1988
MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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ON ALERT – Armored personnel carriers (APCs) backstop soldiers manning this checkpoint in Butig, Lanao del Sur, Wednesday, as the offensive against the Abu Sayyaf and Maute Group remains in high gear in the region. (Reuters)

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Duterte terminates ceasefire with Reds

MLANG, NORTH COTABATO —Saying he does not expect peace with communist rebels “during our generation,” President Duterte lifted the government’s unilateral ceasefire on Friday night because the rebels insisted on “impossible” demands and launched attacks on government troops.

“I am asking the soldiers, go back to your camps, clean your rifles and be ready to fight,” Mr. Duterte said in a speech at the launching of a solar-powered irrigation project in this town in North Cotabato province.

The lifting of the government ceasefire declaration comes a week ahead of the Feb. 10 termination of the rebels’ own unilateral ceasefire.

The Communist Party of the Philippines and the New People’s Army (NPA) on Wednesday canceled their ceasefire declaration, saying the Duterte administration reneged on its promise to release political prisoners and the military violated its own truce.

Mr. Duterte said the rebels wanted him to release 400 political prisoners, which would require

a general amnesty that he could not decide on his own. He said the rebel demands were “just too huge that it is impossible to meet, or even work out a compromise.”

He said he had already conceded too much, citing the release of detained rebel leaders so they could participate in peace talks.

The President did not say whether he would call off the Norway-brokered peace talks, which his administration reopened in August after being stalled for five years.

There have been three rounds of formal talks, with the most recent ending last week in Italy with no ceasefire agreement.

Representatives of the two peace panels tasked to discuss a possible bilateral ceasefire were scheduled to meet in the Netherlands later this month, but there was no immediate word if that would push through after Mr. Duterte’s announcement.

Describing himself as part of the Left, Mr. Duterte said his administration would have been the “golden opportunity” for the talks to end nearly 50 years of insurgency, one of the

longest-running in the world.

“If it won’t end, then OK, but let it not be said that I did not try,” he said. “I guess that peace with the communists cannot be realized during our generation.”

Mr. Duterte said several soldiers had been killed even before the termination of the NPA’s ceasefire next Friday.

“I think to continue with the ceasefire does not or will not produce anything,” he said.

The military chief of staff, Gen. Eduardo Año, said at least six soldiers had been killed by the guerrillas, who abducted two others.

‘Hit them hard’

“We will go after the NPA to prevent them from conducting atrocities and criminal activities against the public. And we will hit them hard,” Año said.

The rebels disputed the military’s account of recent clashes, particularly in Mindanao, and urged Mr. Duterte and the government peace panel to investigate the incidents.

NPA Southern Mindanao spokesperson Rigoberto Sanchez

accused the military of feeding the President and the government panel with lies "to conceal their own ceasefire violation."

He said clashes in Makilala and Matalam in North Cotabato, and in Manay, Davao Oriental, where a young Army officer was killed on Wednesday, were not initiated by the NPA.

The encounters erupted because the military entered NPA areas in the guise of "anticriminality operations to assist the Philippine National Police in going after lawless elements," Sanchez said.

The termination of the ceasefire declarations has worried members of the Northern Mindanao Regional Peace and Order Council (RPOC).

"We hope that both sides of the peace panel could find the solutions that would break the impasse that led to such declaration," said Cagayan de Oro City Mayor Oscar Moreno, the RPOC chair.

Bishop Felixberto Calang of the Iglesia Filipina Independiente said he hoped "that there is no cessation of the talks even if it seems difficult at the moment to

realize a cessation of hostilities."

Tawi-Tawi Rep. Ruby Sahali, who chairs the committee on peace, reconciliation and unity, said she was "more concerned with its immediate impact on the ground, particularly in conflict-affected areas."

Continued support

Bayan Muna Rep. Carlos Zarate, the vice chair of the committee on peace, said the lifting of the unilateral ceasefire declarations should push both panels "to further expedite the talks to finally address the roots of the armed conflict."

Jorge "Ka Oris" Madlos, the spokesperson for the National Operations Command of the NPA, said they still support the peace process.

Human rights lawyer Edre Olalia, a legal consultant for the National Democratic Front of the Philippines peace panel, said the peace negotiations "can continue while they are fighting."

"There is peace negotiations precisely because there is an armed conflict," he said. "Parties have continued talking

while they are fighting as before. In fact, major agreements in peace negotiations were forged even without ceasefire."

The withdrawal of the unilateral ceasefire declarations also "highlights the need for the parties to come up with a more stable, sincere and principled bilateral ceasefire," he said.

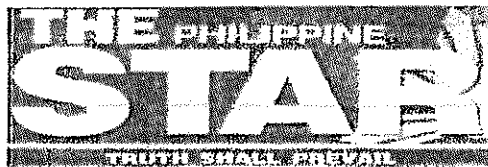
Labor Secretary Silvestre Bello III, head of the government panel, expressed the same sentiments and had hoped the recent talks in Italy would produce a ceasefire agreement.

He said the separate ceasefire declarations had not worked because there were no agreed guidelines and clear terms which would have served as a basis for complaints of truce violations.

Bello also said the government would ask the United States to remove communist party founder Jose Maria Sison from Washington's list of terrorists, but the US government seems to have rejected the request.

—REPORTS FROM KARLOS MANLUPIG, ALLAN NAWAL, WILLIAMOR MAGBANUA, JOE MATEM, LEILA SALAVERRIA, JEROME ANING AND REUTERS INQ

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AFP: We will hit them hard

Duterte ends truce with Reds; peace process in shambles

By EDITH REGALADO

DAVAO CITY – The military is preparing to let loose the dogs of war after President Duterte ended the government's six-month ceasefire with communist rebels following attacks that left three soldiers dead this week.

Duterte disclosed his decision in a speech yesterday, two days after New People's Army rebels announced they would end their ceasefire effective Feb. 10, citing the government's refusal to release 400 political prisoners and accusing the military of encroaching into rural NPA strongholds.

A frustrated Duterte lamented that he had done his best to forge an enduring agreement and the communists had wasted a "golden opportunity" for peace.

"Last (Thursday) night, I decided to lift the ceasefire," he told the crowd at the launching of a solar-powered irrigation system in North Cotabato.

Duterte said the government's unilateral ceasefire would end last night as he ordered soldiers to "clean your rifles and be ready to fight."

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) said it is ready to resume offensives against the NPA following the President's announcement.

"We will go after the NPA to prevent them from conducting atrocities and criminal activities against the public. And we will hit them hard," AFP chief Gen. Eduardo Año declared.

"We shall abide by the President's order of ending the unilateral ceasefire. It is unfortunate that the gains of the

Turn to Page 4

last six months would come to a halt because the CPP-NPA again resorted to the use of violence and chose arms to advance their interests," he said. Duterte cited the "unreasonable demands" of the communists regarding the release of more political detainees that apparently caused the breakdown in peace talks.

"To continue with the ceasefire will not produce anything. I guess peace cannot be realized within our generation," Duterte said.

The NPA on Wednesday declared they are terminating their unilateral ceasefire after accusing the government of failing to release all political

prisoners and encroaching on rebel-held areas.

The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and its military arm, the NPA, said the ceasefire that began Aug. 28 would expire Feb. 10.

The rebels and the government had separately declared a ceasefire as they resumed peace talks.

Duterte stressed he freed rebel leaders as a concession aimed at fostering the peace talks but added the CPP-NPA and the National Democratic Front (NDF), the umbrella group representing the rebels in negotiating peace with the government, raised excessive demands that may upset the military.

"I went out of my way to release as many of their leaders to allow them to participate in the talks in Oslo. Now there is this demand to release some 400 political prisoners, I could not do that because it is already tantamount to the granting of amnesty," Duterte said.

He explained the granting of amnesty is usually allowed following the success of peace negotiations.

Duterte said he had to weigh the expert opinion of his advisers to arrive at the decision.

"I do not own the Republic of the Philippines. I do not decide alone. I consult people, particularly the military," he said.

Duterte, a self-styled socialist who was swept to power in elections last year, restarted peace talks with the CPP-NPA-NDF that had been on and off for 30 years.

The two sides separately declared ceasefires in August, and the informal arrangement largely held as they continued

discussions in Rome last week.

But the CPP-NPA-NDF rejected government overtures to sign a formal ceasefire and peace settlement this year, warning such a pact was unlikely to be achieved before 2019.

Duterte on Thursday criticized the rebels for rejecting his government's formal ceasefire offer and for insisting that he free hundreds of jailed rebel leaders.

While the military has publicly endorsed the peace talks, Duterte suggested the support was qualified.

"Don't push me against the wall because the military might not like it, and if the military ousts me or kills me you'll have nobody to talk to," Duterte said.

In bad faith

Duterte lamented the rebels are talking peace with the government in bad faith.

"They said they are breaking off, so we'll follow. I lost six soldiers and one officer. That was why last night (Thursday) I decided to break off too. I told General Año that there will be no more ceasefire. I lifted the ceasefire effective tonight (last night)," Duterte said.

Earlier in the day, government chief peace negotiator Silvestre Bello III declared they are expected to sign a bilateral ceasefire agreement and come up with the final peace agreement before yearend.

"That is why on April 2-7 we will be back in Oslo to talk about the most important issue on social and economic reforms to address the causes of our problems," Bello told a forum in Bulacan yesterday.

But Duterte said he was forced to break off the ceasefire after receiving reports of "systematic attacks" by the NPA against government forces even before their declaration to scuttle their own ceasefire next Friday.

"I realized that peace with the communists cannot be realized within our generation. They said Feb. 10, but they have been ambushing our troops then and there, even before their deadline," he said.

Duterte said that he really tried his best to forge a peace agreement with the communist rebels. "I went out of my way, walked the extra mile just to look for the opening to find peace for my country. I may not be the most decent person

but I entered into this in good faith, in looking for peace. But with the way things are now, we cannot have a peaceful generation," he said.

Duterte stressed his administration would have been the golden opportunity for the rebels to make peace.

"I come from the Left and that they should have taken advantage of my being president. But they didn't," he added.

"And now they want another 50 years in war, to keep on fighting. What do you want? Another 50 years? Let it not be said that I did not try hard," the President said.

"I don't want us to kill each other but under the circumstances, with my troops getting killed, we have to resume (offensives) anytime," he said.

Lock and load

The AFP said they are ready to resume offensives against the NPA following the President's announcement.

"We will comply with the commander-in-chief's order and guidance," AFP spokesman Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla said.

"We are saddened by the series of violent activities and the loss of the peace investments and dividends from the momentary duration of peace we had since August," Padilla said.

Padilla said the violence committed by the NPA in the past few days was "very disturbing," considering the government was still pushing for a joint ceasefire declaration.

Año, for his part, noted the last four days since Sunday were "disdainful and disturbing," considering NDF chief peace negotiator Fidel Agcaoili was assuring the public through the media that the CPP-NPA-NDF will continue the unilateral ceasefire.

Año said CPP-NPA was doing the opposite by attacking soldiers who were doing community support and development works.

Despite the lifting of the ceasefire on the part of the government, Año assured the public that the AFP would continue to support the peace talks and find a permanent peaceful solution to the four decades-long conflict.

"We hear the people's clamor for peace and are willing to work hard to attain it, but it is unfortunate that the CPP-NPA-NDF chooses to play deaf," he said.

Down the line, Eastern

Mindanao Command (Eastmincom) chief Lt. Gen. Rey Leonardo Guerrero issued a directive to the troops to be on alert for possible attacks from the NPA.

"Alert troops for possible attacks. Protect the communities from criminal acts of extortion, burning of equipment, abductions, liquidations and other forms of atrocities," Guerrero said.

He said all units under Eastmincom are now on active defense posture.

The NPA has been active in the region under the Eastmincom.

Suspected NPA rebels snatched two soldiers in a remote village in Columbio, Sultan Kudarat last Feb. 2.

Last week, two off-duty soldiers in civilian clothes and riding a motorcycle were taken by NPA rebels in Makilala, North Cotabato.

Separately, three soldiers were taken by NPA rebels in Malaybalay City in Bukidnon. The three soldiers were also unarmed and in their civilian attire when they were snatched.

Their lifeless bodies were later found along the road in a remote village in the city.

"While we grieve for the untimely demise of our soldiers, we condemn this inhuman act in its highest form. These attacks on unarmed soldiers is a manifestation of the NPA's wanton disregard for the ongoing peace talks," Guerrero said.

Major Gen. Benjamin Madrigal Jr., commander of the Army's 4th Infantry Division covering the Caraga and Northern Mindanao areas, said the NPA was insincere in the peace talks with the government.

He cited the killing of three of his soldiers by the NPA in Bukidnon.

"Is this what they call achievement of 'just peace'? How can these NPA say they also want peace if they still continue to kill with impunity, continue to burn construction and production equipment and kill innocent people?" he said.

Madrigal said the incident "will not hinder us to continue our mandate, that is to protect our people and secure their communities against any threat."

With Christina Mendez, Michael Punongbayan, Gerry Lee Gorit, John Unson, Ramon Efren Lazaro, AP

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NDF not giving up on peace talks

JOSE RODEL CLAPANO

Communist rebels can fight government forces while talking peace at the same time, their leaders said yesterday.

The National Democratic Front called on the people and the government not to give up on the peace talks despite the decision of the NDF followed by President Duterte to end the ceasefire observed by the military and New People's Army (NPA).

In an interview with GMA News TV yesterday, NDF senior political adviser Luis Jalandoni said the peace panels of the government and the NDF would continue to hold talks.

He also explained why the NPA, the armed wing of the NDF, decided to lift its ceasefire.

"The NPA decided to lift its unilateral ceasefire because there are some violations committed by the Armed Forces of the Philippines. These include the occupation of schools and barangay halls by the military," Jalandoni said.

"The Armed Forces of the Philippines are entering 500 barangays. We are also calling

for the release of all political prisoners.

"We will not lose the peace talks. The lifting of the unilateral ceasefire by the President was just a reaction to the NPA's lifting of its unilateral ceasefire due to many violations of the military. We cannot say that the peace talks are no longer there," he added.

The rebels announced the withdrawal of their ceasefire declaration as the government refused to grant their demand for the release of 400 of their comrades from various prisons.

Duterte ended the government's ceasefire and ordered the military to "be ready to fight" after the NPA killed three soldiers last Wednesday in Bukidnon and captured two others in Sultan Kudarat. The rebels had announced that the end of their unilateral ceasefire would take effect on Feb. 10.

Jalandoni said "the next move is to talk about the proposed bilateral ceasefire this month" and NDF peace panel chairman Fidel Agcaoili is already preparing for the fourth round of talks.

He also admitted that the NDF needs the peace talks to enable them to come up with

an agreement on land reform, national industrialization and socioeconomic and political reforms.

"During the Ramos government, we were able to sign 12 agreements while we continued fighting and continued talking," Jalandoni said.

'AFP blocking release of political prisoners'

Meanwhile, human rights group Karapatan said the AFP has played a major role in the Duterte administration's non-release of political prisoners.

Karapatan also said the AFP has been sabotaging the peace talks.

"The AFP is blocking the release of the unjustly detained political prisoners and it has never ceased to deploy its forces to kill, threaten and harass civilian communities, even during the so-called unilateral ceasefire of the government," said Karapatan secretary-general Cristina Palabay.

"Political prisoners were illegally arrested and detained for their beliefs and work in defense of people's rights... The plight of political prisoners is a matter of human rights obligation and an issue of

justice. What is coercive is the state security forces' gross violation of rights to due process, criminalization of political beliefs and torture of those who are working for the defense of people's rights.

"The release of political prisoners is a litmus test for Duterte, on his political will to uphold justice against threats and efforts by the AFP to sow unpeace," she added.

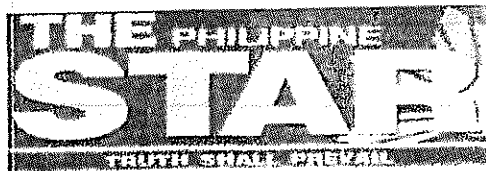
Last Thursday, political prisoner Reynante Malcampo was finally released by the court.

Malcampo's release was long overdue as he is one of the 200 sick political prisoners supposed to be released for humanitarian reasons before Christmas as promised by Duterte.

According to Karapatan, Malcampo was wrongly charged with illegal possession of explosives. His case was tried at Branch 3 of the Regional Trial Court XI and the court dismissed his case last Jan. 26.

Karapatan said that while Malcampo was being detained at the Compostela Valley Provincial Rehabilitation Center in Tagum City, he suffered tuberculosis and recurring bouts of pneumonia. – With Rhodina Villanueva, Edith Regalado

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Violence seen to persist in Mindanao due to IS

By CHRISTINA MENDEZ

Government peace initiatives with Muslim rebels remain on track, but the Duterte administration foresees more violence as the military continues offensive operations against the Abu Sayyaf and those affiliated with the terrorist Islamic State (IS).

President Duterte warned the people anew yesterday of the threat posed by Islamic extremist groups to his quest for peace in the south.

"In Mindanao, we are lucky indeed that MI(LF) and MN(LF) are ready to talk. The problem is time. We were overtaken by the events in the Middle East," he said, referring

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Violence From Page 1

the Moro Islamic Liberation Front and the Moro National Liberation Front.

He said more violence could erupt between government forces and the Abu Sayyaf in the wake of reports that one of its leaders, Isnilon Hapilon, has been appointed as leader of the IS group in the region.

"There is now in this island of Mindanao and in Jolo, *diyan sa mga islands diyan ang mga Abu Sayyaf at iyong pinaka-leader*," Hapilon was sent by the ISIS because he was appointed now, the ISIS leader. I think for this part of Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei and Philippines," Duterte said, using another acronym of the IS.

He cited the military operations last week in Butig, Lanao del Sur where Hapilon was reportedly injured.

"I do not think I can talk to the terrorists," said the President, who has reported in his previous speeches that there were a handful of Arab preachers spotted in known terrorist lairs in recent months.

Duterte indicated that he has not abandoned the peace talks with the Moro groups, adding that he is still ready to talk

to MNLF leader Nur Misuari.

The administration is also pursuing talks with the MILF after Duterte signed last November an executive order reconstituting the Bangsamoro Transition Council.

Citing his Moro roots, Duterte asked for understanding from his brothers regarding his concerns about extremism in the region.

"It's not about the Moro people. It's about the Arabs... it's about the ISIS," he said.

Islamist groups' threat

As this developed, Duterte also warned of bloody consequences in case IS extremists are able to fully penetrate the Abu Sayyaf and other groups in Southern Philippines.

Duterte also noted that the impending crackdown by the United States on the IS militants might spill over to Southern Philippines.

"For heaven's sake, I will never talk to the terrorists," Duterte said in a speech yesterday, explaining why he would fight against IS groups despite his call for peace with other Moro groups in the region.

"And if (US President Donald) Trump

decides to invade the Middle East and if the ISIS loses its land base there, they will start to scatter around the world. Their favorite target would be the southern part of the Philippines," the President said.

"It's gonna be bloody," he warned.

- With Perseus Echeminada, Edith Regalado

04 February 2017



Pahina. 2

'National day of mourning' pinadedeklara ng AFP

Inirekomenda kahapon ng Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) sa administrasyon ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte na magdeklara ng 'national day of mourning' sa tatlong sundalong binihag at brutal na pinaslang ng mga rebeldeng New People's Army (NPA) sa Malaybalay City, Bukidnon nitong Miyerkules.

Sa press briefing sa Camp Aguinaldo, kinonadena ni AFP Spokesman Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla ang ginawang pama-

maslang sa tatlong sundalo na binistay ng bala ng NPA rebels na ayon sa Scene of the Crime Operatives (SOCO) team ay nagtamo ng 76 tama ng bala sa iba't ibang bahagi ng katawan.

"The AFP are recommending to the national leadership to declare national day of mourning for the soldiers killed by the NPA this past few days," pahayag ni Padilla.

Sinabi ni Padilla na sa sampahan nila ng kasong kriminal ang grupo.

Lumilitaw sa imbesti-

gasyon ng SOCO na isa sa mga biktima ay nagtamo ng 24 tama ng bala sa katawan, 25 tama ang isa at 27 namang tama ang isa pa mula sa M16 rifles, M14 rifle, AK 47 rifle, garand rifle at cal .30 carbine rifle base sa nakuhang mga basyo ng bala sa crime scene.

Nabatid na ang tatlong biktima ay pawang miyembro ng Army's 8th Infantry Battalion (IB) Bayanihan Team na nagsasagawa ng mga programa sa komunidad sa Bgy. Manalag, Malaybalay City. (Joy Cartos)

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US delivers counter-terrorism equipment to RP – embassy

By Joyce Ann L. Rocamora

Southern Philippines.

The United States through Joint US Military Assistance Group (Jusmag) has delivered early this week a volume of military equipment to the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Philippine Marine Corps as part of the US-Philippine partnership in countering terrorism.

According to the US Embassy in Manila, the equipment transfer and the continued bilateral training efforts between the two nations “demonstrate the commitment between the Philippines and US to work toward safer communities and the eradication of global terror networks.”

The transfer included over 400 M203 grenade launchers, 85 M40A5 sniper rifles, and a RQ-11B Raven unmanned aerial vehicle system consisting of three drones for exclusive use and ownership by the AFP.

The AFP procured the small-arms weapons through the US government's Foreign Military Sales program.

As per the embassy, this equipment will help enhance the AFP's counter-terrorism capabilities, and protect Philippine security forces actively engaged in counter-terrorism operations in the

In addition to the small-arms transfer, the US government also provided a Raven unmanned aerial vehicle system through the grant counter-terrorism program.

As part of the grant, and in addition to the three unmanned aerial vehicles included in the Raven system, Philippine service members received training in the United States on its operations and maintenance.

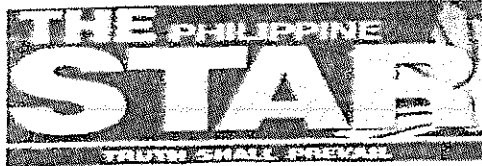
The Raven is a hand-launched unmanned aerial vehicle that will increase the AFP's capabilities to conduct intelligence collection, mission planning, and reconnaissance operations.

From post-World War II until the US base closures in 1992, the US government has granted the country's military with substantial support for training and technical assistance, which made up a considerable portion of their annual defense budget.

Jusmag was created under the 1947 Military Assistance Agreement that aims to advise and assist AFP with train and equip requirements.

Since 2001, the US has substantially increased military assistance to the Philippines with its robust exercise program and increased Foreign Military Financing.

04 February 2017



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EDITORIAL

Elusive peace

The peace process with the communists lay in shambles yesterday, as President Duterte ended the government's ceasefire and ordered the military to resume fighting with the New People's Army. Hours later, the leadership of the Armed Forces of the Philippines vowed to "hit them hard."

The President stressed that he had "walked the extra mile" and done his best. He lamented that the rebels wasted the "golden opportunity" for peace offered by the only president of the republic who was once a leftist supporter. The communists were demanding the release of 400 of their comrades from various prisons. But Duterte said this would be done only if a formal peace pact would be forged.

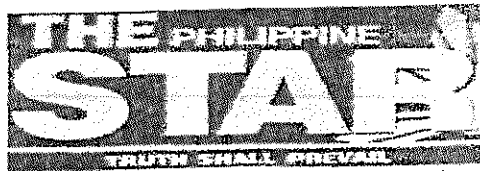
Besides, he has other constituencies to consider, he explained. Among these are his soldiers, who lost three members in an NPA attack last Wednesday in Bukidnon. The rebels, who reportedly took the three men's P12,000 in subsistence allowance, also seized two other soldiers in Sultan Kudarat, bringing to three the number of their captives in recent days.

Those attacks, when the rebels themselves had said their unilateral ceasefire would be in place until Feb. 10, prompted the President to lift the government's own truce. "Let it not be said that I did not try," he said in frustration, as he raised fears that there would be no peace for 50 years.

His predecessor Benigno Aquino III, whose mother Corazon's peace efforts with the communists also collapsed, refused to negotiate with the rebels' exiled leadership, preferring instead to discuss peace at the local level. Duterte can consider a similar approach while at the same time addressing the issues that have fueled the communist insurgency.

As someone sympathetic to the Left, the President knows that these issues include social injustice, chronic poverty, weak governance and economic exclusion. Because the President does not belong to the nation's entrenched elite, there are hopes that he might do better than his predecessors in making growth inclusive. Addressing the root causes of the communist insurgency must be sustained, regardless of the state of the peace initiative.

04 February 2017



Page: 11

Search for Truth

By ERNESTO P. MACEDA, Jr.

Bad idea

Witnessing all the pomp and pageantry of the country's highly successful Miss Universe 2017 celebration, I could not help but contrast it with the splendor and ceremony reserved for our fallen heroes at their memorials.



Unlike the lavishness of beauty contests designed for maximum entertainment value, the grandeur and dignity of police or military full dress honors are all integral parts of their traditions, steeped in history and written in blood. We saw this in the SAF 44 rites; families of service men see it repeated at funerals day in and day out. Even the same day edit video of Pres. Ferdinand Marcos' services at the Libingan ng mga Bayani was a prime example of this gesture of respect that never fails to stir the soul and move the most stoic of hearts.

The maxim, from Horace, is *dulce et decorum est pro patria mori* (it is sweet and proper to die for one's country).

Reality check. If this is what resonates with us for whose benefit they died, we are reading that the adage which echoes more in the psyche of the soldier is "better to be judged by 12 than carried by six." For several, in fact, it has become a motto. Who would not rather face a jury of 12 (or one judge) instead of being placed in a coffin borne by six pallbearers. Translation: Better safe than sorry or Shoot now, ask questions later.

Placed in the situation where split second decisions could spell life or death for you and others whose lives depend on you, the soldier would engage. And this is the mindset when armed with lethal force and dropped into a deadly cauldron as one would expect the drug war to be. But this is exactly what President Rodrigo Roa Duterte (PRRD) proposes.

Bad idea.

As it is, with a civilian police force thoroughly trained in law and proper police conduct, with bachelor's degree and minimum age of 21 years, oriented to resort to force only as a last resort and whose motto is "to serve and protect," the statistics have been piling up. What more if the campaign against illegal drugs is handed to a group whose orientation is to "search and destroy"?

The dark side. The Senate's resident Yodas on the Military and the Police, soldier Gregorio Honasan and policeman Panfilo Lacson, do have reason for concern. Senator Lacson pointedly laments the President's marching orders for the military to also go after rogue cops, specially those involved in drugs. For him, this is a surefire formula for armed conflict between the military and the para-military police force. Senator Honasan suggests that the AFP should be limited to a supporting role with the PNP remaining in the lead.

DEFER. We defer to the counsel of these learned men. Already, over 7,000 have been killed since PRRD assumed office. The goal should be to have the numbers taper off, instead of continuing to rise. Let's not add our service men to the statistics and stop the list of innocents as collateral damage from swelling. Most of all, do not allow any ill advised turf wars to derail the agenda of cleansing the country of the illegal drug menace.

DIFFER. We differ with Senator Leila de Lima's caveat that PRRD's plan is unconstitutional. She is evidently equating the same with the President's calling out power which presupposes the existence of lawless violence before the AFP can be deployed. Well, the reality remains that it is the President that makes factual determination as to whether lawless violence exists. He has already made that determination in his post Davao explosion Proclamation No. 55 last Sept. 2016. To date, the same has not been lifted.

Again, it's a bad idea. But its not unconstitutional.

Gentle reminder. An important rule for lawyers: "A lawyer shall not counsel or abet activities aimed at defiance of the law or at lessening confidence in the legal system (Rule 1.02 - Code of Professional Responsibility)." Please be so kind as to remind our lawyer officials of this principle each time one of them mouths statements like: "Criminals are not humanity" or "Shoot to Kill."

RHRx. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) best wrap up its hearings on the applications for certification or re-certification of the 77 contraceptive products covered by the Alliance for the Family Foundation Philippines (ALFI) TRO. This is what's holding up the implementation of the RH Law. The TRO was granted to ensure that claims against the alleged abortifacient properties of contraceptive hormonal implants like Implanon and Implanon NXT and the like are properly heard.

It has been almost two years since the TRO was granted and, understandably, proponents of the Law are keen on seeing unhindered access to the contraceptive drugs and devices that the TRO effectively blocked. But there is really no immediate end in sight. We can expect a barrage of opposition from ProLife interest groups to every one of these applications. After that, as decisions of the FDA are appealable to the Court of Appeals, what else but a slew of appeals to further strangle the certification process. I would wager that this is exactly the cause of the delay.

Race against time. The principal worry, of course, would be our women are deprived of these options while the applications are pending. The other victims in waiting are the batches of contraceptives now spoiling in government warehouses. The FDA certifications of these products, which include the very Implanons and Implanon NXTs under question are due to expire soon.

With the President equally impatient for the implementation of the RH Law, his Executive Order No. 12 should be just the spearhead of efforts for full implementation. If he cannot apply his Dutertean shortcuts to the administrative due process requirements, what he can do is to beef up the administrative infrastructure of the FDA – one of the regulatory agencies under his Department of Health – to speed up the hearings. If there are appeals to the Court of Appeals, he can throw a tsunami of government lawyers to expedite the process.

Unless he is prepared to do this, his administration will be confined to offering vasectomy, tubal ligation and natural family planning methods per the Population Commission.

★

04 February 2017



Pahina. 3

Editorial

Walang kuwentang kausap ang CPP-NPA

SINABIHAN kahapon ni Pres. Rodrigo Duterte ang mga sundalo na bumalik sa kanilang kampo at iinisang ang kanilang mga baril at maghanda sa pakikipaglaban sa New People's Army (NPA). Ang NPA ay armed wing ng Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) na nakikipagnegosasyon sa usapang pangkapayapaan. Kamakailan ay nag-meet ang mga matataas na lider ng gobyerno at CCP sa pagpapataloy ng peace talks.

“Ubusan na!” Ito ang galit na sinabi ng Presidente kahapon nang magsalita sa inagurasyon ng solar plant sa North Cotabato, kahapon. Itinigil na rin



niya ang ceasefire na unang binawi ng NPA. “Ayaw kong magpatayan, pero kung ang mga sundalo ko ang pinapatay, resume na tayo anytime,” sabi ni Duterte.

Tatlong sundalo ang brutal na pinatay ng NPA sa Malaybalay, Bukidnon noong Miyerkules. Natagpuan ang bangkay ng tatlong sundalo na tadtad ng tama ng bala ang katawan. Ang tatlong sundalo ay kabilang sa Bayanihan Team Activity squad at kinokolekta lamang ang kanilang living allowance sa Manalag Village nang harangin ng mga rebelde at kidnapin. Pawang nakasibilyan umano ang mga sundalo nang maganap ang pagkidnap.

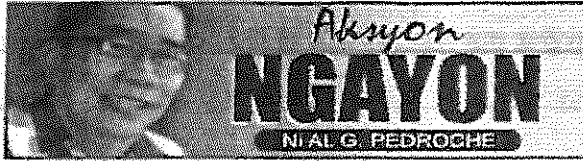
Pagkaraang patayin ang mga sundalo, nagpahayag ang NPA na binabawi na nila ang unilateral ceasefire ngayong buwan na ito bilang protesta sa pamahalaan dahil sa hindi umano pagsunod sa ipinangakong palayain ang political prisoners.

Tama lamang ang desisyon na itigil na ang pakikipag-usap sa CPP-NPA. Sayang lamang ang ipinakikita sa kanila ng gobyerno na sensiridad. Walang mapapala sa pakikipag-usap sa kanila. Nagtatraydor sila. Hindi na dapat pang makipag-usap sa mga taong walang isang salita at pawang pulbura ang laman ng utak.

February 2017

AKSYON NGAYON

Pahina. 4



Exercise in futility

MAGANDA sana kung tuluyan nang mawawakasan ang digmaan ng pamahalaan at ng mga rebeldeng komunista. Sa malaon nang panahon ay naging pangunahing suliranin ng ating bansa ito. Pero halos lahat ng nakaraang administrasyon ay nagsikap na makipagkasundo sa Communist Party of the Philippines pero lahat ng pagtatangka ay nangabigo.

Malaking balita ngayon ang pahayag ni Presidente Rodrigo Duterte na magmula kagabi, tinapos nang pamahalaan ang unilateral ceasefire nito sa CPP/NPA. Nauna rito ay nagdeklara na rin ang pamunuan ng CPP/

NPA na tinatapos na nito ang unilateral ceasefire sa pamahalaan.

Ito ang naging sagot ni Pangulong Duterte sa pagbawi din ng NPA sa unilateral ceasefire nito na epektibo pa sa Pebrero 10: Bakit nga naman mananatili kang nakatameme habang naghahasik ng mapanligalig na digmaan ang kalaban?

Inatasan ng Pangulo ang Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) chief of staff Gen. Eduarano Anon na agad ng ipatupad ang lifting ng ceasefire sa NPA. Palibhasa'y maraming hinihiling na imposibleng kondisyon ang NPA. Ang iba nga ay naibigay na ng pamahalaan. Pero ang pinakamabigat ay ang pagpapalaya sa lahat ng mga political prisoners kahit pa nahaharap sa mga kasong criminal na walang kinalaman sa kanilang ideyolohiya.

Tama ang Pangulo. Walang saysay makipag-usap sa grupong talaga namang ayaw ng kapayapaan, dahil ang gusto'y wasakin ang umiiral na sistema upang sila ang magpatakbo ng pamahalaan. Sa ideyolohiyang komunista, hindi puwede ang compromise. Ang isini-
(Sundan sa pahina 5)

AKSYON NGAYON... Mula pahina 4

sigaw nila, lahat ng sistemang hindi komunista ay bulok at dapat buwagin. Sa kabila nito'y mukhang

tuloy pa rin ang peace talks. Pero palagay ko, maliwanag ito na suntok sa buwan.

ONLINE NEWS 04 FEBRUARY 2017

www.inquirer.net

2 civilians killed in Manay town as ceasefire with NPA ends

By: Erinston Lim - @inquirerdotnet

Inquirer Mindanao / 08:07 PM February 03, 2017



Two civilian have been killed since the collapse of the ceasefire between the government and the NPA ended, according to Capt. Rhyan Batchar, spokesperson of the 10th Infantry Division. (Photo from the Facebook page of Rhyan Batchar)

TAGUM CITY — Two civilians have died as violence flared up again in Mindanao since Wednesday following the collapse of the ceasefire that had been declared separately by the government and communist rebels, the Philippine Army's 10th Infantry Division said on Friday.

Over 3, 000 families have also been displaced in the renewed hostilities, particularly in Manay, Davao Oriental, where New People's Army (NPA) rebels killed a junior Army officer in an ambush.

Capt. Rhyan Batchar, 10th ID spokesperson, identified the dead as Ruben Inidio-an and Boy Sumambot, who were shot by suspected NPA fighters as the victims were fleeing to Barangay Lambog on the afternoon of Wednesday.

That was after rebels waylaid a joint team of soldiers and police officers sent out to investigate the reported presence of armed men there.

Among those killed in the ambush was 2nd Lt. Victor Alejo.

The Manay municipal government had created a crisis management committee to address the plight of at least 3,286 families from six barangays who evacuated out of fear, according to Batchar.

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The families came from the Lambog, Del Pilar, Capasnan, Taocanga, Cawayan, and Rizal.

Two residents identified as Cerilo Lumakang and Nonoy Maumpi, all of Lambog, were also reported missing," Batchar added.

Also on Wednesday, three unarmed soldiers assigned with the 8th Infantry Battalion were captured and killed by suspected NPA rebels in Malaybalay City, Bukidnon, according to Major. Ezra Balagtey, spokesperson of the military's Eastern Mindanao Command.

The troopers were heading back to their post in Manalog village on motorcycles after getting their subsistence allowance from the battalion headquarters when they flagged down and abducted at gunpoint by NPA gunmen in Kibalabag village, Balagtey said.

The bodies of the slain soldiers were found by villagers by Wednesday afternoon, with dozens of gunshot wounds each. /atm

www.dwnd.com.ph

Military laments abduction and killing of unarmed soldiers

By Lt. Colonel ...

NSFA, Panacan, Davao City – Eastern Mindanao Command laments the unprovoked atrocities being perpetrated by the New People's Army after they have announced the termination of their own unilateral ceasefire on February 1, 2017.

In the morning of February 2, 2017 about 10 NPAs abducted two soldiers from the 39th Infantry Battalion of the Philippine Army in Purok 7, Brgy Telafas, Columbio, Sultan Kudarat.

The two unarmed soldiers were on board a motorcycle going towards Makilala, North Cotabato when they were flagged down by the armed lawless elements and brought to an unknown place. The incident prompted the LGU of Columbio, Sultan Kudarat to convene its own Crisis Management Committee. The whereabouts of the abducted soldiers are still not known as of press-time.

In a separate incident, another group, believed to be NPAs, abducted three personnel of 8IB, Philippine Army in the afternoon of February 1, 2017 in Brgy Manalog, Malaybalay City. The three soldiers were on their way to Malaybalay City to withdraw their subsistence allowance when they were forcibly accosted by the NPAs.

The three soldiers were also unarmed and in their civilian attire when they were taken.

At about 5 PM on the same day, the lifeless bodies of the three soldiers were found along the road at vicinity Sitio Kalib, Brgy Kibalabag of the same city. They were positively identified by the Philippine Army and PNP elements who proceeded to the scene of the crime and investigated the incident.

Lt Gen Rey Leonardo B. Guerrero, AFP, Commander of Eastern Mindanao Command expressed his sentiments when he said, "While we grieve for the untimely demise of our soldiers, we condemn this inhuman

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act in its highest form at the same time. These attacks on unarmed soldiers is a manifestation of the NPA's wanton disregard for the ongoing peace talks."

Troops under the Eastern Mindanao Command were earlier ordered to be on active defense mode due to the series of NPA atrocities.

www.pna.gov.ph

NPA abduction, killing of unarmed military personnel show they are not interested in peace talks -- EMC

MANILA, Feb. 3 (PNA) -- The New People's Army (NPA) decision to abduct and kill soldiers, going about their unlawful business, demonstrate the former's disregard for the ongoing peace talks.

These were the sentiments of Eastern Mindanao Command (EMC) head Lt. Gen. Rey Leonardo B. Guerrero after receiving reports that two troopers from the 39th Infantry Battalion were abducted Thursday and another three, from the 8th Infantry Battalion, who were earlier reported missing, were found riddled with bullets in Malaybalay City, Bukidnon Wednesday afternoon.

These incidents took place shortly after the NPAs announced that they will be terminating their unilateral ceasefire, which took effect last August, effective 11:59 p.m. of Feb. 10.

The abduction incident took place in Purok 7, Barangay Telafas, Columbio, Sultan Kudarat morning of Feb. 2.

An estimated 10 rebels abducted two unarmed soldiers from the 39th Infantry Battalion who were aboard a motorcycle heading for Makilala, North Cotabato.

Guerrero said the whereabouts of the two are still unknown as of posting.

In the second, another NPA band abducted three unarmed personnel of 8th Infantry Battalion in Barangay Manalog, Malaybalay City who were on their way to obtain their subsistence allowance last Feb. 1.

At about 5 p.m. on the same day, the lifeless bodies of the three soldiers were found along the road at vicinity Sitio Kalib, Barangay Kibalabag, of the same city.

They were positively identified by the government security troops who responded to the scene.

With these developments, all EMC units are ordered to be on active defense mode. (PNA)
LGI/PFN

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www.philstar.com

No leads in NPA's abduction of 2 soldiers

By John Unson (philstar.com) | Updated February 3, 2017 - 5:28pm

SULTAN KUDARAT — Military and police intelligence units are still clueless on the identities of the communist rebels who snatched two soldiers in Columbio town Wednesday and the location now of the captives.

Superintendent Romeo Galgo, spokesman of the Police Regional Office-12, on Friday said the municipal police office in Columbio, a hinterland town in Sultan Kudarat, enlisted the help of local leaders and community elders in locating the two soldiers and their captors.

Sgt. Solaiman Calocop and Private 1st Class Samuel Garay of the Army's 39th Infantry Battalion were abducted Wednesday by some 20 New People's Army guerillas in Barangay Telefas, Columbio while riding a motorcycle en route to their detachment from the municipal center.

The NPA rebels immediately escaped toward a nearby hinterland at the border of the adjoining Sultan Kudarat and North Cotabato provinces bringing with them the two soldiers.

Galgo said intelligence units of PRO-12 are now helping determine the identities of the rebels who snatched the two soldiers and location now of the captives.

Sources from the Army's 10th Infantry Division, which has jurisdiction over Columbio and nearby towns, said the group that snatched Calocop and Garay belong to the NPA's Guerilla Front 72.

www.gwdc.com.ph

SOCO: The 3 Dead Soldiers sustained 76 Gunshots from the NPA in Bukidnon

CAMP EVANGELISTA, Cagayan de Oro City—The 3 soldiers who were killed by the NPAs were in civilian clothes and sustained a total of 76 gunshots of different calibers based on the report of the PNP Scene of the Crime Operatives (SOCO) of Malaybalay City, Bukidnon. Initial investigation revealed that the three soldiers who were killed last February 1, 2017, along Sitio Kaleb, Brgy Kibalabag, an outskirts community of Malaybalay City, were found dead and sustained a minimum of 24 gunshots each.

Recovered near the killed soldiers are 21-Fired Cartridge Cases (FCC) of 5.56 mm (for M16 rifle), 1- 5.56 mm cartridge, 7- 7.62x 51mm FCC (for M14), 10- 7.62x 39mm FCC (for AK47), 2- 7.62x39mm cartridges (for AK47), 5- 7.62x63mm FCCs (for Garand), and 1- Cal 30 FCCs (for Carbine).

Further, the investigation revealed that the soldiers are on board two motorcycles traversing the route of the said outskirts community when the NPAs flagged them down and eventually killed them.

There are NPAs firing from the high ground and that they went near the three unarmed soldiers to finish them off, considering that the bulk of the rounds were found near their dead bodies.

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Colonel Eric C Vinoya, 403rd Infantry Brigade Commander described the act as inhuman and overkill in nature, he said, "We condemn the recent act of violence perpetrated by alleged NPA members against three (3) personnel of the 8th Infantry Battalion who were conducting Community Support Program in Brgy Manalog, Malaybalay City. They left the barangay because they needed to secure some documentary requirements for a livelihood project that they were facilitating in the community and to get their Subsistence Allowances.

Unfortunately, they were flagged down and murdered by armed men as they were about to go back to the community. They were in civilian attire and unarmed when they were slain."

"This act perpetrated by the NPA only shows that they are not fighting for an ideology anymore. They have resorted to criminal acts and banditry the moment that they murdered our troops and took their money and personal belongings."

For his part, MGen Benjamin R Madrigal Jr, 4ID Commander lambasted the barbaric act of the NPA. "Is this what they call achievement of "just peace?" he said. "How can this NPA say that they also want peace if they still continue to kill with impunity, continue to burn construction and production equipment, and kill innocent people?"

"If they really want peace, then they must lay down their arms and start working with the whole nation on the solutions of these socio-economic problems. They must show sincerity and finally end their violence for the benefit of every Filipino."

This incident will not hinder us to continue our mandate that is to protect our people and secure their communities against any threat. To the perpetrators, the full force of the law will be implemented until justice is served to our soldiers."

www.pna.gov.ph

AFP; NPA killing of 6 unarmed soldiers violate international humanitarian law

By Priam F. Nepomuceno
MANILA, Feb. 3 (PNA) -- The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) strongly condemned the New People's Army (NPA) killing of six unarmed soldiers, saying such brutalities are prohibited by international humanitarian law.

AFP spokesperson Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla said further worrisome was that these troops had just came from peace and development missions that benefitted the communities.

"These acts are not only violations of their own ceasefire declaration, that is still in effect, it is an utter disregard to international humanitarian law when they used excessive force on the bodies of three soldiers they earlier abducted," he noted.

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The AFP spokesperson was referring to the incident involving three 8th Infantry Battalion troopers, who were earlier reported missing last Wednesday, after leaving their base in Barangay Manalog, Malaybalay, Bukidnon to get their subsistence allowance.

The bullet-riddled bodies of the three were found later that day, with one cadaver bearing 27 gunshot wounds, another with 26 and the other one with 24.

The NPA unilateral ceasefire is set to be lifted by 11:59 p.m. Feb. 10.

"The NPA perpetrated acts that are completely unnecessary to the already fallen soldiers," Padilla said. These atrocities show their clear disregard of the newly forged guidelines for the full implementation of the Joint Monitoring Committee under the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law signed by the Communist Party of the Philippines-National Democratic Front (CPP-NDF) leadership in Rome last month.

"Even before they announced the withdrawal of their ceasefire, they already conducted a series of atrocities against government forces beginning last Sunday," he added.

Based from reports on the ground, the NPAs have conducted 18 attacks since January 15 this year.

These include three abduction cases involving three soldiers in separate incidents in Surigao Del Norte and Sultan Kudarat.

"We hereby demand the immediate release of Pfc. Erwin Salan abducted Jan. 29, and two other soldiers abducted Feb. 2," he added.

"The AFP regrets that the NPA has withdrawn its ceasefire declaration. The ceasefire has been an effective manifestation of the CPP-NPA-NDF's commitment to the peace talks and has so far given peace to the communities where they continue to operate," the AFP spokesperson said.

The NPA withdrawal showed their insincerity and bared their insatiable taste for violence, he added.

"For our part, our various units on the ground remain faithful to our own ceasefire declaration, but are ready for any violent incidents that will arise from the NPAs withdrawal," Padilla stressed.

He also assured the public that the AFP, as the only legitimate military organization mandated to protect the people and the communities, will take proactive defensive measures to thwart attacks from all lawless armed groups.

"We shall also continue to perform peace-building and development efforts where the people in conflict areas request us to. We will continue to capacitate local government in order to fast-track delivery of basic goods and services to their constituents," Padilla pointed out.

The AFP spokesperson also said the military will continue to safeguard communities from criminal acts of extortion, burning of vehicles, particularly construction implements that are used for the development of these

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areas, farm and livelihood implements and other forms of criminal and atrocious acts -- whoever is the perpetrator.

"And if ordered by the Commander-in-Chief, we will lift the SOMO (suspension-of-military-operation). It is our beholden duty to protect our citizens," he added. (PNA)

LGI/PFN

www.pna.gov.ph

Joint ceasefire declaration needed to prevent violence in the ground --

AFP

MANILA, Feb. 3 (PNA) -- The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) on Friday said there is a strong need for the government and rebel peace panel to come out with a joint ceasefire declaration so that sporadic clashing between the units in the ground can be prevented.

AFP spokesperson Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla issued this statement after noting that six soldiers were already killed and another three abducted after the New People's Army (NPA) announced it is terminating its unilateral ceasefire effective 11:59 p.m. Feb. 10.

"Demands for a joint ceasefire (with the NPA) is one aspect the AFP has been demanding for ever since peace negotiations started in August," he said in Filipino.

With a joint ceasefire declaration, both parties can agree and submit a list of what they consider as violations to the truce, to a duly appointed third monitoring team or facilitators, who will be tasked to look and investigate on these claims, and if necessary, impose sanctions on the offending party, Padilla said.

In unilateral ceasefire, there are no provisions for a third party monitoring team, making it possible for either side to commit truce violations, incidentally or accidentally, without fear of punishment.

The unprovoked attacks against unarmed government troops this week took place in Echague, Isabela; Manay, Davao Oriental; and Malaybalay City, Bukidnon.

Padilla said NPA attacks in Isabela resulted in the deaths of two enlisted troopers, one junior officer in Davao Oriental and three enlisted soldiers in Bukidnon.

One abduction incident was reported in Surigao Del Norte last Jan. 29 and two in Sultan Kudarat last Feb. 2.

With these developments, the AFP spokesperson said all military units were placed in heightened alert to safeguard the lives of its troops going about their lawful mandate. (PNA)

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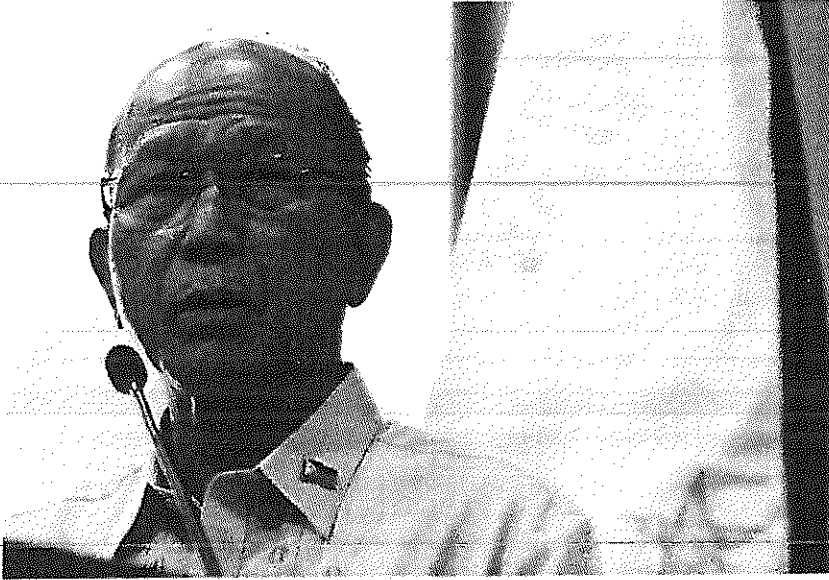
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DND: NPA's 'lawless' activities caused lifting of ceasefire

By Audrey Morallo (philstar.com) | Updated February 5, 2017 - 7:59pm



Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana condemned communist rebels for their "lawless" activities. **AP/File** MANILA, Philippines—The Department of National Defense on Friday blamed communist rebels for a hitch in peace talks, which were resumed last year after breaking down during the Aquino administration.

In a statement, Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana criticized the New People's Army for extortion, abduction and attacks on government forces that he said caused the deaths of civilians and soldiers.

Lorenzana blamed the violence instigated by the rebels as the reason the "promising start to achieving peace has ended."

The secretary of defense also said that he had already instructed the military to be on high alert and to continue protecting the communities under their respective jurisdictions.

"I have instructed the chief of staff to place our troops on high alert and to continue their protection of the communities under their care, wherever they are," Lorenzana said.

President Rodrigo Duterte announced earlier Friday that the government was lifting its unilateral ceasefire with the NPA. He said that rebels were asking for too much by demanding the release of some 400 political prisoners even before parties sign a more permanent bilateral ceasefire agreement.

The president ordered government troops on Friday afternoon: "Go back to your camps, clean your rifles, and be ready to fight"

The NPA, which is on the US State Department's list of terrorist organizations, recently declared that it was ending its unilateral ceasefire effective Feb 11. The group blamed the failure of the government to release political prisoners and the intrusion of security forces into areas "within the authority of the revolutionary government."

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The government and communist rebels are currently engaged in peace talks in Europe in a bid to end the 48-year insurgency, the longest in Asia.

Rounds of negotiations failed in the past due to unmet rebel demands and to distrust on both sides.

www.pna.gov.ph

2 ASG bandits bagged, numerous weapons seized in Sulu ops

By Priam F. Nepomuceno

MANILA, Feb. 3 (PNA) – Operatives from Joint Task Force Sulu, conducting pursuit operations against Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) bandits in Luuk town, Sulu have successfully arrested two of its members and recovered assorted weapons and other war materials Thursday afternoon.

The incident took place 4:30 p.m. at Sitio Kanjawali, Barangay Kan Kulak in the above-mentioned town, said 1st Infantry Division spokesperson Lt. Col. Benedicto Manquisquis.

The ASG members were nabbed by troopers from the 32nd Infantry Battalion.

Seized from the two were two fragmentation grenades, an M-16 automatic rifle with five short magazines and 20 pieces of 5.56mm ball ammunition, .30 caliber Browning automatic rifle with five magazines, two bandoleers, one backpack, one pair of combat boots, assorted battle dress uniforms and personal belongings and documents with high intelligence value.

Manquisquis identified the arrested bandits as Maijung Salyin, of Barangay Tandu, Luuk town and Nasser Ongah, Barangay Kambing, Kalingalan, Caluang, Sulu.

Pursuit operations are still ongoing as of this posting. (PNA)

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TRADOC installs new Doctrine Director and Strategy Office Chief

Posted by Lui Claudio on February 3, 2017 at 1:34 PM



Capas, Tarlac – The Philippine Army's Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) under Maj. Gen. Herminigildo Francisco C. Aquino has installed Col. Edgardo C. Palma as the new Director of the Doctrine Center; and Col. Gilmar N. Galicia as the new Chief, Governance Strategy Management Office (GSMO), during joint turnover ceremony at Headquarters TRADOC Camp O'Donnell, Capas, Tarlac at 9:00 a.m., February 3, 2017.

TRADOC Commander Maj. Gen. Herminigildo Francisco C. Aquino presided the joint turnover ceremony. He emphasized the essential duties and responsibilities of the concerned offices for TRADOC's growth path to a world-class institution. "Doctrine tells us how we will fight today's wars while GSMO tells us how to be the future Army we envision ourselves to be". MGen. Aquino said

MGen. Aquino congratulated Col. Rynell R. More, the former Director of Doctrine Center and Col. Abundio C. Caracas, the former Chief, GSMO for the job well-done.

GSMO is a personal staff of the commander on matters pertaining to governance, strategy alignment, scorecard development, strategy evaluation and strategic communication.

Doctrine Center is a subordinate unit of TRADOC that capacitates a commander to execute campaigns, battles, and engagements. Moreover, it is the starting point from which a commander develops solutions and options to address the specific war fighting demands and challenges faced within the conduct of operations.

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