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OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS  
**NEWS CLIPPINGS**

**24 February 2017**

**Friday**

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



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BALANCED NEWS • FEARLESS VIEWS

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**TODAY'S WEATHER FORECAST | FEBRUARY 24, 2017 | FRIDAY**

**EASTERLIES AFFECTING THE EASTERN SECTION OF THE COUNTRY (As of 5:00 PM - Feb. 23, 2017)**

<b>SUNRISE</b>	<b>SUNSET</b>
6:16 AM	6:03 PM
<b>MOONRISE</b>	<b>MOONSET</b>
4:12 AM	3:59 PM
<b>LAST QUARTER</b>	<b>NEW MOON</b>
FEB 19 3:33 AM	FEB 29 10:58 PM
<b>LOW TIDE</b>	<b>HIGH TIDE</b>
MANILA SOUTH HARBOR	
4:20 AM -0.12 Meter	8:42 PM 0.94 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 rain

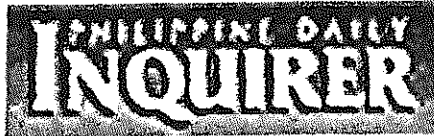
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FEB 24		FEB 25		FEB 26		FEB 27		FEB 28		FEB 29	
<b>METRO MANILA</b>	22-30°C	21-30°C	<b>TAGAYTAY</b>	20-30°C	19-30°C	<b>TACLOBAN</b>	24-28°C	23-28°C	<b>CAGAYAN DE ORO</b>	23-29°C	24-30°C
<b>TUGUEGARAO</b>	20-29°C	20-29°C	<b>LEGAZPI</b>	25-30°C	25-29°C	<b>METRO DAVAO</b>	24-30°C	25-31°C	<b>ZAMBOANGA</b>	24-32°C	25-32°C
<b>LAOAG</b>	21-29°C	21-29°C	<b>PUERTO PRINCESA</b>	24-31°C	25-31°C	<b>METRO CEBU</b>	24-29°C	25-30°C			
<b>BAGUIO</b>	14-22°C	14-22°C	<b>ILOILO/BACOLOD</b>	25-30°C	25-29°C						
<b>SBMA/CLARK</b>	22-32°C	22-31°C									

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24 February 2017



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# De Lima to turn self in today

**FROM A1**

By **Tarra Quismundo,**  
**Marlon Ramos**  
and **Leila B. Salaverria**  
@Team\_Inquirer

“The fight goes on,” an emotional Sen. Leila de Lima declared on Thursday night, hours after a warrant for her arrest was issued by the Muntinlupa City Regional Trial Court (RTC), on drug charges.

In a brief appearance before reporters in the Senate after a meeting with her legal team, De Lima, her voice breaking, said: “I will come home tonight. I will be back tomorrow morning and here, in the Senate, I will wait for the arresting team.”



Sen. Leila de Lima —GRIG C. MONTEGRANDE

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"I will wait for them. I will voluntarily surrender to them," she said. "But for now, I want to be with my family at home," said De Lima, a mother of two.

Malacañang said the court move against the harshest critic of President Duterte's war on drugs was a "major step forward" in the campaign to eliminate the narcotics scourge.

"The war on illegal drugs targets all who are involved and the arrest of an incumbent senator demonstrates the President's strong resolve to fight pushers, peddlers and their protectors, and that his government will not yield until the last pusher and trader are out of the streets victimizing the Filipino youth," said Mr. Duterte's spokesperson, Ernesto Abella.

#### No intention to hide

Executive Judge Juanita Guerrero of RTC Branch 204 issued the warrant for the arrest of De Lima six days after the Department of Justice (DOJ) elevated criminal complaints against the senator and several others.

The charges, which include the sale and trading of drugs, were based on testimonies of high-profile convicts that De Lima allegedly profited from the drug trade at New Bilibid Prison during her time as justice secretary.

She has repeatedly denied the charges, and called the cases a retaliation from the "vengeful" President, with whom she has had a history of conflict.

As chair of the Commission on Human Rights, De Lima investigated Mr. Duterte's involvement in extrajudicial killings carried out by the Davao Death Squad during his time as Davao City mayor. She believes the administration is using the same tack to get rid of drug suspects even without proof of crime now that he is President.

While questioning the le-

gality of the arrest order, De Lima said she would not evade it.

"I have no intention to hide because I will face those cases," she said. "The fight goes on."

De Lima expressed surprise at the swiftness of the court move, pointing out that hearings on her motion to quash had been scheduled for Friday and that the DOJ had even requested a postponement.

#### Detention at NBP

Salvador Panelo, the President's chief legal counsel, did not offer an objection to De Lima's request to spend a night with her family before yielding to arresting officers.

"Let her rest tonight and meditate on her sins of omission and commission that brought her to the rot she is in," he said.

"Hopefully, in her meditation she will come to the realization on the validity of the cardinal principle that what you sow is what you reap. She is now reaping the whirlwind of what she has sown," he added.

Justice Secretary Vitaliano Aguirre II said De Lima would probably be detained at the Muntinlupa city jail, noting that she did not want to be detained in a Philippine National Police jail.

Curiously, the DOJ panel that recommended the filing of charges against De Lima was headed by Senior Assistant State Prosecutor Peter Ong, a fraternity brother of Mr. Duterte and Aguirre in the Lex Talionis.

Besides the senator, also named in the arrest warrant were former Bureau of Corrections chief Rafael Ragos and De Lima's former driver, Ronnie Dayan.

"After a careful evaluation of the herein information and all the evidence presented during the prelimi-

nary investigation, the court finds sufficient probable cause for the issuance of warrants of arrest against all the accused," Guerrero said in her order.

#### Caught flat-footed

News about the issuance of the arrest warrant came two hours after De Lima attended a hearing on the murder of Korean businessman Jee Ick-joo. She immediately met her legal team in her office.

"We were surprised because what we know is that the judge had just returned from Macau today and there's supposed to be a hearing tomorrow," Ferdie Maglalang, De Lima's media officer, told reporters.

Aguirre said the issuance of the arrest warrant had been expected, as De Lima refused to present evidence in her defense during the preliminary investigation.

"She only relied on her legal points that the Ombudsman and not the DOJ has jurisdiction over her case. That's a major blunder of De Lima and her lawyers," Aguirre said over the phone.

"Justice is working in our beloved nation," Speaker Pantaleon Alvarez said in a text message.

But colleagues in the Liberal Party rallied behind De Lima. "The Sandiganbayan, not the RTC, has jurisdiction over the case," said a statement issued by Senators Franklin Drilon, Francis Pangilinan and Bam Aquino.

—WITH REPORTS FROM DJ YAP AND CHRISTINE O. AVENDAÑO INQ



WATCH VIDEO: Senate presser on Sen. Leila de Lima's arrest  
f.inq.ph/qLx470T

5, 5295

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Page: 1

# Leila ordered arrested

## *No bail allowed*

By EDU PUNAY  
and EMMANUEL TUPAS

A day before the courts were to hear her motions contesting the drug charges against her, Sen. Leila de Lima was ordered arrested by a judge who cited "sufficient probable cause" to issue an arrest warrant.

In a one-page order, Muntinlupa Regional Trial Court Branch 204 Judge Juanita Guerrero also ordered the arrest of De Lima's co-accused, former driver and lover Ronnie Dayan and National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) deputy director Rafael Ragos.

De Lima was in her fifth floor office at the Senate when news of the court's order broke yesterday. She emerged from the office at past 7 p.m. to face the press, then went home to prepare for detention.

Police went to her home to arrest her, but missed her as she returned to the Senate, where she spent the night.

Dayan was arrested at 7 p.m. at his home in Aplaya, Barangay Galarin in Urbiztondo, Pangasinan. He did not resist arrest.

In Davao City, President Duterte did not comment on De Lima's impending arrest when he addressed the Knights of Rizal.

The cases for the sale and trading of illegal drugs and liability of government officials

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## Leila From Page 1

under Republic Act 9165, the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act, are non-bailable.

The RTC judge said there was probable cause to proceed with the charges filed by the Department of Justice (DOJ) last Feb. 17 against the senator.

"After a careful evaluation of the herein information and all the evidence presented during the preliminary investigation conducted in this case by the Department of Justice, Manila, the Court finds sufficient probable cause for the issuance of warrants of arrest against the accused Leila de Lima, Rafael Marcos Ragos and Ronnie Palisoc Dayan," read the order.

The court issued the arrest warrant despite De Lima's pending motion for the dismissal of the charges and deferment of issuance of arrest order while judicial determination of probable cause is ongoing.

De Lima is facing two other counts of drug cases before RTC branch 205 under Judge Amelia Fabros-Corpuz and branch 206 under Judge Patria Manalastas-De Leon.

Her nephew Jose Adrian Dera is included in the second count in branch 205.

The third count in branch 206 included former Bureau of Corrections chief Franklin Bucayu, his alleged bagman Wilfredo Elli, convict Jaybee Sebastian, De Lima's former bodyguard Jonel Sanchez, Dayan and Dera.

Guerrero issued the arrest warrant at 4 p.m., a staff told **The STAR** over the phone.

As of 4:30 p.m., the sheriff who was to serve the warrant was out implementing another order not related to De Lima's case, Guerrero's staff said.

The cases against De Lima stemmed from the complaints filed by the Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption (VACC), former NBI deputy directors

Reynaldo Esmeralda and Ruel Lasala, and Sebastian.

### Day in court

Reacting to the arrest order on De Lima, presidential spokesman Ernesto Abella said she "will now have her day in court where she will have full opportunity to prove her claim of innocence."

"The war on illegal drugs targets all who are involved, and the arrest of an incumbent senator demonstrates the President's strong resolve to fight pushers, peddlers and their protectors and that his government will not yield until the last pusher and trader are out of the streets victimizing the Filipino youth," he added.

"This we owe to the Filipino youth and the future generations for whom we build a nation worthy of Filipinos; and Filipinos worthy of the nation," he said.

"Let her rest tonight and meditate on her sins of omission and commission that brought her to the rot she is in," chief presidential legal counsel Salvador Panelo said.

"Hopefully, in her meditation she will come to the realization on the validity of the cardinal principle that what you sow is what you reap. She is now reaping the whirlwind of what she has sown," he added.

"Justice is working in our beloved nation," said Speaker Pantaleon Alvarez, an ally of President Duterte who initiated and led the House probe on the senator's alleged drug links to convicted drug lords. It was also "a victory of the war against drugs," he said.

The Speaker said the House inquiry into the illegal drug trade at the New Bilibid Prison "yielded enough evidence that indeed, she has violated the Dangerous Drugs Act."

"She should now prepare her legal defense. Let the

wheels of justice turn and take its course," he added.

A total of 16 policemen, including three officials, have been tasked to provide security to De Lima.

An official of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) said police-women would be among those to serve the warrant of arrest against De Lima to ensure her rights as a woman would be respected.

Senior Insp. Lea Galvan of the CIDG-National Capital Region (NCR) earlier instructed the 16 police officers to wear the official CIDG shirt and six-pocket khaki pants. But an hour later, they were directed to change to general office attire as part of procedure in serving warrants of arrest.

Galvan said the deployment was based on verbal instructions from CIDG-NCR Senior Supt. Belli Tamayo.

### Political persecution

Senators from the Liberal Party (LP) condemned what they called political persecution of a "brave administration critic" and expressed fears for her safety in detention.

LP president and Sen. Francis Pangilinan and Senators Franklin Drilon and Paolo Benigno Aquino IV in a statement maintained that it was the Sandiganbayan, not the Muntinlupa RTC, that has jurisdiction over De Lima's three drug cases.

"We heard that this judge (Guerrero) just came from Macau, and the motion to quash (the charges) was voluminous. She should read the motion first. The haste is deplorable," they said.

"We fear for Sen. Leila's life and security given what happened to Albueria mayor Espinosa and Korean businessman Jee Ick-joo, who were both killed inside police-controlled facilities," they said.

They described the arrest order as "purely political vendetta and has no place in a justice system that upholds

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the rule of law." Moreover, the order was "condemnable" as they stressed that an arrest based on trumped-up charges is illegal.

They reiterated the Office of the Ombudsman has primary jurisdiction over cases against public officers "cognizable by the Sandiganbayan."

Violation of the Dangerous Drugs Act, which is the DOJ's case against De Lima, falls under "other offenses committed by public officials" listed in the Sandiganbayan Law, they maintained.

"We maintain that if this warrant of arrest is served, it would be a clear violation of legal proceedings and is therefore a violation of her Constitutional right to due process," they said.

Drilon said he was "saddened by what happened." He said his advice to De Lima is "we will avail of all the remedies under the law, including bringing these issues to the appellate courts."

Pangilinan, Aquino and LP ally Sen. Risa Hontiveros paid a visit to De Lima in her office at the Senate to show their solidarity.

"This is an ugly episode. I hope she is afforded respect and given an opportunity to be with family members. I pray for her safety," Akbayan Rep. Tom Villarin said.

"She is a victim of political persecution as charges against her are trumped up. It demeans our sense of justice and fairness," he said.

Before news of her arrest came out, De Lima said she hoped to meet UN special rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions Agnes Callamard in Switzerland next month.

De Lima has an invitation to attend the 15th International Film Festival and Forum on Human Rights in Geneva, Switzerland on March 18.

"Your tireless advocacy of the respect of fundamental rights in your country has earned you the unanimous re-

spect and admiration of the human rights community around the world," Isabelle Gattiker, director of the festival, said in a letter of invitation to De Lima.

The international film festival and forum on human rights is organized in collaboration with the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs.

De Lima, if allowed to leave the country, will also have a chance to meet with Ruth Drei-

fuss, former president of the Swiss Confederation and chair of the Global Commission on Drug Policy.

De Lima filed Senate Resolution No. 153 urging the Department of Foreign Affairs to invite Callamard to look into the spate of extrajudicial killings and summary executions in the country.

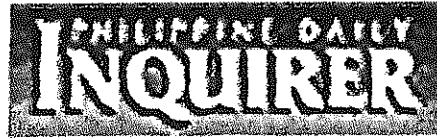
– With Paolo Romero, Christina Mendez, Marvin Sy, Jess Diaz, Delon Porcalla, Cecille Suerte Felipe, Eva Visperas

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GOODWILL MEASURE

## REDS VOW TO FREE 6 GOV'T TROOPERS SOON

DAVAO CITY—Communist rebels in Mindanao on Thursday said they were finalizing the release of six soldiers, militiamen and a policeman in their custody even amid fighting on the ground.

Joaquin Jacinto, spokesperson of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) in Mindanao, identified four of those set to be freed as Police Officer 2 Jerome Anthony Natividad, who was taken captive in Talakag town in Bukidnon province on Feb. 9; Private First Class Edwin Salan, who was held in Alegria town in Surigao del Norte province on Jan. 29; and Sgt. Solaiman Calucop and Pfc. Samuel Garay, who were nabbed in Columbio town in Sultan Kudarat province on Feb. 2.

Jacinto said two other captives would be released by the New People's Army (NPA) unit holding them. He did not name the captives but the NPA, on Feb. 14, abducted government militiamen Rene Doller and Carl Mark Nucos in Lupon town

in Davao Oriental province.

"The respective regions will soon announce the details of the release of these aforementioned prisoners of war," Jacinto said.

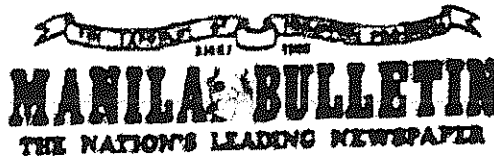
He said the decision to release their captives was a "gesture of support for the resumption of formal talks between the [government] and NDFP."

In an earlier statement, Maj. Gen. Rafael Valencia, commander of the military's 10th Infantry Division, said President Duterte ordered the military to continue the offensive against NPA rebels even as efforts to rescue their captives were continuing.

Valencia said if NPA rebels were serious about talking peace, they should lay down their arms and stop their attacks on government troops and other targets.

Jacinto said the NPA's termination of its unilateral ceasefire was "necessary" because the military had not stopped its operations against the rebels. —ALLAN NAWAL INQ

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# POWs to be released even as fighting continues – NDFP

By ANTONIO L. COLINA IV

**D**AVAO CITY – The National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP)-Mindanao has vowed it will release the prisoners of war (POWs) as a gesture of support for the resumption of peace negotiations with the government.

In an NDFP statement released yesterday, NDFP-Mindanao spokesperson Joaquin Jacinto said they will release the POWs “even as fighting continues in the field.”

To be released are: PFC Edwin Salan, captured in Alegria, Surigao del Norte on January 29; Sgt. Solaiman Calucop and Pfc Samuel Garay, captured in Columbio, Sultan Kudarat on February 2, PO2 Jerome Natividad, captured in Talakag, Bukidnon on February 9; and two alleged “paramilitary” members Rene Doller and Carl Mark, both captured in Lupon, Davao Oriental on February 14.

“The respective regions will soon announce the details of the release of these aforementioned prisoners of war,” he said.

He said that they encouraged the GRP to heed the call of the Filipino people “for the resumption of formal talks with the NDFP despite the absence of any ceasefire agreement.”

He added that President Rodrigo R. Duterte should not ignore the clamor for genuine agrarian reform and national industrialization.

“If genuine agrarian reform and national industrialization are carried out to the satisfaction of Filipino peasants, workers and national minorities, millions will surely benefit and significantly improve their lives,” he said.

“Both the GRP and the NDFP owe it to the Filipino masses, at the very least, to continue to buckle down in significant dialogue and thresh out, and possibly agree on means to eradicate the very roots of

armed conflict in the country, which are feudal exploitation, US imperialist domination and bureaucrat-capitalism,” he added.

He explained that the Communist Party of the Philippines, New People’s Army, and National Democratic Front (CPP-NPA-NDFP) lifted its bilateral ceasefire due to the non-release of the more than 400 political detainees and the continuous violations of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and Philippine National Police (AFP-PNP) who they claimed “occupied hundreds of communities in both cities and the countryside in Mindanao and the rest of the country” in the guise of military and police operations.

“In this context, the NPA, in active-defense mode, was only duty-bound to launch offensives against operating AFP/PNP troops in order to defend these communities from state-sponsored atrocities,” he said.

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## Top NPA leader captured in Batangas

By Mario J. Mallari

A top leader of the communist New People's Army (NPA), tagged in large scale extortion activities and atrocities in Southern Tagalog region including the raid at the posh Hamilo Coast-Pico de Loro, was captured by military troops in Batangas.

Maj. Gen. Rhoderick Parayno, commander of the 2nd Infantry Division (ID), identified the arrested NPA leader as Ernesto Samarita, alias Mel, secretary of the NPA's Guerilla Unit-3, Southern Tagalog Regional Party Committee, and head of the finance committee STRPC.

Samarita is believed to be an alternate member of the Communist Party of the Philippines

(CPP) Central Committee operating in Cavite, Batangas, Laguna and Central Quezon province.

He is the third highest in the NPA's Southern Tagalog Regional Committee and headed the Tactical Center of the 2nd Congress of the CPP's Central Committee held in Mindanao only last January.

The military tagged Samarita in large scale extortion activities by the NPA in Southern Tagalog region, including the raid at the posh Hamilo Coast-Pico de Loro resort in Barangay Papaya, Nasugbu.

Parayno said that Samarita was arrested by elements of the 730th Combat Group of the Air Force while on combat operation along Barangay Munting Indang in Nasugbu at around 3 a.m. on Tuesday.

"The troops noticed a roll of detonating cord, which is an explosive part or component, protruding from the unzipped part of the belt bag that the subject was wearing," said Capt. Xy-zon Meneses, information officer of 2nd ID.

"When asked why he is in a possession of an explosive detonating cord, instead of answering, he hid his back and tried to escape. However, he was ably prevented by the troops," he added.

Initially, Meneses said that Samarita introduced himself as Jojomar Dimayacyac of San Pablo City, Laguna to Laureano Bayon, chairman of Barangay Munting Indang.

Further verification, however, led to the discovery that the arrested person was Samarita.

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Pahina. 8

## Kalihim ng NPA sa ST, arestado

Arestado ang itinuturing lider at kalihim ng rebeldeng New People's Army sa Southern Tagalog Region sa isinagawang operasyon ng militar sa Barangay Munting Indang sa bayan ng Nasugbu, Batangas kamakalawa

Kinilala ni Lt. Xyzon Menezes, spokesperson ng Army's 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division, ang suspek na si Ernesto "Ka Mel" Samarita, secretary ng Southern Tagalog Regional Party Committee, pinuno ng regional finance staff at miyembro ng central committee ng CPP-NPA-NDF

Bandang alas – 3 ng malding araw nang masakote ang suspek sa inilatag na operasyon ng 730<sup>th</sup> Combat Group ng Philippine Air

Force sa ilalim ng operational control ng Army's 202<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Brigade

Lumilitaw sa inisyal na ulat na napansin ng tropa ng militar ang rolyo ng detonating cord ng bomba sa hindi naka-zipper na belt bag ng suspek

Gayunman, tinangkang sitahin ng military subalit nagtatakbo ang suspek hanggang nasakote rin.

Unang nagpakilala ang suspek sa pangalang Jojomar Dimayacyac ng San Pablo, Laguna pero sa imbestigasyon at booking procedure matapos na iturn-over ito sa pulisya ay natukoy na ito ang wanted na mataas na lider ng NPA rebs

Lumitaw din sa imbestigasyon na ang grupo ng

suspek ay sangkot sa raid sa Pico de Loro Resort noong Enero na 2017 *Joy Cantos*



24 February 2017

# NPA chieftain falls

By FRANCIS T. WAKEFIELD

A high-ranking leader of the communist New People's Army (NPA) who led numerous atrocities and large scale extortion in Southern Tagalog Region has been captured by government troops Tuesday in Batangas City.

Ernesto Samarita alias "Mel", Secretary of the Sub-Regional Military Area-Guerrilla Unit 3 (SRMAGU3), Southern Tagalog Regional Party Committee) was nabbed during a combat operation by a section of the 730th Combat Group of the Philippine Air Force (PAF) Barangay Munting Indang,

Nasugbu, Batangas.

Samarita, who is also the head of the Regional Finance Staff of the STRPC, and Alt Central Committee member operating in the areas of Cavite, Batangas, Laguna, and Central Quezon, was initially stopped for acting suspiciously in the wee hours Tuesday.

The troops noticed a roll of detonating cord, which is an explosive part or component, protruding from the unzipped part of the belt bag that the subject was wearing.

When asked why he is in a possession of an explosive detonating cord, instead of answering, Samarita turned his back and tried

to escape but was subsequently prevented by authorities from fleeing.

Samarita was turned over to authorities in Barangay Munting Indang, which has jurisdiction over the place where the subject was arrested.

Samarita is third highest in the Komiteng Rehiyon Timog Katalagan and headed the Tactical Center of the 2nd Congress of the Komiteng Sentral held in Mindanao in January 2017.

He is also believed to be an Alternate Member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines.

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**POLICE FILES**

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### **Caigu patay sa sagupaan sa NPA sa Cotabato**

**KORONADAL CITY** – Nasawi ang isang CAFGU member matapos makaengkwestro ang rebeldeng New People's Army (NPA) sa Sitio Buay-Buay, Brgy Basak, Magpet North Cotabato kamakalawa ng hapon.

Nangyari ang engkwentro pasado 4:00 ng hapon na ikinamatay ng CAFGU member na si Elisio Sicao.

Inihayag ni 2nd Lt. Silver Belvis na nagsasagawa ng combat patrol ang tropa ng mga CAFGU ng 39th IB ng Philippine Army nang maka-engkwentro ang nasa 15 NPA rebels ng Guerilla Front 53.

Umabot naman sa isang oras ang sagupaan ng dalawang grupo kung saan unang umatras ang rebeldeng NPA.

Patuloy ang manhunt operation ng mga militar sa mga rebelde na pinaninwalaang nagtatago sa liblib na bahagi ng naturang lugar.

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

## **Govt forces in Bulacan on alert following NPA sightings**

From the Philippine News Agency (Feb 23): Govt forces in Bulacan on alert following NPA sightings

Government forces in this province, particularly those assigned in the north eastern part of Bulacan, are on alert following confirmed sightings of band of New People's Army (NPA) guerrillas in Dona Remedios Trinidad town and in the mountains of Umiray, Aurora which is close to the mountain town of Norzagaray, Bulacan.

Bulacan acting police director Senior Supt. Romeo Caramat Jr., made this disclosure during the Peace and Order Council (PPOC) meeting held at the Hiyas Convention Center here on Thursday morning.

Caramat told PPOC chairman and Gov. Wilhelmino M. Sy-Alvarado and Vice Gov. Daniel Fernando that a band of NPA rebels were first sighted in the mountain village of Kabayunan, Dona Remedios Trinidad on Feb. 7.

He said that based on intelligence reports and sources that was verified by the 48th Infantry Battalion of the Philippine Army under the command of Lt. Col. Ramil Anoyo, the communists guerrillas were on procurement missions.

He said the rebel band bought dresses, combat boots, 100 bullet rounds of M203 grenade rifle and 10,000 rounds of M16 rifles.

Alvarado said both the police and military should be vigilant since Bulacan has already been declared insurgent-free by the Philippine Army in 2013, during the time of AFP chief Gregorio Pio Catapang.

He also said that while no violent incidents have been reported for so many years now, the government troops assigned in Bulacan must always remain on alert and vigilant because the anniversary of the NPA will take place next month and they might do some surprises in the province.

<http://www.pna.gov.ph/index.php?idn=2&sid=&nid=2&rid=966587>

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## **Leyte, Samar remain peaceful amid halt in peace talks with Reds**

From the Philippine News Agency (Feb 23): **Leyte, Samar remain peaceful amid halt in peace talks with Reds**

The Philippine Army reported that Eastern Visayas region remained peaceful despite the termination of peace talks between the government and communist rebels.

Army's 8th Infantry Division commander Brig. Gen. Raul Farnacio said Leyte and Samar provinces have been spared by recent atrocities of the New People's Army (NPA).

Farnacio attributed the situation to the fact that one of the key rebel leaders in the region is a priest, who is also searching for genuine peace. The official is referring to Fr. Santiago Salas, the National Democratic Front (NDF) Eastern Visayas spokesperson.

"Fr. Salas adheres to the peace agreement of the negotiating panel and there is a big chance that they are really pursuing peace, once and for all," he said.

"I believe that he is aware of the consequence that warring parties had brought to the region, especially to worsening poverty incidence in Samar provinces."

Farnacio noted that even in Western Visayas where rebels are led by a priest, there are no atrocities as well.

Although there were reported tactical moves by rebels, the official said no violence had been perpetrated by communist rebels recently unlike in other parts of the country where there are attacks, abduction of soldiers, and burning of equipment.

Recently, three NDF leaders in the region have conveyed their intention to continue with the peace talks.

Samar provinces have been a stronghold of armed rebels due to its terrain consisting of densely forested mountainous areas, high poverty incidence, and issue of widespread landlessness, according to a 2013 study of William Norman Holden of the University of Calgary in Canada.

Since the early stages of the rebellion, Samar Island has been considered to be a rebel stronghold with 11 percent of all NPA-related incidents having taken place in the three provinces, the same study revealed.

The NPA launched its first tactical operation in the country in Calbiga, Samar in 1974, when it ambushed an army scout patrol and seized a number of their weapons.

<http://www.pna.gov.ph/index.php?idn=2&sid=&nid=2&rid=966631>

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THE HISTORY OF THE  
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THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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**TEAM EFFORT** – Cebu City Mayor Tomas Osmeña discusses with soldiers from the Armed Forces' Central Command the plan to create a Task Force Cebu, where the troops will be deployed to the barangays to help police in the fight against illegal drugs and crime. (Juan Carlo de Vela)

24 February 2017

# The Standard

DEFINING THE NEWS

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## Military receives 2 leased JP planes

By Francisco Tuyay

TWO Japanese reconnaissance aircraft transferred to the Philippine government are expected to upgrade the Southeast Asian country's surveillance capability over its long coastline, particularly in the hotly-contested reefs and shoal in the West Philippine Sea.

Navy Flag-Officer-in-Command Vice Admiral Ronaldo Joseph Mercado revealed the impending arrival of two TC-90 reconnaissance aerial aircraft during fellowship night with the Defense Press Corps aboard BRP Andres Bonifacio birthed at Pier 13 South Harbor Wednesday.

Mercado said the 2 TC-90 aircraft from the Japan Maritime Defense Force were scheduled to arrive on March 27 this year, the first batch of the five to be delivered to the Philippine government as part of the countries' bilateral

defense cooperation.

"Yes, it will boost our capability on aerial reconnaissance, particularly on maritime surveillance," Mercado said.

Mercado said the 2 TC-90 in the Air Force inventory would eventually be utilized not only for surveillance purposes, but would also hasten humanitarian assistance and could ferry limited cargoes and personnel for maritime use as well.

The Philippines has 36,289 kms coastline, longer than Australia's 25,760 kms and Japan's 29,751 kms but shorter than Russia's 37,653 kms.

Navy spokesman Capt. Lued Lincuna also said the three TC-90s would be transferred to the Philippine Navy hopefully at the end of the year.

Lincuna said the Japanese surveillance plane would supplement the existing Norman-Britten BN-2 Islander fleet in its maritime missions.

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# AFP in all-out drive vs Abu Sayyaf, IS cohorts

**S**O many issues demand the new administration's attention but it must not lose sight of one problem that lies at the center of peace and development in Mindanao – the jihadist groups trying to establish an Islamic State (IS) base in the southwestern part of the island.

Military sources said the core group is the Abu Sayyaf, which has been joined by dozens of Indonesians, Malaysians, and Arabs from the Middle East. Two weeks ago, the Armed Forces, in an artillery attack followed by gunbattles on the ground, engaged the group in an area near Butig, Lanao del Sur, and one Indonesian was reported killed.

Military operations are now underway in Basilan, Tawi-Tawi, and Sulu. Gen. Eduardo Ano, chief of staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), said. Fourteen battalions of government troops are engaged in a search-and-destroy campaign. The AFP, he said expects to defeat the Abu Sayyaf in six months.

For years the Abu Sayyaf has carried out its operations in Mindanao, kidnapping many foreigners, holding them for ransom, and beheading them if their families fail to deliver. Only a few days ago, the Abu Sayyaf came out with a video

showing a German hostage, vowing to kill him if P30-million ransom is not paid by February 26.

The video showed the German, Jurgen Kantner, pleading for his life, in the same way previous foreign hostages had pleaded for their lives. Two Canadians – John Ridsdel and Robert Hall – were killed in April and June, 2016, seven months after they were kidnapped from a resort island in the Davao Gulf. Their companions – a Filipina and a Norwegian – were freed soon afterwards and police sources said the Abu Sayyaf got P30 million for the Norwegian.

The February 26 deadline is just two days away. We will soon know if the military campaign against the Abu Sayyaf and its jihadist allies from Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Middle East has them on the run after two months of operations. Or shall we have another foreign victim of the Abu Sayyaf, who continue to defy all efforts to eliminate them and are even gaining adherents from various parts of the world?

We continue to hope that the Armed Forces with its 14 battalions will be able to force the Abu Sayyaf and their jihadist cohorts out of their bases in Mindanao. We cannot allow the Philippines to be the next site of Islamic State operations after Syria and Iraq.

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## EDITORIAL

### TULOY ANG PINAIGTING NA KAMPANYA NG AFP LABAN SA ABU SAYYAF AT SA MGA KAALYADO NITO SA ISLAMIC STATE

**N**APAKARAMING usapin ang kailangang pagtutunan ng atensiyon ng bagong administrasyon, ngunit marapat na hindi nito tantanan ang isang problema na nasa sentro ng inaasam na kapayapaan at kaunlaran sa Mindanao — ang grupong jihadist na nagtatangkang magtatag ng base ng Islamic State (IS) sa timog-kanlurang bahagi ng isla.

Ayon sa mga source sa militar, pangunahing grupo rito ang Abu Sayyaf, na nagkaroon na ng mga kasaping Indonesian, Malaysian, at Arabo mula sa Gitnang Silangan. Dalawang linggo na ang nakalipas nang makaengkuwentro ng Sandatahang Lakas, matapos ang isang artillery attack, ang grupong terorista sa isang lugar malapit sa Butig, Lanao del Sur, at isang Indonesian ang napaulat na napatay.

Hindi tumitigil ang mga operasyon ng militar sa Basilan, Tawi-Tawi, at Sulu, ayon kay Gen. Eduardo Año, chief of staff ng Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP). Labing-apat na batalyon ng mga tropa ng gobyerno ang nagsagawa ng search-and-destroy campaign. Inaasahan ng AFP, aniya, na magagapi ang Abu Sayyaf sa loob ng arim na buwan.

Sa loob ng maraming taon ay isinagawa ng Abu Sayyaf ang mga operasyon nito sa Mindanao, nangingidnap ng mga dayuhan, binibihag ang mga ito para makakolekta ng ransom, at pinupugutan ang mga ito kung mabibigong magbayad ang pamilya ng mga ito. Ilang araw lang ang nakalipas nang ilabas ng Abu Sayyaf ang video na nagpapakita sa bihag na German hostage, at nagbantang papatayin ang dayuhan kung hindi mababayaran ang hinihingi nilang P30-milyon ransom kapalit ng kalayaan nito hanggang sa Pebrero 26.

Ipinakita sa video ang German, si Jurgen Kantner, na nagmamakaawa para sa sariling buhay, gaya ng kung paano nagmakaawa ang ibang dayuhang bihag para sa sarili nilang kaligtasan. Rimatay ang dalawang Canadian — sina John Ridsdel at Robert Hall — noong Abril at Hunyo 2016, pitong buwan matapos silang dukutin mula sa isang resort island sa Davao Gulf. Ang mga kasama nila — isang Pilipina at isang Norwegian — ay pinalaya pagkatapos at sinabi ng mga source mula sa pulisya na nakakolekta ang Abu Sayyaf ng P30 milyon mula sa Norwegian.

Dalawang araw na lang bago sumapit ang Pebrero 26. Malalaman na natin ang kahihinatnan ng opensiba ng militar laban sa Abu Sayyaf at sa mga kaalyado nitong jihadisti mula sa Indonesia, Malaysia, at Gitnang Silangan makalipas ang dalawang buwan ng maigting na operasyon. O isa na naman kayang dayuhan ang mabikuma ng Abu Sayyaf, na patuloy na nagtatagumpayan ang lahat ng pagpupursige upang magapi sila, at sa katunayan ay nakahihikayat pa nga ng mga tagasuporta mula sa iba't ibang panig ng mundo?

Patuloy tayong umaasa na magagawa ng Sandatahang Lakas, sa pagsasama-sama ng 14 na batalyon nito, na maitaboy ang Abu Sayyaf at ang mga kasabwat nitong jihadisti mula sa Mindanao. Hindi natin papayagang sa Pilipinas sunod na ilunsad ng Islamic State ang mga operasyon nito, kasunod ng Syria at Iraq.

24 February 2017

The Manila Times

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## Editorial

### Govt is right to set its own conditions for peace talks with Reds

THE situation has changed in the on-again, off-again peace negotiations between the Philippine government and the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), New People's Army, and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDF).

In the past, the talks fell through because of the conditions set by the communist side for negotiations to proceed.

At the last reckoning, the talks were abandoned because of the Left's insistence that government release first some 400 communist rebels in custody.

This was subsequently followed by the decision of the NPA to junk its unilateral ceasefire with the armed forces starting February 10.

To this, and following NPA attacks on AFP patrols and units, President Duterte responded by cancelling peace negotiations that were scheduled to take place on February 22 to 25 in the Netherlands.

Thus, the talks were brought to a standstill.

As third parties and mediators have worked to revive the negotiations, the Philippine government has perceptibly modified its once passive stance in the talks.

Now, government is setting conditions for the resumption of the negotiations. Through presi-

*It is evident that the talks have stalled because of mutual suspicions of both sides, and the fears of each that it will be disadvantaged by being conciliatory. We believe the impasse can be broken if both sides will approach the talks with a new perspective and minus the old, set positions that proved unbridgeable.*

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dential spokesman Ernesto Abella, Matacanang has announced four conditions for the communist side to consider, namely:

- 1) A stop to the collection of revolutionary taxes and extortion activities by the insurgents,
- 2) A stop to ambushes of government troops by the NPA,
- 3) A stop to the burning of property by the NPA, and
- 4) A stop to provocative and hostile actions by communist insurgents

This new, tough-minded position has been received with great interest across the entire country. It will enjoy wide public support, because local communities and many private businesses have long been complaining about the extortion activities perpetrated by communist insurgents, which have done much damage to economic activities. It is derogation of Philippine sovereignty for certain areas of the country to be subjected to revolutionary taxation. We want to state here our position that the peace negotiations should be earnestly revived and resumed by both sides. We believe further that each side should be prepared to adjust its position for the sake of reaching an agreement and forging a just and lasting peace.

It is evident that talks have stalled because of mutual suspicions of both sides, and the fears of each that it will be disadvantaged by being conciliatory.

We believe the impasse can be broken if both sides will approach the talks with a new perspective, and minus the old, set positions that proved unbridgeable.

Both sides should be wiser from the difficulties and misunderstandings that have occurred. The important thing now is for both sides to keep talking, and work hard to still the guns. It may be a cliché, but talk truly is a bridge.

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## **ONLINE NEWS**

**24 FEBRUARY 2017**

### **5 NPA rebels yield in Masbate -- Solcom official**

From the Philippine News Agency (Feb 23): 5 NPA rebels yield in Masbate -- Solcom official

Five suspected members of the New People's Army (NPA) surrendered to the Philippine Army's 2nd Infantry Battalion headquarters in Barangay Bacolod, Milagros town in Masbate on Thursday afternoon, an Army spokesperson said.

Maj. Virgilio Perez, spokesperson of the Southern Luzon Command based at Camp Guillermo Nakar in Lucena City, said the communist rebels brought with them five firearms that included an M16 Armalite rifle, M14 rifle, M1 carbine, .45-cal. and .38-cal. pistols when they surrendered at the Army headquarters at 1:40 p.m.

The surrenderers requested that their identities be withheld for the meantime.

Perez said the surrender of the five rebels resulted from the continuous military offensive operations in Masbate province under Col. Fernando Trinidad, commander of the 903rd Brigade.

<http://www.pna.gov.ph/index.php?idn=2&sid=&nid=2&rid=966753>

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## **AFP conducting simple rites, activities for EDSA-1 anniversary**

From the Philippine News Agency (Feb 23): **AFP conducting simple rites, activities for EDSA-1 anniversary**

As the nation celebrates the 31st anniversary of the EDSA People Power 1 on Feb. 25, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) announced that it will conduct simple rites and activities in honor of the bloodless revolt.

Activities include a Catholic Mass that will be held at the Grandstand of Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon City on Friday, which will be followed by awarding ceremonies for civilians and other stakeholders who played a valuable role during EDSA 1, AFP public affairs office chief Col. Edgard Arevalo said.

Aside from this, a wreath-laying ceremony, spearheaded by former president Fidel Ramos, will be held at the EDSA Shrine in Ortigas, Mandaluyong on Saturday.

The AFP's commemoration of EDSA 1 formally started on the morning of Feb. 22 when a wreath-laying ceremony took place at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at the Libingan Ng Mga Bayani in Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City.

The flowers came from President Rodrigo Duterte, Arevalo said.

Despite the relative simplicity of this year's rites, the AFP official said what is important is that the AFP, as ordered by its head Gen. Eduardo Año, is showing its solidarity with the people on this important historical occasion for Filipinos.

<http://www.pna.gov.ph/index.php?idn=1&sid=&nid=1&rid=966565>

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