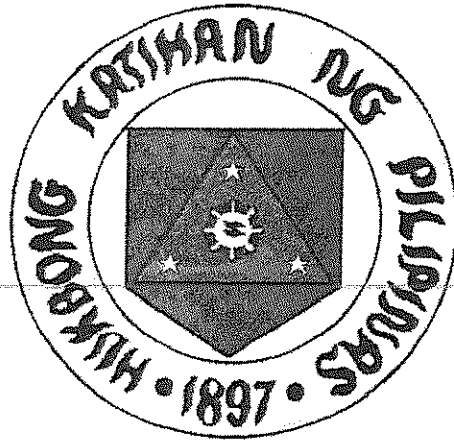


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**NEWS CLIPPINGS**

23 January 2017

Monday

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

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# PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER


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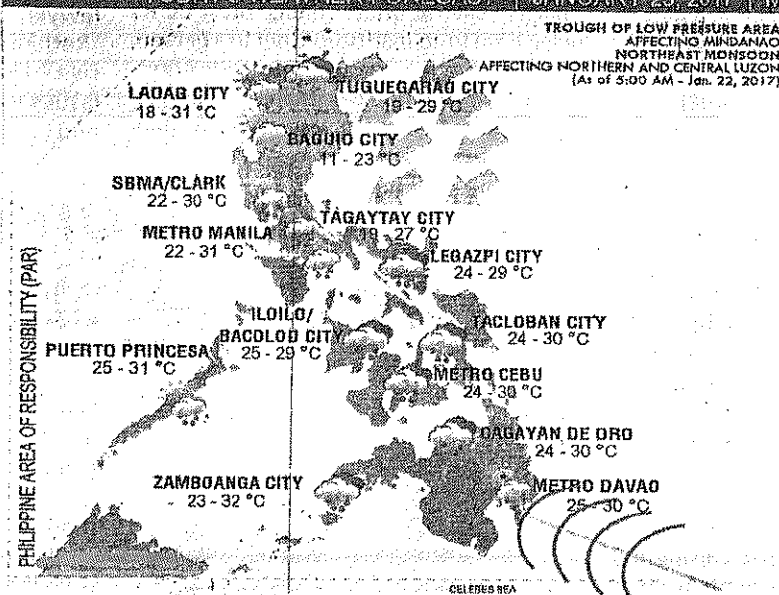












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BALANCED NEWS + FEARLESS VIEWS






























**TODAY'S WEATHER FORECAST | JANUARY 23, 2017 | MONDAY**






TROUGH OF LOW PRESSURE AREA AFFECTING MINDANAO NORTH-EAST MONSOON AFFECTING NORTHERN AND CENTRAL LUZON (As of 5:00 AM - Jan. 22, 2017)

<b>SUNRISE</b>  6:26 AM	<b>SUNSET</b>  5:51 PM
<b>MOONRISE</b>  2:15 AM	<b>MOONSET</b>  2:01 PM
<b>LAST QUARTER</b> JAN 20 6:13 AM	<b>NEW MOON</b> JAN 28 8:07 AM
<b>LOW TIDE</b> MANILA SOUTH HARBOR 2:44 AM 0.11 Meter	<b>HIGH TIDE</b> MANILA SOUTH HARBOR 7:01 PM 0.81 Meter

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

	JAN 24	JAN 25	JAN 24	JAN 25	JAN 24	JAN 25		
<b>METRO MANILA</b>	 21-31 °C	 21-30 °C	<b>TAGAYTAY</b>	 19-26 °C	 18-27 °C	<b>TACLOBAN</b>	 24-31 °C	 24-31 °C
<b>TUGUEGARAO</b>	 19-29 °C	 18-29 °C	<b>LEGAZPI</b>	 24-29 °C	 25-29 °C	<b>CAGAYAN DE ORO</b>	 24-30 °C	 24-31 °C
<b>LAOAG</b>	 18-30 °C	 18-30 °C	<b>PUERTO PRINCESA</b>	 26-31 °C	 25-31 °C	<b>METRO DAVAO</b>	 24-30 °C	 24-31 °C
<b>BAGUIO</b>	 12-22 °C	 11-22 °C	<b>ILOILO/BACOLOD</b>	 25-29 °C	 25-28 °C	<b>ZAMBOANGA</b>	 23-33 °C	 24-33 °C
<b>SBMA/CLARK</b>	 22-30 °C	 23-30 °C	<b>METRO CEBU</b>	 24-31 °C	 25-30 °C	 <b>SAGOT NG PADALA MO!</b>		

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INQUIRER

Page: A1

# Women lead global protests vs Trump

WASHINGTON—Hundreds of thousands of women filled the streets of major American cities to lead an unprecedented wave of international protests against President Donald Trump, mocking and denouncing the new US leader the day after his inauguration.

Women activists, outraged by Trump's campaign rhetoric and behavior they found to be especially misogynistic, spearheaded scores of marches in the United States and sympathy rallies around the world on Saturday.

## 5M around the world

Organizers said they drew nearly 5 million protesters in all, far surpassing crowd expectations.

The demonstrations also highlighted strong discontent over Trump's comments and policy positions toward a wide range of groups, including Mexican immigrants, Muslims, the disabled and environmentalists.

In contrast to the heated, often shrill tone of the presidential campaign, and the grim imagery of "American carnage" that Trump evoked in his inaugural address, the mood during Saturday's protests was largely upbeat, even festive.

Chanting such slogans as, "We need a real leader, not a creepy tweeter," and "Hey-hey, ho-ho, Donald Trump has got to go," many marchers wore knitted pink cat-eared "pussy hats" in a reference to Trump's boast, in a 2005 video made public weeks before the election, about grabbing women by the genitals.

While women constituted the bulk of the demonstrators, many were accompanied by husbands, boyfriends and children.

The planned centerpiece of the protests, a Women's March on Washington, appeared to draw larger crowds than turned out a day earlier to witness Trump's swearing-in on the steps of the US Capitol.

No official estimates of the turnout were available, but it clearly exceeded the 200,000 marchers projected by organizers of the Women's March, filling long stretches of downtown Washington around the White House and the National Mall.

## Mass turnouts

Hundreds of thousands more women thronged New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Denver and Boston, adding to a public outpouring of mass dissent against Trump unmatched in modern US politics for a new president's first full day in office.

Organizers of the so-called Sister March estimated 750,000 demonstrators swarmed the streets of Los Angeles, one of the largest of Saturday's gatherings.

Police said the turnout there was as big or bigger than a 2006 proimmigration march that drew 500,000.

Some 400,000 marchers assembled in New York City, according to Mayor Bill de Blasio, though organizers put the number there at 600,000.

The Chicago event grew so large that organizers staged a rally rather than trying to parade through the city.

Police said more than 125,000 people attended, while sponsors estimated the crowd at 200,000, the same tally they reported for Boston and Denver.

Smaller protests were held in such cities as Seattle, Portland, Oregon, Madison, Wisconsin and Bismarck, North Dakota.

The marches were the kick-

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off for what their leaders hope will be a sustained campaign of protest in a polarized nation, riven by an election that raised unsettling questions about American values, out-of-touch elites and barriers to women's ambitions.

#### Two Americas

On successive days, two parallel and separate Americas were on display in virtually the same location.

First there was Trump's inauguration, his message of an ailing society he would restore to greatness aimed at the triumphant supporters who thronged Washington on Friday.

Then on Saturday, in what amounted to a counterinauguration, the speakers, performers and marchers proclaimed allegiance to a profoundly different vision of the nation.

They voiced determination to protect a wide array of rights that they believe Trump threatens, and that they thought only recently were secure.

"Thank you for understanding that sometimes we must put our bodies where our beliefs are," Gloria Steinem, the feminist icon and an honorary chair of the march, told the throngs gathered in Washington. "Pressing 'send' is not enough."

To mobilize a progressive movement reeling from Democrat Hillary Clinton's defeat, organizers broadened the platform beyond longstanding women's issues such as abortion, equal pay and sexual assault to include immigrant rights, police brutality, mass incarceration, voter suppression and environmental protection.

In Washington, demonstrators old and young pushed strollers and hoisted children onto their shoulders or guided elderly parents through the milling crowds.

They waved handmade signs: "Hate Does Not Make America Great," "I Will Not Go Back Quietly to the 1950s," and "I'm 17—Fear Me!"

They chanted, "This is what democracy looks like."

The marches were a magnet for A-list celebrities, unlike

Trump's inauguration, which had a deficit of top performers.

Alicia Keys sang "Girl on Fire" for the Washington crowd.

Madonna gave a fiery, profanity-laced address to the gathering.

Cher, also in the nation's capital, said Trump's ascendance has people "more frightened maybe than they're ever been."

#### Depth of division

The protests, mostly peaceful, illustrated the depth of division in a country still reeling from the bitterly fought 2016 election campaign.

Trump stunned the world by defeating Clinton, a former secretary of state and first lady who made history as the first woman nominated for president by a major US political party.

Pam Foyster, a resident of Ridgway, Colorado, said the atmosphere in Washington reminded her of mass protests during the 1960s and '70s against the Vietnam War and in favor of civil rights and women's rights.

"I'm 58 years old, and I can't believe we are having to do this again," Foyster said.

Although Republicans now control the White House and both houses of Congress, Trump faces entrenched opposition from wide segments of the public, in contrast with the honeymoon period new presidents typically experience when first taking office.

A recent ABC News/Washington Post poll found Trump had the lowest favorability rating of any incoming US president since the 1970s.

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### Around the world

Women-led protests against Trump, who has vowed that US policy would be based on the principle of "America first," also were staged in Sydney, London, Tokyo and other cities across Europe and Asia.

Protesters brandished signs with slogans such as "Women Won't Back Down" and "Less Fear, More Love."

They decried Trump's stand on such issues as abortion, healthcare, diversity and cli-

mate change.

And they branded him a sexist, a bully, a bigot and more.

Tens of thousands of protesters squeezed into London's Trafalgar Square.

In Paris, thousands rallied in the Eiffel Tower neighborhood in a joyful atmosphere, singing and carrying posters reading "We have our eyes on you Mr. Trump" and "With our sisters in Washington."

Hundreds gathered in Prague's Wenceslas Square in freezing weather, mockingly waving portraits of Trump and Russia's Vladimir Putin.

In Sydney, thousands of Australians gathered in solidarity in Hyde Park. One organizer said hatred, bigotry and racism are not only America's problems.

Sister March sponsors boasted some 670 gatherings around the world in solidarity with the Washington event, estimating a global turnout of more than 4.6 million participants tallied through online march registrations, although those numbers could not be independently verified.

### No mention of protests

Trump, in a Twitter post on Saturday, wrote, "I am honored to serve you, the great American People, as your 45th President of the United States!"

Attending an interfaith service at Washington National Cathedral before visiting the Central Intelligence Agency headquarters, Trump made no mention of the protests.

Saturday's march in Washington overwhelmed the city's Metro subway system, with enormous crowds reported and some stations temporarily forced to turn away riders.

The Metro reported 275,000 rides as of 11 a.m. on Saturday, 82,000 more than the 193,000 reported at the same time on Friday, Inauguration Day, and eight times normal Saturday volume.

The peaceful atmosphere of Saturday's march contrasted sharply with unrest the day before, when groups of black-clad antiestablishment activists, among hundreds of anti-Trump protesters, smashed windows, set vehicles on fire and fought with riot police, who responded with stun grenades.

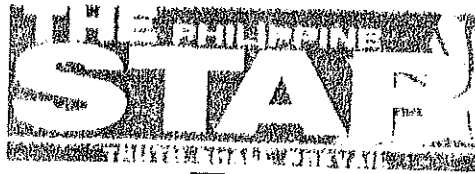
Washington prosecutors said about \$100,000 in damage had been done and 230 adults and five minors had been arrested.

Clinton won the popular vote in the Nov. 8 presidential election by around 2.9 million votes and exceeded Trump's support among women voters by more than 10 percentage points.

Trump, however, easily prevailed in the state-by-state Electoral College vote that actually determines the outcome of the race. —REPORTS FROM REUTERS, AP AND NEW YORK TIMES NEWS SERVICE

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# 'Bato to stay as PNP chief'

## *He has my complete trust – Duterte*

By EDITH REGALADO

DAVAO CITY – President Duterte yesterday put to rest any uncertainty over Philippine National Police (PNP) chief Director General Ronald dela Rosa's keeping his post.

"He stays as chief of police. Bato has my complete trust," Duterte said during the 55th birthday celebration of Dela Rosa at PNP headquarters at Camp Crame last night.

The President said he has put his entire trust in Dela Rosa to carry out his administration's war on drugs.

Speaker Pantaleon Alvarez had called on Dela Rosa to resign following the kidnapping and grisly murder of a South Korean businessman right inside Camp Crame by

members of a police team tasked to carry out Oplan Tokhang, code name for the bloody drug war.

At last night's party, Duterte said, "Kung patanggal natin si Bato, ako at si Speaker wala dito (If we take out Bato, the Speaker and I will not be here)."

Alvarez later said, "All's well that ends well; we're one group here."

Whether the President's decision would end feuding within his inner circle remains to be seen.

Before last night's party, Dela Rosa

had said he was insulted by the calls for him to resign, especially from another staunch Duterte supporter.

The Speaker represents a district in Davao, where Dela Rosa served as city police chief when Duterte was mayor.

Alvarez wants Dela Rosa to resign to spare the President from embarrassment over the kidnapping and murder of South Korean Jee Ick-joo.

Policemen detained Jee with a

Turn to Page 4

## **Bato** From Page 1

fake arrest warrant on Oct. 18 with the intent of holding him for ransom, but killed him on the same day. They extracted P5 million in ransom from Jee's family

without telling them he was dead.

Alvarez stressed there was nothing personal in his call for Dela Rosa to resign.

Dela Rosa, however shot back, and said he was insulted by the criticisms coming from an ally of the President.

– With Alexis Romero

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23 January 2017

**Malaya**  
The National Newspaper

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# Best soldiers, equipment to be used vs Abu Sayyaf

BY VICTOR REYES

ARMED Forces chief Gen. Eduardo Año told ground commanders in Sulu to display their “highest degree of commandship” as he relayed his new timeline of six months within which to defeat the lawless Abu Sayyaf group.

Año issued the call during a visit of military units in Sulu, an Abu Sayyaf bailiwick, on Wednesday last week, Col. Edgard Arevalo, chief of the

AFP’s public affairs office, said yesterday.

Arevalo said Año also vowed to put the “best officers, enlisted personnel, and equipment” on the ground to accomplish the mission. Año’s predecessor, now retired Gen. Ricardo Visaya, also aimed to defeat the Abu Sayyaf during his term but failed.

Asked if additional forces will be deployed to Sulu, Arevalo said there is no need because

there are enough soldiers on the ground. There are about 7,500 soldiers operating in Sulu. There are some 300 to 400 Abu Sayyaf men operating in Sulu and Basilan, according to the military.

Año set the new deadline last January 6. He also wants the other lawless groups – the Maute Group and the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters – ended in six months.

Arevalo said Año gave “in-

puts” on how to end the Abu Sayyaf to Brig. Gen. Jesus Mananquil, commander of the Joint Task Force Sulu. He declined to elaborate as he said these are operational in nature.

With Año during the Sulu visit were Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana, Army chief Lt. Gen. Glorioso Miranda, Air Force chief Lt. Gen. Edgar Fallorina, and Navy chief Vice Adm. Ronald Joseph Mercado, among others.

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27 January 2017

The Standard

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# Govt eyes 'political deal' with Reds

**C**HIEF negotiator Silvestre Bello III said Sunday President Rodrigo Duterte was determined to uphold the human rights of political dissenters even as he continued to seek a negotiated political settlement with the communist rebels.

He said that was his response to the list of alleged violations of the provisions of the Comprehensive Agreement on the Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law that the human rights group Karapatan submitted before the opening of the third round of peace talks in Rome.

The government and the communist National Democratic Front on Saturday signed the supplemental guidelines for the full operation of the Joint Monitor-

ing Committee under the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law, moving the peace negotiations another step toward a final peace settlement.

Bello said the signing was a concrete manifestation of the Duterte administration's adherence to and respect for human rights and international humanitarian law.

He made his statement even as Armed Forces spokesman Restituto Padilla said

they were exercising caution by not issuing any comments on human rights issues at the third round of peace talks in Rome.

Padilla has refused to answer the questions sent to his mobile phone, unlike Army spokesman Benjamin Hao who is more accommodating.

"The guidance here in the Army and also from higher-ups is to wait for the signed agreement before we make comments," Hao said.

Bello said as far as he was concerned there had been no acts committed by the president that would constitute any violations of the CARHRIHL.

"The track record of President Duterte will speak for itself. He has always upheld the rights of political dissenters and respected their human rights," Bello said in defending the President.

"Some may [may not like] his uncon-

ventional approach in addressing peace and order issues in the country, but he has always maintained high respect for political dissent."

Nevertheless, Bello said the government will investigate the cases submitted by the National Democratic Front and allied organizations.

He said the signing of the supplemental agreement put into motion the operationalization of the joint monitoring committee.

But the government also submitted the acts committed by rebel forces that he said violated some provisions of the CARHRIHL, among them the torching of buses and heavy equipment by New People's Army rebels.

All these allegations of violations from both sides will be addressed, Bello said.

"Hopefully, the JMC will expedite the forging of a bilateral ceasefire agreement that will address the alleged issues of government violations and provocative and prohibited acts of NPA rebels," Bello said.

The signing of the supplemental guidelines was the first agreement signed by both parties under the Duterte government.

All previous documents signed in the August and October rounds of talks were joint statements and declarations.

"In just five months we have already scored a victory for the Filipino people," Bello said.

The CARHRIHL primarily encourages all victims of violations and abuses of human rights or their surviving families due to the armed conflict to come forward with their complaints and evidence. **Sandy Araneta and Florante S. Solmerin**

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[www.inquirer.net](http://www.inquirer.net)

## 8 soldiers, NPA rebel killed in North Cotabato clash amid Rome peace talks

By: Karlos Manlupig - Correspondent / @kmanlupigINO

Inquirer Mindanao / 10:22 PM January 22, 2017



Philippine Army troops during operations in North Cotabato, Mindanao (FILE PHOTO BY GEOFFREY MAITEM/ INQUIRER MINDANAO)

ROME — While peace negotiations continue here, government forces and communist guerrillas clashed in Makilala town in North Cotabato leaving a rebel and eight soldiers dead.

The military's 10th Infantry Division said in a statement that a combined team of soldiers and police clashed with armed men in Barangay Biangan at 5 p.m. Saturday. Fighting lasted for an hour.

At around 5:30 a.m. the next day, another clash erupted.

"After the 30-minute firefight, the troops recovered three high-powered rifles, several personal belongings and a dead body of an unidentified man at the encounter site," the military said.

The AFP said that on January 20, government forces were responding to a report of rebels commandeering a vehicle of the Santos Land Development Corporation (SLDC) in the village of Malasila.

"The driver of the ten-wheeler truck reported that the armed men fired at him and threatened that the management will suffer the consequences if they fail to give in to their extortion demands. After which, the armed men forcibly took the key of the said truck and escaped immediately," the military said.

But the New People's Army said the military was provoking and pursuing them despite the ceasefire and peace negotiations.

"At around 5 in the morning yesterday, troops from the 39th IB-AFP arrived at Sitio Concepcion, Barangay Kisante, Makilala and launched offensive operation towards Sitio Lokatong in Barangay Biangan where an NPA unit was encamped. Having monitored the enemy's movement, Red fighters promptly maneuvered to avoid armed encounter," Rigoberto Sanchez, NPA-Southern Mindanao spokesman, said in a statement.

Sanchez said that government troops caught up with the NPA where a firefight erupted leaving one communist and eight soldiers dead.

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"The war dogs of the 39th IB and the entire AFP cannot wash its hands clean of this flagrant violation of their own ceasefire: Sitio Lokatong in Brgy. Biangan is a remote area that their presence can only mean an offensive operation against the NPA," Sanchez said.

"Furthermore, they fool no one by claiming that their combat operation was merely in response to reports by local authorities of the presence of lawless groups: for the entire day, they actively maneuvered to engage the evading unit of the NPA," he added.

Sanchez said that since August last year the military has maneuvered in North Cotabato with them deployment of peace and development teams.

"It likewise continued to mobilize its troops and paramilitaries in various forms of combat operations such as intelligence gathering, combat and psywar in far-flung areas that resulted in harassments, extra-judicial killings of civilians Rita and Norberto Gasdon on September 13 in Arakan, and Rolan Malignan on November 22 and the forced evacuation of several families in Magpet on December 6," Sanchez said.

"The Duterte government must know by now that it is the bullish insincerity of its armed forces to continue its counter-insurgency campaign that is the biggest impediment in the quest for just and lasting peace," Sanchez commented.

Both peace panels are still mum about the incident but they said that they would investigate it and act on it in the context of the negotiations. **SFM**

13 January 2017



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## AFP told: Neutralize Sayyaf in 6 months

By MICHAEL PUNONGBAYAN

Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) chief of staff Gen. Eduardo Año has ordered military troops in Mindanao to follow President Duterte's desire to neutralize the Abu Sayyaf within the next six months.

"Train all your thoughts, focus your efforts, muster all your courage, summon all your energy and give it all to this fight. So that once and for all, we will neutralize the Abu Sayyaf, the other terrorist groups, and their infrastructures," Año said.

Año gave the instructions as he presided over the change of command ceremony for the Western Mindanao Command (Westmincom) chief in Zamboanga City from Lt. Gen. Mayoralgo de la Cruz to Maj. Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr. last Jan. 17.

He asked members of the Philippine Army, Air Force, Navy and Marines to always look at the big picture and see

where each of them would fit.

AFP Public Affairs Office chief Marine Col. Edgard Arevalo, who was with the group, said Año told the troops in the area that he "is satisfied" with their preparations, especially the personnel and equipment readiness of the combat, intelligence, psychological operations and support units.

"We are advancing in our campaign to finish the Abu Sayyaf group within six months with renewed and modified plans derived from the strength of our past operational plans and the renewed vigor of the defense and AFP leaderships," Año told the troops. "You are privileged to be part of this fight in pursuit of the mission that our commander-in-chief, President Duterte has given us. I challenge you (field commanders) to exercise the highest degree of commandership. Give your utmost best."

23 January 2017



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## Finish off ASG, other terror groups in 6 months – Año

By **ZAIDA DELOS REYES-PALANCA**

**ARMED Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Chief of Staff General Eduardo Año ordered all military personnel deployed in Western Mindanao Command (Wesmincom) area to heed President Rodrigo Roa Duterte's call to significantly defeat the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) and other terrorist groups in the area within six months.**

The order was made as General Año presided over the Change of Command ceremony of the commander of Wesmincom in Zamboanga City from Lt. Gen. Mayoralgo de la Cruz to Maj. Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr. last week.

The Chief of Staff said the AFP will be advancing their campaign to finish off the bandits and other terror groups in six months as ordered by President Duterte.

"We are advancing in our campaign to finish the Abu Sayyaf Group within six months with renewed and modified plans derived from the strength of our past operational plans and the renewed vigor of the Defense and AFP leaderships," Año said.

He also challenged all field commanders to exercise the highest degree of commandship and give their best to lead, adding they are privileged to be part of the fight in pursuit of the mission that the President gave them.

"I urge you to trail all your thoughts,

focus all your efforts, muster all your courage, summon all your energy and give it all to this fight. So that once and for all, we will neutralize the Abu Sayyaf Group, other terrorist groups and their infrastructures," he said.

According to AFP-Public Affairs Office (PAO) chief Marine Col. Edgard A. Arevalo, the recent visit of General Año to the AFP's frontline units in Western Mindanao is historic.

Arevalo was with the group of General Año during the visit, together with Department of National Defense (DND) Secretary Delfin Lorenzana.

"He had with him the commanding generals of the Philippine Army and the Philippine Air Force; the flag officer-in-command of the Philippine Navy, the just-posted commander of Western Mindanao Command, the commander of Joint Task Force Tawi-Tawi and members of the joint staff based in Camp Aguinaldo," Arevalo said.

"After a closed-door operational update by the commander of Joint Task Force Sulu Brig. General Jesus Mananquil, General Año gave his own inputs to the plan. The latter likewise took into account recommendations as well as requests from field commanders present. He directed the members of joint staff to make good his prior commitment to put the best officers, enlisted personnel, and equipment in this campaign," Arevalo added.

13 January 2017

# INQUIRER

Page: A4

## COA slams LGUs, DND on use of disaster funds

By Vince F. Nonato  
@VinceNonatoINQ

Local government units (LGUs) and the Department of National Defense (DND) were the biggest violators of rules on the use of disaster relief funds in 2015, according to the Commission on Audit's (COA) first-ever audit report on such allocations.

According to state auditors, 22 LGUs had failed to allocate at least P124.95-million funds for the Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Fund (LDRRMF). One such LGU in the National Capital Region failed to allocate P93.79 million.

The COA said LGUs had failed to conform with Section 21 of the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) Act of 2010, which required that no supporting documents.

The agency also observed the failure of 57 LGUs—10 of them in the Cordillera Administrative Region—to set up DRRM offices, leaving them unprepared when disaster strikes.

The COA said 112 LGUs—22 of them in Bicol region—failed to prepare or submit their annual LDRRMF Investment Plans. Another 278 LGUs—37 of them in Eastern Visayas—were found not to have complied with a COA requirement for a report on the source and use of the DRRM funds.

### DND funds

State auditors also reported that of the DND's P572.9 million available funds for DRRM services, only P236.31 million was utilized. Of the said amount,

5 percent of revenue be set aside for disaster preparedness and mitigation.

"Thus, there was no assurance that the DRRM projects and programs of the concerned LGUs have been fully and effectively implemented," the report stated.

The report, which covered the last full year of the Aquino administration, was submitted on Jan. 10 to Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana, chair of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council.

The COA said 183 LGUs did not transfer their unused balances totaling P3.05 billion to the Special Trust Funds, a standby sum meant to support relief aid for up to five years.

Three Metro Manila LGUs accounted for a bulk of this

P128.63 million was actually paid by the end of 2015, with the rest still pending approval of the purchase orders.

The COA observed that the use of P73.93 million in Quick Response Funds was not in accordance with its purpose as a standby fund during calamities.

The DND had used the funds for rehabilitation and repair of its offices and buildings, a function that actually falls with the Department of Public Works and Highways. The transactions include the construction of Office of Civil Defense facilities in Cagayan Valley and Zamboanga Peninsula, as well as the repair of various Armed Forces of the Philippines buildings.

The COA said the DND should have withheld the release of P120.27 million to its

finding, at P1.993 billion, followed by 23 LGUs in Calabarzon with P220 million and nine LGUs in Central Luzon with P208 million.

### Misused funds

The COA said P244.997 million was spent by 124 LGUs on activities unrelated to disaster mitigation, in violation of the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) Memorandum Circular No. 2012-73.

Five LGUs, three of them in Calabarzon, were found to have failed to use P92.2 million, representing the 70-percent share of the LDRRMF that the DILG circular said may be used to procure early warning systems and preparedness equipment.

The COA said the use of P19.36 million by 12 LGUs had

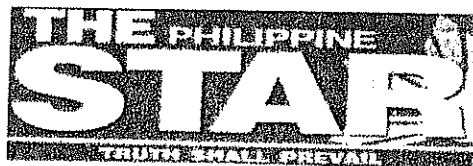
various implementing agencies, because they still had pending unliquidated fund transfers totaling P456.12 million from 2008 to 2014.

### Aid to fishermen

The report flagged the delays in the distribution of fishing gear and boats to fisherfolk affected by Super typhoon "Yolanda" (international name: Haiyan), due to delayed procurement, limited manpower and transportation, and the poor quality of motorized bancas. It said 55.73 percent of the fishing equipment was yet to be distributed.

The COA also scored the low utilization of funds by the Local Water Utilities Administration for water districts and by the Department of Health. INQ

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## DND, LGUs misused disaster funds

By ELIZABETH MARCELO

The Commission on Audit has taken to task the Department of National Defense (DND) and local government units (LGUs) for either misusing disaster funds or failing to put them in a Special Trust Fund (STF).

In its 52-page "2015 Consolidated Report on the Audit of Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) Fund," the COA said several violations in the provisions of Republic Act 10121 or the Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act were committed by the DND and various LGUs.

Released on Jan. 19, the report was transmitted to Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana's office on Jan. 10. It was the first time that the COA came up with a consolidated report on the utilization of DRRM Fund appropriated to national agencies, LGUs and government corporate sectors.

### DND violations

The report said out of the P572.9 million available disaster funds of the DND for 2015, only P236.31 million was used by the agency – P128.63 million for actual payout while the rest was merely obligated due to pending approval of purchase orders, contracts or deliveries.

The audit body also noted the DND's misuse of P73.923 million of its Quick Response Fund (QRF). "The utilization of funds amounting to P73,929,934.91 for repairs/reconstruction, using the QRF, was not in accordance with the intended purpose of QRF as authorized in the DND's budget," the COA said.

The COA pointed out that under RA 10121, QRF is strictly for emergency use such as for relief and rescue operations during disasters and calamities. The audit body said conducting repairs and reconstruction is not a primary function of the DND but of the Department of Public Works and Highways.

### LGUs' violations

Meanwhile, the COA said 183 LGUs failed to comply with Section 21 of RA 10121, which mandates them to transfer unspent or unobligated balance in their Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Fund (LDRRMF) to STF to serve as standby fund in times of emergency.

The COA said a total of P3.05 billion unspent and unobligated LDRRMF was not transferred to STF as of end of 2015.

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# NDFP ready to sign joint ceasefire accord

By Karlos Manlupig  
@kmanlupigINQ

ROME—The National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) is not shutting its door on a bilateral ceasefire agreement with the government and is even willing to sign it anytime, the chief negotiator of the communist movement said.

But the revolutionary movement has specific requisites before they can agree on it, NDFP peace panel chair Fidel Agcaoili said.

Agcaoili denied speculations that the NDFP is averse to a joint ceasefire agreement. On the contrary, he said “there are things that can be talked about.”

He said the fate of the bilateral ceasefire agreement would be based on the conditions on the ground in the coming days.

According to the NDFP emissary, what worries his camp is the reported cases of

continuing military presence in many communities.

“With respect to the bilateral ceasefire, it is something that can be worked out provided the conditions for such a ceasefire are complied with. We have raised the questions of continuing militarization in the countryside, occupation of schools, daycare centers and even private residences,” Agcaoili said.

Government peace panel chair Silvestre Bello III considers the NDFP’s statement reassuring as President Duterte is pushing for a joint ceasefire agreement to replace the 5-month-old unilateral ceasefire declarations.

“I was very encouraged because he (Agcaoili) merely underscored the need for a bilateral ceasefire agreement,” Bello said.

Bello explained that a bilateral ceasefire agreement would help set clear definitions and parameters for the temporary cessation of hostilities.

“Because if you do not have one you won’t know the violations,” he said.

Within the five-month period of the unilateral ceasefire declarations, both parties have accused each other of violating their own ceasefire orders.

At the beginning of the third round of talks, the NDFP submitted a list of 86 violations allegedly committed by state forces, while the government also submitted its own list of violations reportedly perpetrated by New People’s Army (NPA) guerrillas.

On Saturday, both parties signed a supplemental agreement that would operationalize the joint monitoring committee (JMC) and process complaints of human rights violations.

“Hopefully, the JMC will expedite the forging of a bilateral ceasefire agreement that will address the alleged issues of government violations and provocative and prohibited acts of NPA

rebels,” Bello said.

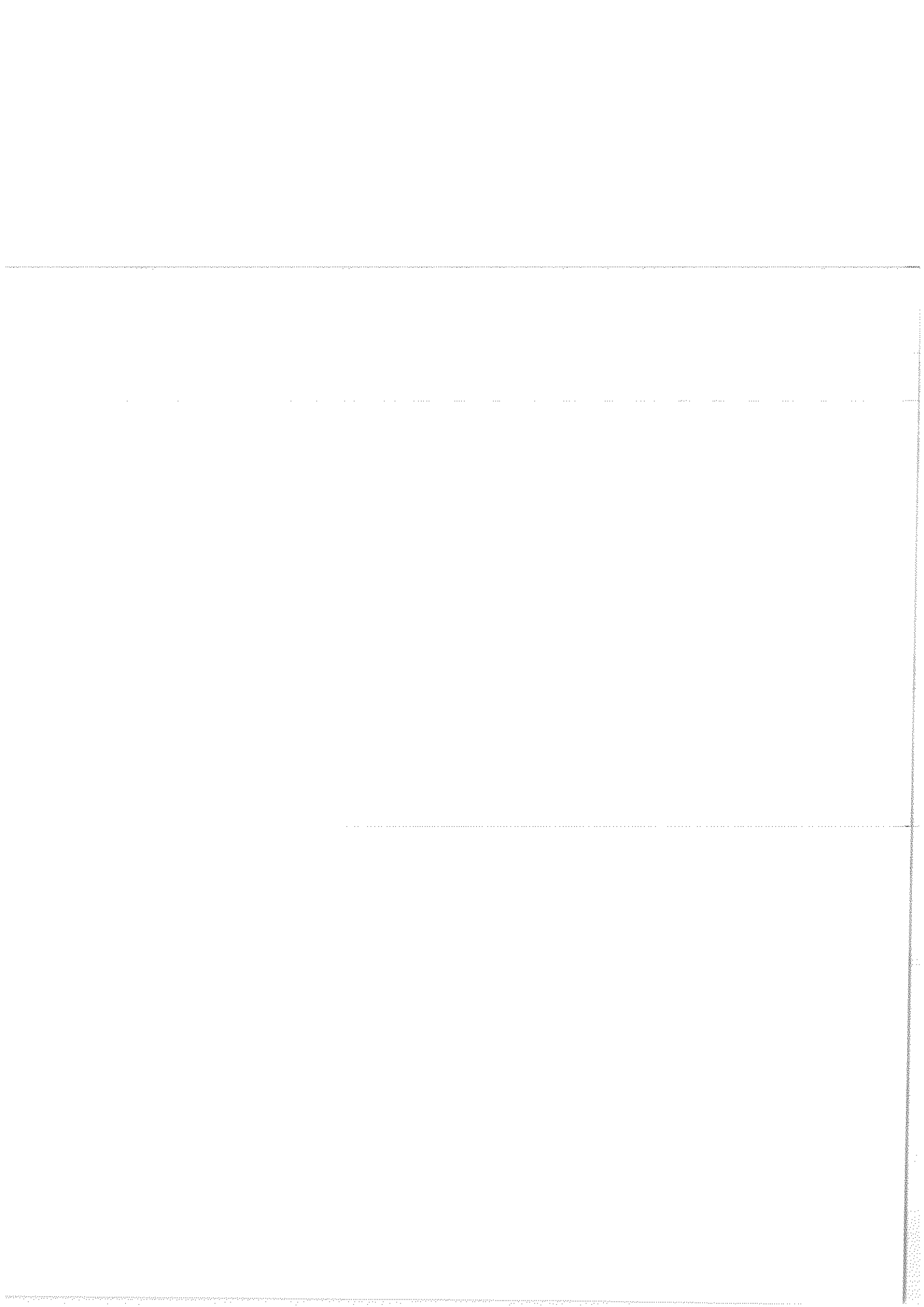
While the issue on the release of the remaining 392 political prisoners is still on the table, Agcaoili said this concern is separate from the discussions for a bilateral ceasefire agreement.

Agcaoili said the demand for the release of political prisoners is not a precondition for a bilateral ceasefire agreement but is a matter of justice and implementation of the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law.


Meanwhile, Bello affirmed that President Duterte is committed to his earlier pronouncement to release prisoners but has appealed for understanding that certain legal and judicial processes must be observed.

Both parties are still engaging in both formal and backchannel discussions for the release of prisoners and bilateral ceasefire agreement. INQ





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## Peace talks with NDF in Rome breaking new ground – Bello

By **ROCKY NAZARENO**

ROME, Italy – Government peace panel Chairman Silvestre Bello, III said here on Sunday that the Rome talks between the Philippine Government

issues regarding social and economic reforms – the so-called “heart and soul” of the peace negotiations which are on the third round here in Rome, at the Holiday Inn Rome-Parco de Medici.

Bello said he expects that the draft

(GPH) and the National Democratic Front (NDF) “are breaking new ground and gaining more traction towards finally achieving peace in the country.”

They are starting to come to terms in striking an agreement here over

proposals of the two parties to be “initialed” this week, before this third round of peace talks ends on January 25.

The two sides have started to delve into the most relevant, yet most contentious, agenda in

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## Peace talks with...

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the talks, which is the Comprehensive Agreement on Socio-Economic Reforms (CASER), tackling genuine land reform, national industrialization and the expansion of social services.

"The comprehensive agreement on social and economic reforms (CASER) is the heart and soul of these negotiations. And by finally starting to intently discuss this alone is already a significant breakthrough and a major leap forward," he said.

In 30 years of negotiations with the Communist insurgents, the talks have never reached this far, he said.

Communist Party founding chairman and NDF senior political consultant Jose Maria Sison had earlier said that he was pleased with the discussions on the CASER and that the CASER could be formally signed within the next six months.

Another area of substantive issues being discussed are political and constitutional reforms. Sison described the progress of negotiations on these matters as "very encouraging." Sison voiced support for plans of the Duterte administration to establish a federal system of government.

"The NDF is willing to maintain its alliance with the GRP and Duterte administration by cooperating in the founding of the Federal Republic of the Philippines, creating a parliamentary system, and making a new constitution that upholds, defends, and promotes national independence, democracy, economic development, social justice, cultural progress, independent foreign policy, and international solidarity with peoples and all countries for peace and development," Sison had said in his statement at the start of these talks last Thursday, January 19.

### Taking a break

The two parties took a break Sunday with the government panel attending a peace forum at the Philippine Embassy

here. Bello, who is also the secretary of labor, later proceeded to Milan for a dialogue with Filipino workers based there.

The NDF, on the other hand, joined Migrant in a peace rally held in the center of this ancient city.

Last Saturday, January 21, the two panels signed supplemental guidelines on the Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC), a body mandated under the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law. The JMC was never constituted despite a joint issuance from both parties in 2004.

Under former President Benigno Aquino III, peace negotiations bogged down in 2011 after only one round of formal talks over the issue of continuing arrests and detentions of leaders and members of the NDF.

### Political prisoners issue

NDF Peace Panel Chairman Fidel Agcaoili was asked by a Filipino journalist during the ensuing press conference if the two parties were already nearing the signing of a bilateral ceasefire agreement.

"I'd like to state clearly that the implementation of CARHRIHL (Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Law) requires the release of the 392 political prisoners," Agcaoili said. He said the 392 prisoners they were asking to be released were "charged with common crimes" and that "some of them have already been asked to withdraw their appeals."

"So they should be released immediately," he maintained.

Before the Rome talks started, President Duterte had made it clear that he would only start ordering the release of political prisoners once he sees a signed document by the GRP and NDF peace panels agreeing to a joint bilateral ceasefire.

As it is, the two parties have unilateral

ceasefires in place ever since the first round of the peace negotiations in Oslo, Norway last August, 2016.

A bilateral ceasefire could be "worked out," he said, but "it requires action, not simply statements, or press releases." He called for "warm bodies of political prisoners or side prison and the withdrawal of the military so that the people in the countryside won't be terrorized."

Under the supplemental guidelines signed Saturday, "complaints for alleged violations of the specific provisions of the CARHRIHL... may either be filed in person, through email, fax, post or courier to the nominated section in the JMC secretariat."

As such, complaints could be filed by "human rights groups, peace advocacy groups, church members, media, or anyone capable of filing the complaint on behalf of the victim or relative of the victim." The joint secretariat of the JMC is situated at the Immaculate Conception Cathedral in Cubao, Quezon City.

### 3-factions report denied

In Davao City, the NDF dismissed allegations that the Communists have been divided into three groups over alleged differences in the stand of their leaders while talking peace with the government.

It cited an article in a Manila newspaper (not the Manila Bulletin) alleging that a faction led by NDF panel senior adviser Luis Jalandoni and chief political consultant Jose Ma. Sison wants a negotiated settlement; that a second faction led by Benito and Wilma Tiamzon merely want the release of all political prisoners; and a third faction led by NPA National Operational Command Chief Jorge "Ka Oris" Madlos wants to pursue the armed struggle.

The NDF here said Agcaoili called the report a "rehash of the old military psywar line" and was "nothing but an attempt to sow intrigues against the revolutionary movement and derail the peace negotiations."

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The Manila Times

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# Gov't, NDF form monitoring body on human rights

BY LLANESCA PANTI

**T**HE government and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) have formed a Joint Monitoring Committee on human rights, a move that could help speed up the signing a final peace agreement between the government and communist rebels.

The agreement, signed on Saturday in Rome, contained supplemental guidelines for the full operation of the committee under the two parties' Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL).

Labor Secretary Silvestre Bello 3rd, the government peace panel head, said the green light on the joint committee was a concrete manifestation of the Duterte administration's respect for human rights and international humanitarian law or IHL.

"The signing is a victory for the people and the Duterte government and a major dividend in the peace process," Bello said in a statement.

The guidelines for committee were first drafted in 2004 but were not signed after peace negotiations between the government and the NDFP hit a snag in 2011 because of the government's refusal to release scores of NDFP consultants.

"The full operation of the Joint Monitoring Committee, with its supplemental guidelines in place, should not be difficult under our legal regime that includes new and bold laws and statutes upholding human rights and international humanitarian laws such as the law against enforced disappearance, Anti-Torture Act, IHL Act, Human Security Act, Writ of Amparo and the Writ of Kalikasan, among others," Bello said.

"Hopefully, the [committee] will expedite the forging of a bilateral ceasefire agreement that will address the alleged issues of government violations and provocative and prohibited acts of NPA (New People's Army) rebels," he added.

The supplemental guidelines signed by Bello and NDFP panel chief Fidel Agcaoili at Holiday Inn in Rome, Italy, in the presence of the Norwegian government's special envoy Elisabeth Slattum, are a set of mechanisms on how to address complaints of violations of human rights by government forces and the NPA, the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines.

The CARHRIHL promotes and protects human rights and adherence to international humanitarian law, and provides a venue for victims of violations and abuses of human rights, or their surviving families, to file their complaints and evidence.

The agreement also provides that persons liable for violations and abuses of human rights shall be subject to investigation and, if evidence

warrants, to prosecution and trial. The victims or their survivors will then be indemnified, while all necessary measures will be undertaken to remove the conditions for violations and abuses of human rights and to render justice to and indemnify the victims.

It is one of the four substantive agenda items of the negotiations that will comprise the final peace agreement. The other three are: socioeconomic reforms, political and constitutional reforms and end of hostilities and disposition of forces.

President Rodrigo Duterte is determined to uphold the human rights of political dissenters even as he continues to seek a negotiated political settlement with rebel forces, Bello said.

Duterte has not committed acts that constitute a violation of CARHRIHL, the Cabinet official added.

"Some may find his approach in addressing peace and order issues in the country unconventional but he has always maintained high respect for political dissent," Bello added.

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# NDF exec accuses military of sabotaging peace talks

By Ted Tuvera

The left wing National Democratic Front (NDF) yesterday denied floating reports that there are emerging factions among its ranks on whether pushing through with the supposed peace pact with the government.

NDF chief negotiator Fidel Agcaoili cited three "fictitious" factions that are allegedly propaganda operations perpetrated by certain saboteurs.

Accordingly, a group led by Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) founding chairman Jose Ma. Sison wants a negotiated settlement within President Duterte's term while a bloc supposedly led by influential party leaders Benito and Wilma Tiamzon merely wants the release of all political prisoners.

Allegedly, too, a "hardcore" faction led by the New People's Army (NPA) National Operational Command chief Jorge "Ka Oris" Madlos – who's based in one of the Reds' prominent zones in Mindanao – wants to continue guerrilla operations.

Agcaoili, who is currently in Rome with the rest of his leading and elderly NDF comrades, suspects that the military is propagating "wrong information" meant to undermine both the Duterte administration's and the rebels' desire to win peace.

"This rehash of the old military psywar line is nothing but an attempt to sow intrigues against the revolutionary movement and derail the peace negotiations," Agcaoili, who is commonly identified as the "collective" of Sison and Jalandoni, said.

"The NDF will not be distracted



**Round 3** Peace negotiators from the government and the National Democratic Front sign the supplemental guidelines for the full operation of the Joint Monitoring Committee during the third round-of-talks in Rome, Italy.

by such baseless intrigues in its objective of engaging the government in peace negotiations to attain the maximum possible benefits for the Filipino people," he added.

Last Saturday, the government and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) signed the supplemental guidelines for the full operation of the Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC) under the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL) during the third round-of-talks in Rome, Italy.

The signing of the supplemental guidelines by GRP panel chairman Silvestre Bello III and NDF chairman Fidel Agcaoili, is a significant move under the administration of Duterte after the first draft crafted in 2004 was not signed when the peace negotiations bogged down in 2011.

The supplemental guidelines is

he said in his statement.

Bello said the adoption of the guidelines is a realization of CARHRIHL, which is one of the four substantive agenda of the negotiations that will comprise the final peace agreement. The other three remaining substantive agenda are socio-economic reforms, political and constitutional reforms, and end of hostilities and disposition of forces.

According to Bello, the full operation of the JMC with its supplemental guidelines in place, should not be difficult under the government's legal regime that includes new and bold laws and statutes upholding human rights and international humanitarian laws, such as the law against enforced disappearance, anti-torture act, IHL Act, Human Security Act, Writ of Amparo and the Writ of Kalikasan, among others.

The NDF chair welcomed the signing and thanked the GRP panel as this would advance the ongoing peace negotiations.

Agcaoili said the supplemental guidelines will govern operations of the JMC and the Joint Secretariat.

The supplemental guidelines include provisions on how to file and deal with complaints and details the roles of the receivers of the complaints, the joint secretariat and third party facilitator.

Under the guidelines, complaints for alleged violations of the specific provisions of the CARHRIHL may be filed either in person, through email, Web site, fax, post or courier to the Nominated Section in the Joint Secretariat, who shall immediately forward the same to the co-chairmen of the JMC for proper disposition. **With PNA**

a set of mechanisms on how to address complaints of violation by the government forces and the armed wing of the NDF – the NPA. The supplemental guidelines are issued pursuant to the Operational Guidelines for the JMC issued on 14 February 2004, in Oslo, Norway by the GRP and NDFP peace negotiators.

Bello said the signing of the supplemental guidelines is not only an affirmation to International Human Rights Law of the Duterte administration but also a concrete dividend of the third round-of-talks. Bello said this also bodes well to the possible signing of the bilateral ceasefire set to benefit more the people living in conflict-affected areas.

"This should be taken as an incentive for us to work harder in the remaining days of this round of talks, especially on our efforts to put in place a joint ceasefire agreement – a peace dividend that our people have been waiting for,"

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## 4 ex-military men named to top Customs posts

FOUR more ex-military officers, all identified with Customs Commissioner Nicanor Faeldon, were appointed to top Customs posts.

The four were identified as former captains Gerardo Gambala, Nilo Maestrocampo and Alvin Ebreo, and former Southern Luzon Command spokesman Neil Anthony Estrella.

Their designations, along with those of four others, were contained in a Customs personnel order signed by Faeldon last January 11. It was approved by Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Gambala is the new deputy commissioner for management information systems and technology; Maestrocampo, director, Import Assessment Service; Ebreo,

director, Legal Service; and Estrella, director, Customs Intelligence and Investigation Services.

Gambala, Maestrocampo and Ebreo were among nine members of the rebel Magdalo group found guilty in connection with the July 2003 failed Oakwood rebellion in Makati City.

Faeldon is also a member of the Magdalo Group.

Gambala and Maestrocampo were meted life sentences for leading the short-lived rebellion, while Ebreo and the others were sentenced to 6 to 12 years in prison as accomplices.

They were given executive clemency by former president and now Pampanga Rep. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

Faeldon, a former Marine captain, applied for amnesty in 2011, along with former Marine commandant Maj. Gen. Renato Miranda.

The four others who were given new assignments were James Layug, director, Port Operations Service; Henry Anthony Torres, director, Financial Management Office; Marites Martin, district collector, Port of Clark; and Elvira Cruz, district collector, Port of Cebu.

Earlier, Malacañang named retired Maj. Gen. Natalio Ecarma 3<sup>rd</sup>, a former defense undersecretary, deputy commissioner for revenue collection; and Ariel Nepomuceno, deputy commissioner for enforcement.

Faeldon said there was nothing wrong in appointing former military officials to

the bureau.

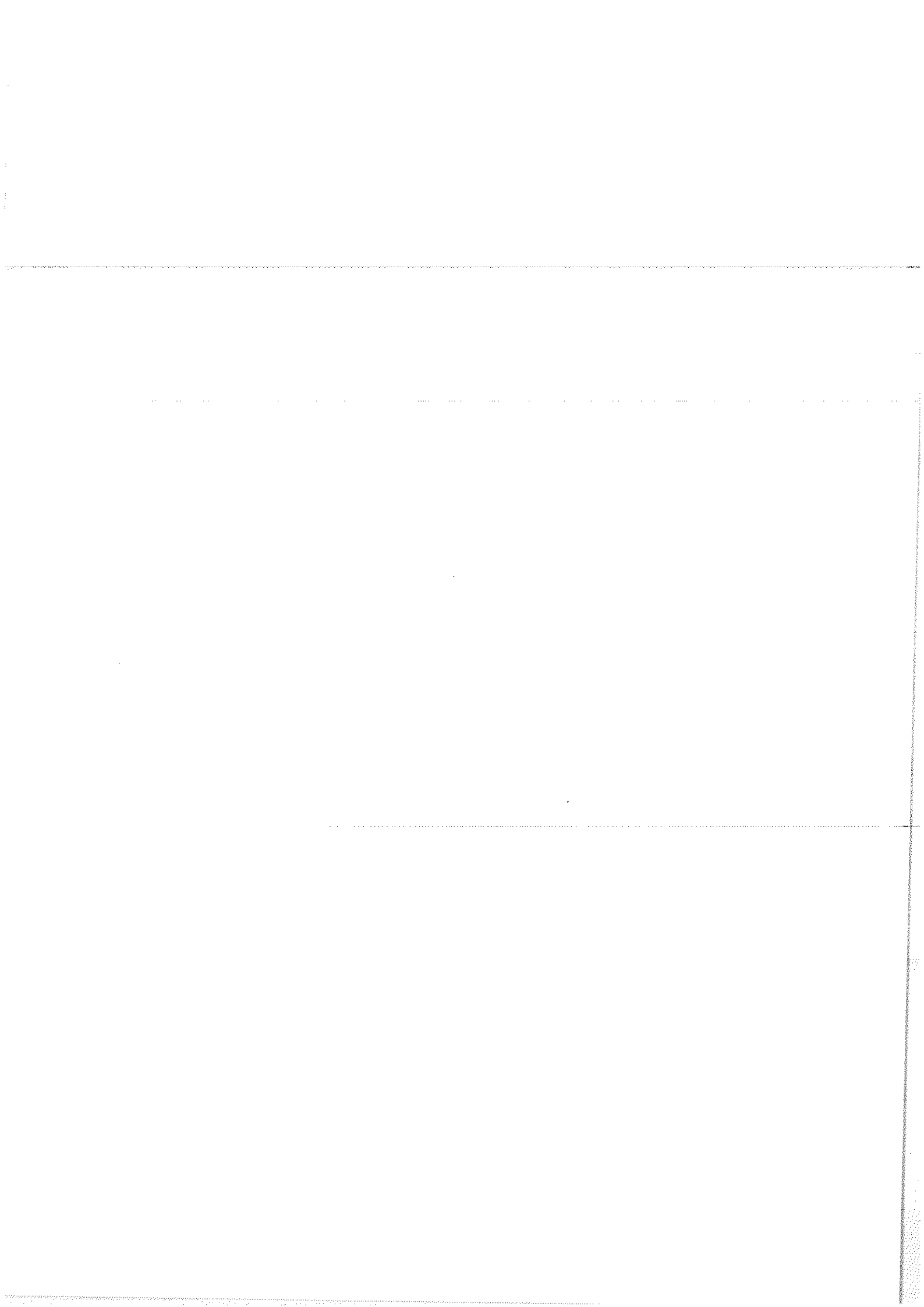
The bureau has law enforcement functions, and Customs agencies in other countries even have Armed Forces-like structures, he pointed out.

In other countries, the head of Customs is a director general with a four-star rank, unlike in the Philippines where the title is "commissioner."

"It's really wrong to question why there are military people in the [bureau]. Try to imagine if one has a law enforcement function but you don't have training in the military. You cannot," Faeldon said.

"We coordinate with our counterparts all over the world and they are all military-trained also," he added.

**WILLIAM B. DEPASUPIL**



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# Big gap in positions at Rome peace talks

**T**HERE seems to be a great disparity in the assessments of the Philippine government peace panel and the National Democratic Front (NDF) panel on when the two sides can finally end hostilities with a joint ceasefire agreement.

The Philippine panel led by Secretary Silvestre Bello III expressed optimism the other day that agreement may be reached in the third round of talks which began Thursday in Rome, after two previous meetings in Oslo, Norway. But Jose Ma. Sison, founding chairman of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and senior political consultant of the NDF, said he thinks agreement can be reached "as early as 2020-2021."

The Philippine panel would like to sign a cessation of hostilities agreement immediately while talks continue on socio-economic affairs and political and constitutional reforms. But it seems the NDF wants the talks on reforms completed, to form the basis for a Comprehensive Agreement on the End of Hostilities and Disposition of Forces by 2020 or 2021. That's three to four years from today.

During these three to four years, Sison said at the opening of the talks in Rome, the NDF will be remaining in alliance with the government, cooperating in the setting up of a federal republic and parliamentary system of government. After the talks on socio-economic reforms and politi-

cal-constitutional reforms culminate in formal agreements, the NDF would want to see them implemented by the Duterte administration for at least two years before its term ends.

Earlier this month, there was some disagreement on the release of political prisoners, with President Duterte saying the NDF was asking for too many concessions. He said he was willing to release more prisoners once he sees a copy of a formal agreement for a joint ceasefire. But NDF peace panel Chairman Fidel Agcaoili said the release of nearly 400 female, sickly, and elderly comrades from jail "should not be used as trump cards to extract concessions from the NDF."

There is a gap between the two positions, but the fact alone that they are now meeting in Rome, encourages hope that they will come to some agreement. The fighting between government forces and the New People's Army has been going on for the last 47 years – the longest Communist insurgency in the world.

The government understandably wants to end hostilities immediately, while the NDF, speaking for the CPP and the NPA, wants the reforms they seek first written down on formal agreements and implemented by the government. Somewhere between the two positions there must be a compromise that they can agree on. For now we must welcome the fact that they are meeting at all.

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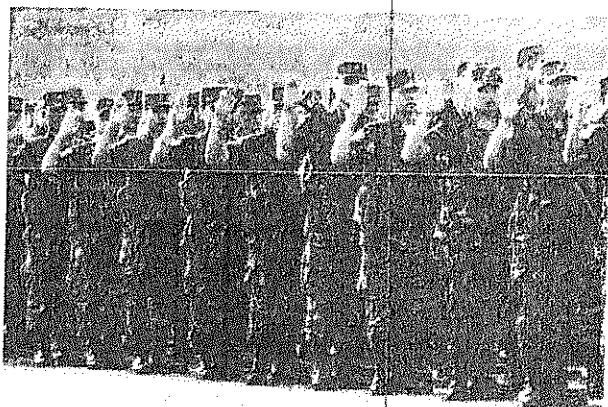
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[www.retiredanalyst.blogspot.com](http://www.retiredanalyst.blogspot.com)

### Philippine Army says LGBT community can join, but they have to 'behave properly'

From Attitude (Jan 22): Philippine Army says LGBT community can join, but they have to 'behave properly'

*LGBT members can join the Armed Forces of the Philippines, but there's one condition*



The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) is now welcoming LGBT community to sign up and join the army, on one condition.

According to [NewNowNext](#), the AFP, who is trying to recruit new soldiers, promises they won't discriminate against LGBT soldiers, as long as "they behave."

Chief of Public Affairs, Colonel Edgard Arevalo, said: "We are being asked whether the recruitment will include members of the LGBT community. Are we not going to discriminate them? The answer is no. The AFP is not going to discriminate against them. Please feel free to apply and enter the Armed Forces."

The officer then added, "But we have one recommendation."

"The moment that they apply and get accepted in the Armed Forces of the Philippines, we are reminding them that they need to act and behave with dignity and with proper care to the uniform."

He then stated that the LGBT community would be a great asset to the AFP.

The decision to welcome LGBT community members comes after Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte caused a stir after he called the US Ambassador to the Philippines "gay."

<http://attitude.co.uk/philippine-army-says-lgbt-community-can-join-but-they-have-to-behave-properly/>

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