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

28 January 2017

Saturday

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# NEWS HEADLINES

## 28 January 2017

WORLD'S OLDEST CHINATOWN'S BUSIEST BUSINESSES

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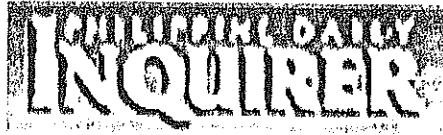
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**PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER**  
BALANCED NEWS • FEARLESS VIEWS

TODAY'S WEATHER FORECAST | JANUARY 28, 2017 | SATURDAY

**PHILIPPINE AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY (PAR)**

**LAOAG CITY** 120 - 30 °C  
**TUGUEGARAO CITY** 20 - 28 °C  
**BAGUIO CITY** 13 - 21 °C  
**SBMA/CLARK** 23 - 30 °C  
**TAGAYTAY CITY** 20 - 27 °C  
**METRO MANILA** 22 - 30 °C  
**LEGAZPI CITY** 24 - 29 °C  
**ILOILO/BACOLOD CITY** 25 - 29 °C  
**TACLOBAN CITY** 24 - 30 °C  
**PUERTO PRINCESA** 24 - 31 °C  
**METRO CEBU** 25 - 29 °C  
**CAGAYAN DE ORO** 23 - 30 °C  
**ZAMBOANGA CITY** 23 - 31 °C  
**METRO DAVAO** 24 - 29 °C

**NORTHEAST MONSOON AFFECTING LUZON AND VISAYAS TROUGH OF A LOW PRESSURE AREA AFFECTING MINDANAO (As of 3:00 PM - Jan. 27, 2017)**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>SUNRISE</b><br>6:25 AM                 | <b>SUNSET</b><br>5:53 PM                   |
| <b>MOONRISE</b><br>6:21 AM                | <b>MOONSET</b><br>6:10 PM                  |
| <b>LAST QUARTER</b><br>JAN 20<br>8:13 AM  | <b>NEW MOON</b><br>JAN 28<br>8:07 AM       |
| <b>LOW TIDE</b><br>5:58 AM<br>-0.21 Meter | <b>HIGH TIDE</b><br>10:20 PM<br>1.06 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

|                     | JAN 28     | JAN 29     | JAN 30     | JAN 31     | JAN 30     | JAN 31     |
|---------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| <b>METRO MANILA</b> | 22 - 30 °C | 23 - 31 °C | 20 - 27 °C | 21 - 28 °C | 24 - 29 °C | 25 - 30 °C |
| <b>TUGUEGARAO</b>   | 21 - 28 °C | 22 - 29 °C | 23 - 29 °C | 24 - 30 °C | 23 - 31 °C | 24 - 32 °C |
| <b>LAOAG</b>        | 22 - 31 °C | 20 - 29 °C | 24 - 31 °C | 25 - 32 °C | 24 - 30 °C | 25 - 31 °C |
| <b>BAGUIO</b>       | 13 - 21 °C | 12 - 20 °C | 25 - 30 °C | 25 - 30 °C | 24 - 32 °C | 24 - 32 °C |
| <b>SBMA/CLARK</b>   | 23 - 31 °C | 24 - 31 °C | 25 - 30 °C | 25 - 30 °C |            |            |

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28 January 2017

# INQUIRER

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## I'm innocent, says funeral home owner

### FROM A1

By Tetch Torres-Tupas  
and Jovic Yee  
@Team\_Inquirer

"I am innocent," Gerardo Santiago told reporters on Friday when asked why he returned to the Philippines despite threats to his life.

Santiago is the owner of Gream Funeral Services in Caloocan City where the body of South Korean businessman Jee Ick-joo was taken after he was killed inside Philippine National Police headquarters in Camp Crame, Quezon City, on Oct. 18 last year.

Policemen pretending to be carrying out an antidrug mission took Jee from his home in Angeles City and transported him to Camp Crame, where one

of the officers, SPO3 Ricky Sta. Isabel, allegedly strangled him aboard the businessman's own vehicle.

The cops then took Jee's body to Santiago's funeral parlor, from where it was taken to St. Nathaniel Crematory, also in Caloocan, to be cremated.

The kidnappers then demanded P5 million in ransom from the businessman's wife.

Choi Kyung-jin, Jee's wife, paid the ransom, but her husband never came home.

### Operation discovered

She pleaded for government help, leading to an investigation that showed Jee had been killed and that exposed a kidnapping for ransom operation by rogue policemen who used President Duterte's war on drugs as cover for their criminal activity.

The policemen involved in Jee's abduction and murder



Gerardo Santiago

have been arrested and are now facing kidnapping for ransom and homicide charges in a Pampanga court.

According to one of the accused, SPO4 Roy Villegas, Santiago was paid P30,000 and a golf set belonging to Jee for the disposal of the businessman's body.

Santiago, who is chair of Barangay 165 Bagbaguin in Caloocan, disappeared after the Inquirer reported the kidnap-

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ping of Jee on Jan. 8.

Immigration records showed Santiago left for Canada on Jan. 11.

He returned early Friday aboard a Philippine Airlines flight from Toronto and was met at the airport by National Bureau of Investigation agents.

Justice Secretary Vitaliano Aguirre II earlier said that Santiago had sent feelers, asking for NBI protection when he returned to Manila.

"I came back because I'm innocent," Santiago told reporters during a news briefing at NBI headquarters on Friday.

"If I am guilty, I will not return and just hide in Canada," he said, adding he would face the charges filed against him.

While his name was not mentioned in the Department of Justice resolution recommending the filing of kidnapping for ransom with homicide

charges against Jee's killers, a certain "alias Ding" who owned the funeral parlor where the businessman's body was taken appeared in the complaint.

Aguirre said Ding was Santiago.

Santiago said he was willing to cooperate with the government.

#### Loose ends

"The return of Mr. Santiago augurs well for our collective search for the truth behind the dastardly act committed against the person of the late Mr. Jee Ick-joo," Aguirre said during the news briefing at NBI headquarters on Friday.

"It is a most welcome development. We assure the Filipino people and our Korean friends that earnest efforts will be exerted to bring the real perpetrators to justice," he said.

"There are loose ends in the

case. He would be of great help in explaining the unanswered questions in the investigation," he added.

Aguirre said he ordered the NBI to protect Santiago, who claimed at least two groups wanted him dead.

Santiago is a former policeman.

Aguirre said Santiago did not explain why he chose the NBI for protection over his former organization.

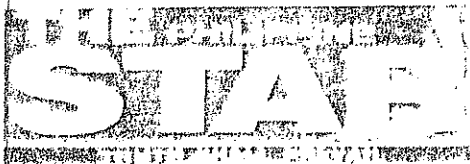
He said Santiago would apply for admission into the government's witness protection program.

The PNP Anti-Kidnapping Group on Friday asked the justice department to amend the charge sheet to include Santiago and two others in the criminal case filed against Sta. Isabel.

—WITH REPORTS FROM GIL CABACUNGAN, LEILA B. SALAVERRIA, TARRA QUISMUNDO AND REUTERS INQ

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28 January 2017



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# Bato sacks cops in Lacson video

By EMMANUEL TUPAS

**Philippine National Police (PNP) chief Director General Ronald dela Rosa relieved yesterday 10 police officers seen on video allegedly planting illegal drugs during a raid on an office last October.**

"The PNP chief has already ordered an investigation and relieved the people involved," Director Oscar Albayalde, chief of National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO), said in a news briefing at Camp Crame in Quezon City.

Albayalde said the 10 policemen were members of the NCRPO Special Operations Task Group. He declined to identify them.

Officials at the NCRPO and Camp Crame are mum about the identities of the police officers.

According to Albayalde, the officers were transferred to the Personnel Holding and Accounting Unit (PHAU).

Asked if Senior Supt. Eleazar Matta, chief of the NCRPO Regional Intelligence Division

Turn to Page 8

(RID) is among those relieved, Albayalde said Matta is not included in the list. He said the highest ranked officer is a chief inspector.

Sen. Panfilo Lacson, during a Senate public hearing on Thursday on the killing of South Korean businessman Jee Ick-joo, showed footage from a closed-circuit television (CCTV) camera taken last Oct. 26 wherein policemen raided an office.

The police officers clad in civilian clothes inspected the desks of employees.

Another could be seen placing something in the drawers, which Lacson believes were illegal drugs.

Albayalde did not divulge where exactly the raid took place. It is not clear if this was the operation on Oct. 26 where 61 foreigners, mostly Chinese nationals, were captured for alleged involvement in illegal drugs during the raid on the Multinational Bancorporation Center in Salcedo Village, Makati City.

Albayalde clarified that the relief of the police officers does not mean they are already being penalized.

"This is not punitive in nature. This is to pave the way for due process and impartial investigation," he said.

"We don't want to condemn them right away. Let them explain their side," Albayalde said.

Albayalde also disclosed that the policemen, caught on video planting evidence and stealing money from their victims, were disarmed and

relieved from their posts.

Albayalde said the policemen were immediately transferred to the PHAU in Camp Crame, Quezon City and would be tried by the police Internal Affairs Service (IAS).

A police source said that the erring policemen belong to the NCRPO's intelligence division headed by Senior Supt. Matta.

During the public hearing at the Senate last Thursday, Lacson showed footage of a closed circuit television camera showing a policeman planting shabu and stealing money from an office that the police team later raided.

"May mauuna rito, mag-plant ng shabu and then papasok 'yung (one would get in first, then plant shabu before the entry of the) raiding party. These are police officers. *Ninakawan pa ng* (they took) equivalent to P7 million *at nag-cough up pa ng* additional P2 million," Lacson said.

He also said members of the anti-crime civic group Movement for Restoration of Peace and Order reported to him that there were 12 cases involving policemen.

One case involved a kidnap for ransom. "One case included an arrest, kidnap and ransom. The uncle arrived at NAIA (Ninoy Aquino International Airport), paid P1 million. But even after the payment, while (victim was still) in custody, the police withdrew from an ATM (automated teller machine)," Lacson said.

There are also several cases in Bu-



lacan and Makati, he added.

"These incidents show there are really excesses being committed by our policemen. If you don't monitor, you would not know, you can't act on the situation," Lacson said in a mix of English and Filipino.

Presidential spokesman Ernesto Abella assured the people that President Duterte supports the police in the war against illegal drugs but he does not tolerate rogue cops.

Abella made the assurance yesterday amid concerns raised by some sectors over the culture of impunity after the controversial case of Korean businessman Jee Ick-joo who was kidnapped and killed by alleged policemen inside PNP headquarters at Camp Crame, Quezon City.

"The President has said he continues to protect their efforts, assuming regularity, assuming regularity. But it's running on parallel tracks and the President has said that he will deal quite severely with those who are erring," he said.

"The President has said he will deal severely with those who are found to be engaged in... found to be guilty of. So let us see how it proceeds," Abella pointed out.

### **46 cops dismissed**

Albayaalde claimed that 46 Metro Manila policemen were dismissed, 63 others suspended while four police officers demoted since July last year.

Albayaalde warned policemen to stop their illegal activities or face dismissal.

"Any police officer involved in any illegal activities will be immediately investigated, be given due process

but if warranted, removed from the police service," Albayaalde said.

"The involvement of a few police officers in illegal activities does not bespeak the discipline of our police. We have to give justice to our hard-working police officers," he added.

Albayaalde emphasized that the NCRPO has no tolerance for erring cops or "bad eggs."

The NCRPO is also reviewing the cases of 896 more policemen facing administrative charges.

Albayaalde pointed out that the NCRPO is doing its part in resolving the administrative cases filed against erring cops.

The NCRPO Regional Training and Education Division (RTED) had imposed strict and disciplinary training to new police officers.

Meanwhile, the PNP reported yesterday that 2,538 suspected personalities have been killed in the government's war on drugs.

PNP spokesperson Senior Supt. Dionardo Carlos said these drug suspects were killed in 43,239 police operations under Project Double Barrel Alpha.

Meanwhile, 3,502 other people were murdered allegedly by unidentified vigilantes as of Jan. 2 according to the police. These cases fall under the category of deaths under investigation.

Police have reasoned these suspected drug users and pushers were killed after they allegedly put up a fight which endangered the lives of lawmen. In the report covering July 1 to Jan. 27, some 52,521 drug suspects were arrested by the police.

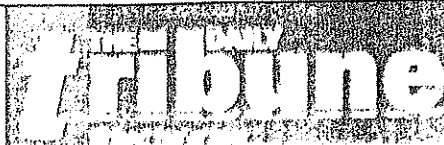
In the same report, Carlos said 35 policemen were killed and 86 others were wounded in the drug war. The military also suffered casualties with three fatalities and eight injuries.

Also, a total of 1,176,523 persons composed of 79,310 pushers and 1,097,213 users voluntarily surrendered to the authorities.

Meanwhile, policemen visited 6,936,157 houses of suspected drug-personalities under the "tokhang" operations, where lawmen knock on the doors of drug suspects and plead that they stop their illegal activities.

- With Non Alquitran

28 January 2017



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## Military hits NPA for killing 2 civilians

By Mario J. Mallari

The military yesterday scored the communist New People's Army (NPA) for killing two civilians – one suspected of being an Army "stooge" and the other of involvement into illegal drugs.

Capt. Rhyan Batchar, public affairs chief of the Army's 10th Infantry Division (ID), noted that Rigoberto Sanchez, spokesman for the NPA's Southern Mindanao Regional Committee, claimed responsibility for the killing of Alberto Sablada and Neptali Pondoc.

Sablada was suspected as a "stooge" or agent of the Army's 73rd Infantry Battalion (IB) while Pondoc was tagged as involved into illegal drugs.

The two were killed by NPA assassins in separate occasions in Calinan and Paquibato in Davao City, on January 16 and 23, respectively.

The 10ID takes strong offense on the unfounded allegation of Sanchez that an NPA liquidation victim Alberto Sablada was a 'stooge' of the 73rd Infantry Battalion and that the NPA killing was a 'dispensation of justice,' Batchar said.

"Furthermore, 10ID doubts the legitimacy of the NPAs to conduct anti-drug and anti-criminality operations beyond the mandate of the police and military," he added.

Batchar stressed that the 73rd IB is not, in any way, connected to any Alamara group, or anti-NPA band, as claimed by Sanchez. He stressed that the battalion is not operating in Davao City.

He also dismissed NPA's authority to go after individuals suspected of involvement into illegal drugs or any criminal activity.

"Warrants of arrest can only be implemented by duly authorized authorities such as the PNP (Philippine National Police) and other law enforcement agency as ordered by the court," Batchar said.

"The NPA is not a legitimate law enforcement unit, as such their actions are criminal," he added.

However, President Duterte once urged the NPA to join and help his campaign against illegal drugs.

28 January 2017

# PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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The Philippine Air Force's newly acquired FA-50 jets are taking part in operations against Islamic State-affiliated terror groups in the mountains of Lanao del Sur province. —NIÑO JESUS ORBETA

26 January 2017

PHILIPPINE DAILY  
**INQUIRER**

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# Bombs drop on terror groups' lair

**Casualties reported in air strikes targeting Abu Sayyaf, Maute group in Lanao del Sur province**

**By Julie Alipala  
and Jeffrey Maitem  
@inmindanao**

ZAMBOANGA CITY—Islamic State-affiliated (IS) terror groups converging in Butig town in Lanao del Sur province became the first state enemies to experience the capability of the military's newly acquired FA-50 jets.

There were reports of casualties on the side of the Maute group and the Abu Sayyaf, led by Basilan-based Isnilon Hapilon, during bombing operations in their encampment areas, military officials said.

However, the actual body count had yet to be determined as ground troops were still inching toward the area that the two FA-50 jets had targeted on Jan. 26. The aircraft were part of the assets of the 7th Tactical Fighter Squadron of the Philippine Air Force.

"We will await the validated details of the results of this operation as soon as we get confirmation from our troops on the ground," said Col. Edgard Arevalo, the military spokesperson.

But intelligence reports showed initial assaults killed at least four militants, possibly including a Malaysian, and reportedly wounded Hapilon, Defense

Secretary Delfin Lorenzana told The Associated Press (AP).

Maj. Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr., the commander of the military's Western Mindanao Command (Westmincom), described the bomb run by the jet fighters as a "surgical operation," meaning the targets were specific.

He said soldiers from the Army's 103rd Infantry Brigade were "cautiously advancing to their designated objectives—the location of [Abu Sayyaf] leader Isnilon Hapilon, his select group, and the brothers Abdullah, Omar and Otto Maute, and possibly other foreigners joining their notorious group."

"We will relentlessly pursue these lawless groups. We will not allow them to thrive in any part of our country to sow terror to our people. Your Armed Forces of the Philippines—through the support of our people and local government as shown in this case—will frustrate every attempt to disrupt our normal lives," Galvez said in a statement.

Lorenzana earlier confirmed that Hapilon, now considered the head of IS in the Philippines, had moved to Central Mindanao in a bid to unify extremist groups such as the Maute and the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters.

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"[Hapilon] moved to Central Mindanao, allegedly on the behalf of the IS people in the Middle East, to find out if Central Mindanao is more conducive to the establishment of an organization because, according to the report, Basilan and Jolo are too small. They would be easily cornered there so they are looking for a bigger area," Lorenzana told reporters in Manila on Thursday.

Hapilon, who is on the US Department of Justice list of most-wanted terrorists worldwide with up to \$5 million bounty for his capture, moved to Butig from his stronghold on southern Basilan island a month ago to look for a base for his new militant alliance, Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Eduardo Año told AP.

Butig Mayor Jimmy Pansar

confirmed that Yakan and Tausug-speaking armed men were seen arriving in his town.

"This is Hapilon's group," he said.

Galvez said American troops stationed at the Westmincom headquarters here have been helping the military in so far as sharing intelligence and other tasks.

"They help in analysis of data, do some assessments

and confirmation, but they are not going down [there]," he said.

Galvez said the Butig operation involved only Filipino operatives.

"There are no US troops in Butig, *walang* US forces *dyan*. We have a number of US troops inside Western Mindanao Command, they are deployed here and confined inside. They are not allowed to leave the camp," he told the Inquirer by telephone.

"We have dedicated people on the ground and this effort is supported by local governments and other peace-inclined groups," he added.

He said ground troops, on Friday, were moving toward the area where armed groups were believed to have camped prior to the air raid.

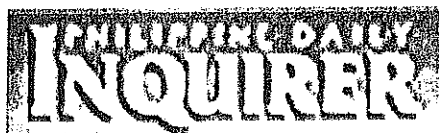
In Cotabato City, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) ordered its men in Central Mindanao and in Lanao del Sur to help pursue Hapilon and the other terror suspects.

Mohagher Iqbal, MILF chief negotiator, said the MILF was invoking the provisions set for the Ad hoc Joint Action Group, an anticriminal body tasked "to interdict and isolate" criminal groups, such as kidnappers and terrorists. --WITH AP AND REUTERS

INO

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28 January 2017



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WAR ON DRUGS

## 4 KILLED, 10 SOLDIERS WOUNDED IN ANTIDRUG OPERATION VS MAYOR

COTABATO CITY—Four gunmen protecting the mayor of a Maguindanao town listed as a drug suspect were killed in a clash with lawmen trying to serve a search warrant on the official on Thursday, authorities said.

At least 10 soldiers were wounded in the clash, which broke out as a team of policemen and soldiers were entering the town of Ampatuan to search the houses of Mayor Rasul Sangki and his men.

Senior Supt. Jimmy Daza, head of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), said the team was in the village of Saniag when they were met with heavy gunfire.

### State witness

Daza said reports reaching police were not clear if Sangki was with the armed men.

Sangki is a state witness in the 2009 Maguindanao massacre. Last year, President Duterte named him as among mayors and other officials involved in the drug trade.

Sangki vehemently denied involvement in drugs and went to Camp Crame, the Philippine National Police headquarters, to clear his name.

Senior Supt. Agustin Tello, Maguindanao police director, said the operation against Sangki and his men is continuing and backed by two MG-520 attack helicopters. Sporadic gunfire continued until early last night.

Myrna Jo Henry, speaking

for the ARMM's Humanitarian Emergency Action Response Team, said the ARMM government has given aid to displaced families from the village of Salman and areas nearby.

### Displacement

"Many of them left without much valuables," Henry told the Inquirer after distributing food packs to displaced families at the municipal gymnasium of Ampatuan on Thursday.

"Some told us they left behind their work animals such as horses and carabaos as well as their produce," Henry said.

"They had just harvested corn and palay," she said. No civilian was hurt in the clash, Henry said.

ARMM Gov. Mujiv Hataman said the regional government continues to support Mr. Duterte's war on drugs.

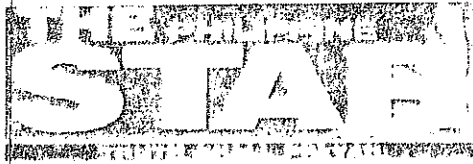
### 'Narcopoliticians'

Several other Maguindanao officials are also being linked to the drug trade, including Talitay Mayor Montasir Sabal, who is now in hiding.

"We support the President's campaign even in the judicious use of intelligence funds in the maintenance of law and order," Hataman said.

ARMM Interior Secretary Noor Hafizullah Abdullah said the region, as part of the war on drugs, also wants to establish drug- and crime-free communities. —EDWIN FERNANDEZ  
WITH A REPORT FROM CHARLIE SEÑASE INQ

28 January 2017



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## Abu commander wounded in Lanao del Sur assault

Government troops have launched air strikes and ground assaults that reportedly wounded one of Southeast Asia's most-wanted militant suspects who is trying to establish a new base for an alliance backing the Islamic State group, officials said yesterday.

Intelligence reports showed the assaults killed at least four militants, possibly including a Malaysian, and reportedly wounded the main target, Isnilon Hapilon, Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said.

He said Hapilon apparently managed to flee from a camp in the mountainous hinterlands of Butig town in Lanao del Sur.

"Army troops are still in hot pursuit," Lorenzana said.

Air strikes targeted Hapilon's group on Wednesday and Thursday. Hundreds of troops, backed by artillery fire, then began pursuing him and other militants from the so-called Maute group in Butig, Armed Forces of the Philippines chief of staff Gen. Eduardo Ano said.

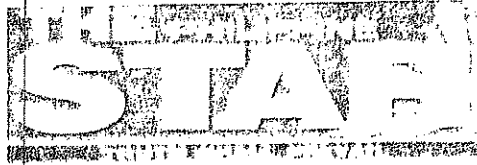
Hapilon, who is on the US Department of Justice list of most-wanted terrorists worldwide with a reward of up to \$5 million for his capture, moved to Butig from his stronghold in southern Basilan a month ago to look for a base for his new militant alliance, Ano told the AP.

Hapilon, an Arabic-speaking Islamic preacher known for his expertise on commando assaults, has been indicted in the District of Columbia for alleged involvement in attacks on Americans and other foreigners in Mindanao.

He organized an alliance called Dawlatul Islam Wilayatul Mashriq, which is now believed to include at least 10 small militant groups including some Abu Sayyaf factions, the Maute and two other groups established by Malaysian and Indonesian militants. They all use black IS-style flags, according to counterterrorism officials and documents.

- AP

28 January 2017



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## NPA sabotaging peace talks – DND chief

By JAIME LAUDE

If there is one group sabotaging the ongoing peace talks in Rome, it is the New People's Army (NPA), Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said yesterday.

His statement runs counter to the claim of the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army-National Democratic Front (CPP-NPA-NDF) leadership that accused the Armed Forces of the Philippines of damaging the talks.

"We will not stop our operations against lawless elements in support of the police law enforcement action," Lorenzana said, referring to the killing of a man who turned out to be an NPA member during a recent law enforcement operation in Makilala in North Cotabato.

He added that for as long as there are lawless elements terrorizing civilian communities, the military and police operations would continue.

In Davao City, the Philippine Army reported yesterday that the NPA had executed a civilian and a farmer they accused of being a military spy and a drug peddler, respectively.

Capt. Rhyan Batchar, spokesman for the Army's 10th Infantry Division, identified the victims as Alberto Sablada of Calinan district and Nep-tali Alfredo Pondoc, a farmer from Paquibato district, after

a confirmation from Rigoberto Sanchez, spokesman for NPA-Southern Mindanao Regional Committee.

Also yesterday, President Duterte reiterated his position that political prisoners would not be released unless the government and communist peace panels reach a ceasefire agreement.

Both sides failed to come up with an agreement after closing the third round of formal peace talks in Rome, Italy yesterday.

"What I want is ceasefire first. But you communists would not give it, so I would not give either. I have given so much," Duterte said, stressing his hesitance on releasing more political prisoners.

"I have given so much, too soon, already. Show me first a document with the ceasefire agreement before there will be more release of prisoners," the President said while doing a "talk to men" session among soldiers assigned with the Army's 6th Infantry Division in Awang, Maguindanao.

Lorenzana asked the CPP-NPA-NDF leadership on what the heavily armed NPA rebels were doing in a remote community in Makilala town, which led to an encounter with government forces last week.

- With Edith Regalado



28 January 2017

# The Standard

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## Mortars rain on MILF coddling 'narco-mayor'

By Francisco Tuyay and John Paolo Bencito

SECURITY forces fired mortars at rogue members of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front shielding Ampatuan town Mayor Rasul Sangki, who fled while his followers battled police trying to serve a search warrant for his home in Barangay Santiag Thursday.

Regional police director Reuben Sindac said fighting erupted after Sangki's followers fired at a combined po-

lice and military contingent serving the search warrant.

Sangki was one of the five Maguindahao mayors whom President Rodrigo Duterte claimed was involved in narcotics trafficking last August.

Sangki surrendered to authorities but was later released for lack of evidence.

"The MILF has given us the go signal to continue the hunt against the followers of Sangki who sought refuge inside MILF areas manned by rogue MILF members," Sindac said.

Sindac said the authority surfaced after the government and the MILF along with the International Monitoring Team reached a consensus.

But reports said that the MILF refused to abide the government's call for them to peacefully surrender Sangki,

### Mortars...

From A1

who is believed to be holed up in an MILF camp.

"We are pounding an enemy stronghold where armed followers of Sangki are holed up," Sindac said.

More troops have been sent into the battle zone.

Sindac also said that several checkpoints were set up.

So far, 12 soldiers from the 601st Infantry Battalion have been wounded in the two days of fighting.

President Duterte on Friday admitted that he cannot anymore control the spread of local terrorist groups allied with the Islamic State as he threatened to call off the ongoing peace talks with Moro rebel groups should they provide refuge to them in their territories.

"I am pleading that I still want peace. I am ready to talk with you, but not with the ISIS," Duterte told the MILF and the Moro National Liberation Front.

"But the ISIS contamination, I can no longer control it. So what I can do

now is to talk with you, MI[LF] and the MN[LF]," he added.

"I was shown the map where the encounters were. I am earnestly asking, I am pleading to the MN[LF] and the MI[LF] that do not provide sanctuary to these terrorists in your areas. Because if that happens, then we will be forced to go after them within your territory."

"Do not allow the Maute to seek refuge in your camps, otherwise I will be forced to tell the AFP and the police to enter your territories," he added.

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana on Thursday said they are looking into the transfer to Central Mindanao of Abu Sayyaf leader Isnilon Hapilon at the behest of the ISIS people in the Middle East. Lorenzana said Hapilon left Basilan for Lanao del Sur in December 2016.

Earlier reports said Hapilon had been the rising "figure head" of a handful of ISIS followers from different groups such as the Abu Sayyaf based in Basilan and Sulu, the Maute Group based in Butig, Lanao del Sur; the BIFF based in Central Mindanao,

Ansar al-Khilafa Philippines and rogue MNLF and MILF groups.

Just recently, security officials said those homegrown terrorist groups had been uniting and evolving into just one group called Dawlatul Islamiyah Waliyatul Masrik or DIWM, and had chosen Hapilon as their sole leader in their aggressive efforts to be recognized by the ISIS.

Lorenzana said the ISIS had prodded Hapilon "to find out if Central Mindanao is conducive to the establishment of an organization [provincial caliphate]."

Duterte said allowing terrorists to their camps could prod the government to cancel the peace talks.

In the same speech, Duterte admitted that the previous administration's Oplan Exodus in Mamasapano, Maguindanao, where 44 elite police commandos were killed was a 'serious flaw' on the part of the government.

The previous administration stormed into an MILF territory without proper coordination with the rebel group to arrest Malaysian terrorist Zulkifli bin Hir alias Marwan.

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# The Standard

DEFINING THE NEWS

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## Defense ties with China, Russia backed

By John Paolo Bencito

MANY Filipinos approve of President Rodrigo Duterte's position to seek security and defense cooperation with China and Russia, the latest Pulse Asia survey showed.

The same survey showed that

eight out of 10 Filipinos believe the Philippines should assert its territorial rights in the South China Sea based on the arbitration ruling that it won in July 2016.

The latest survey, conducted from Dec. 6 to 11 last year among 1,200 respondents, showed that 84 percent of those polled said

the Philippines should assert the arbitration ruling that invalidated China's claims over most of the South China Sea.

The same survey showed that 47 percent of Filipinos agree that the Philippines should strengthen its defense ties with China and Russia.

*Next page*

### Defense...

From A1

Some 34 percent said they might agree or disagree, while another 18 percent expressed disapproval. Two percent of the respondents said they didn't know.

Across geographical areas, however, it was only in Mindanao where Duterte's position gained majority approval with 57 percent.

In his visit to Beijing in October last year, Duterte said he wanted to pivot to China and Russia and away from the United States, the Philippines' traditional ally.

"I announce my separation from the United States," the President told a packed room of business leaders in the Chinese capital after meeting with President Xi Jinping.

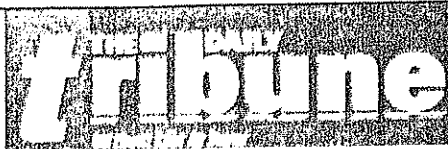
Duterte also said he might go to Russian President Vladimir Putin and tell him "there's three of us against the world."

The survey likewise showed that many Filipinos viewed the Philippines' security and defense relations with the United States as "beneficial, with 47 percent expressing approval, 33 percent saying they might agree or disagree and 17 percent saying they disapproved.

A recent Pulse Asia survey revealed within the same survey period that 76 percent of those polled trusted the United States while 61 percent and 58 percent distrusted China and Russia, respectively.

Duterte is set to visit Moscow by April this year and to return to China later this year for the BRICS Summit in Shanghai.

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# Military intensifies offensive vs terror groups in Lanao Sur

By Mario J. Mallari

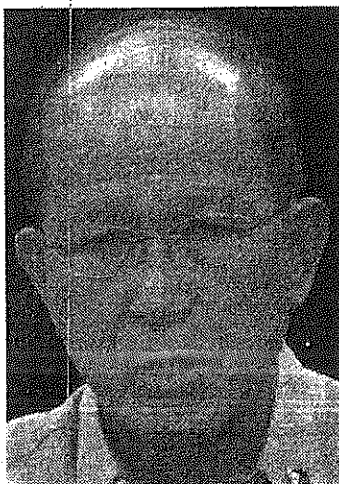
Government forces pounded suspected lairs of the terrorist Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) and Maute Group in Lanao del Sur province — where Isnilon Hapilon, who has links with the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, is believed to have relocated in his attempt to establish ISIS caliphate.

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana confirmed on Thursday that Hapilon has sneaked out of his lair in Basilan middle of December, along with select men, and transferred to Lanao del Sur.

"The bulk of his (Isnilon) people are still in Basilan. I think he went there (Lanao del Sur) just to see the area, to find out if it is conducive for them to move there and establish what you call caliphate or *wilayat* of the ISIS," Lorenzana said.

The Defense chief also admitted that the group of Hapilon, who is wanted by both the Philippines and United States governments with the US offering \$5-million reward, is now recognized by the ISIS.

"In a way, they are recognized



**LORENZANA**

by the ISIS," Lorenzana said.

Col. Edgard Arevalo, public affairs chief of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), said that military operations against known lairs of the Maute Group in Butig town are continuing since Wednesday night.

Among the high value targets of the ongoing military offensives are Hapilon and brothers Omar, Abdullah and Otto Maute.

The military is not discounting the possibility of the presence of foreigners with the ASG and Maute Group.

Arevalo claimed that the military is now validating reports that the terrorist groups sustained heavy casualty following the conduct of surgical air strike and a well-directed and observed artillery rounds accurately landing in the identified enemy locations.

As of Thursday afternoon, Arevalo said ground troops have already established foothold and begun their assault to the same objective of the preliminary attack midnight Wednesday.

"They are now cautiously advancing to their designated objectives — the location of ASG leader Isnilon Hamilton, his select group, and the Brothers Abdullah, Omar, and Otto Maute, and possibly other foreigners joining their notorious group," he said.

"We will await the validated details of the results of this operation as soon as we get confirmations from our troops now on the ground," he added.

Maj. Gen. Carlito Galvez, commander of Western Mindanao Command (Wesmincom), vowed to pursue the terrorists to thwart any attempt to disrupt peace in the country.

"We will relentlessly pursue these lawless groups. We will not allow them to thrive in any part of our country to sow terror to our people," vowed Galvez.

"Your Armed Forces of the Philippines — through the support of our people and local government as shown in this case — will frustrate every attempt to disrupt our normal lives," he added.

The intensified military offensives in Lanao del Sur is part of the efforts to defeat the terror groups within the six-month deadline given by AFP chief of staff Gen. Eduardo Año, who vowed all-out support to operating troops.

"You will have the support you need in all your endeavors in contribution to attain the mission given to us by the Commander in Chief. Let us together end in six months the menace these terror groups bring," Año said.

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## Military on the offensive in Lanao del Sur Abu leader expanding clout

**By Jun Legaspi**

**MILITARY** personnel pounded suspected lairs of the terrorist Abu Sayyaf and Maute groups in Lanao del Sur where Isnilon Hapilon, who has links with the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, is believed to have relocated in an attempt to establish an ISIS caliphate.

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana on Thursday said that Abu leader Hapilon has sneaked out of his lair in Basilan middle of December, along with select men, and transferred to Lanao del Sur.

"The bulk of his (Isnilon) people are still in Basilan. I think he went there (Lanao del Sur) just to see the area, to find out if it is conducive for them to move there and establish what you call caliphate or wilayat of the ISIS," said Lorenzana.

The Defense chief also said that the group of Hapilon, who is wanted by both the Philippines and United States governments, with the US offer-

ing a \$5 million reward, is now recognized by the ISIS.

"In a way, they are recognized by the ISIS," said Lorenzana.

Armed Forces of the Philippines Public Affairs chief Col. Edgard Arevalo said that military operations against lairs of the Maute Group in Butig town are continuing since Wednesday night.

Among the high value targets of the ongoing military offensives are Hapilon and Maute brothers Omar, Abdullah and Otto.

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ground troops have already established foothold since the preliminary attack midnight on Wednesday.

"They are now cautiously advancing to their designated objectives – the location of ASG leader Isnilon Hapilon, his select group, and brothers Abdullah, Omar, and

Otto Maute, and possibly other foreigners joining their notorious group," he said.

"We will await the validated details of the results of this operation as soon as we get confirmations from our troops now on the ground," he added.

Western Mindanao

Command commander Maj. Gen. Carlito Galvez vowed to pursue the terrorists to thwart any attempt to disrupt peace.

"We will relentlessly pursue these lawless groups. We will not allow them to thrive in any part of our country to sow terror to our people," said Galvez.

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## MNLF, MILF warned: Don't give refuge to terrorists

**"DON'T provide sanctuary to terror groups."**

President Rodrigo Duterte made this "earnest" appeal to the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) as well as to the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF)

Duterte warned that he will be forced to order the military to conduct operations against the MILF and the MNLF if it is proven that they are providing safe refuge to terrorists.

"I am earnestly asking -- nakikiusap po ako sa

MNLF] pati sa MILF] na do not provide sanctuary itong mga terorista sa lugar ninyo," Duterte said in a speech during his visit to wounded soldiers at Camp Siongco Station Hospital.

"Kasi kapag ganoon, then we will be forced to go after them within your territory. And that would mean trouble for all of us. Ayoko mangyari iyan," he added.

Duterte also reminded the two groups of the loom-



**President Duterte**

ing ISIS threat in Mindanao, which he described as the country's breadbasket.

The Duterte administration is set to begin peace talks with the MNLF and MILF this year. The President is confident the peace efforts with rebel groups would bear fruit in two years in Mindanao. **Efren Montano**

28 January 2017



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## 8 in 10 Pinoys want rights asserted in West Phl Sea

By HELEN FLORES

Eight in 10 Filipinos want the Duterte government to assert the country's rights in the West Philippine Sea, according to the latest Pulse Asia survey.

The survey found 84 percent of 1,200 respondents who agreed that the Duterte government should uphold the Philippine rights in the disputed region as stipulated in the July 2016 decision of the United Nations Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague, Netherlands.

Only three percent of the respondents opposed this view, while 12 percent were ambivalent on the matter.

The number of Filipinos who think the Duterte government should assert its rights in the West Philippines Sea was highest in the National Capital Region (NCR) at 92 percent.

It was followed by Mindanao, the bailiwick of President Duterte, at 87 percent; Luzon at 83

percent, and Visayas at 77 percent.

In terms of socioeconomic class, 85 percent in Class D believe it was necessary that the country insist its rights over the contested islands since it got a favorable ruling from the international court.

The survey also showed 47 percent of Filipinos who agreed that the Philippines "should explore security/defense cooperation with China and Russia than the US."

This sentiment was highest in Mindanao at 57 percent; followed by NCR and Luzon at 45 percent each and Visayas at 41 percent. Eighteen percent of respondents opposed this view.

The poll likewise found 47 percent of respondents who think that the security/defense relations with the US have been beneficial to

the Philippines. Only 17 percent of respondents said otherwise.

The poll, commissioned by private think tank Stratbase Albert del Rosario Institute, was conducted from Dec. 6 - 11, 2016.

Pulse Asia research director Ana Maria Tabunda acknowledged that the respondents may have only some knowledge of the territorial dispute in the South China Sea.

She noted that in a separate survey by Pulse Asia, foreign policy was not among the "top three concerns" of Filipinos.

"Having a snapshot of the issue doesn't make them unqualified for the survey," she said after presenting the survey results at the Fairmont Hotel in Makati City yesterday.

Professor Jay Batongbacal of the University

of the Philippines' Institute of Maritime Affairs and the Law of the Sea said the government only started educating the people about the country's claim over portions of the South China Sea when it was about to file a case against China before the United Nations-backed tribunal. And people got the information about the issue from the media.

Dindo Manhit, Stratbase ADR Institute president, said the Duterte administration can pursue its claim in the West Philippine Sea while still improving the country's economic partnership with Beijing.

In July last year, the arbitral tribunal ruled that China's "nine-dash line" is invalid. "The tribunal concluded that there was no legal basis for China to claim historic rights to resources within the sea areas falling within the nine-dash line," it said.

Aside from the Philippines, the South China Sea is claimed wholly or in part by Brunei, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Taiwan and Vietnam.

January 2017

The Manila Times

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# Don't coddle terrorists, MILF, MNLF warned

BY CATHERINE S. VALENTE

**P**RESIDENT Rodrigo Duterte on Friday appealed to the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) not to provide "sanctuary" for terrorists in their territories.

"I am earnestly asking, I am pleading with the MN[LF] and the MI[LF], do not provide sanctuary for terrorists in your area," the President said when he visited wounded soldiers at Camp Siongco Station

Hospital in Maguindanao.

If the two groups will coddle terrorists, Duterte warned that he will be forced to order state forces "to go after them" and end ongoing peace negotiations.

"That would mean trouble for all of us. I don't want that to happen," the President said.

"If you give your territory there and you don't let us in, you protect them, that's another story. You might as well forget about peace talks," he added.

The President then recalled the Mamasapano incident in 2015 where members of the MILF and other Muslim rebels mowed down dozens of members of the police's Special Action Force.

"Maybe we just swallowed the story because they went inside without the blessings of the MILF.

I'm not saying that you were not there. You wiped out the (SAF) 44. We never said anything about you, we never blamed you because there was this agreement that we can't enter your camp except really to catch a criminal. But you know that's a grey area. So it's like we swallowed it, even me. You did not hear anything," he said.

"This time, I am pleading. Do not allow the Maute and the other terrorist groups to enter and seek refuge in your camps. Otherwise, I'll be forced to tell the Armed Forces and police, 'enter their territory'."

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

**ONLINE NEWS**  
**28 JANUARY 2017**

[www.pna.gov.ph](http://www.pna.gov.ph)

**Duterte honors wounded soldiers in Maguidanao**

From the Philippine News Agency (Jan 27): **Duterte honors wounded soldiers in Maguidanao**

**President Rodrigo Roa Duterte honored 12 wounded soldiers at Camp Siongco Station Hospital during his visit to Datu Odin Sinsuat, Maguindanao on Friday.**

The soldiers, who belonged to 6th Infantry Division of Philippine Army, got injured in a clash with lawless armed group in Ampatuan town on Thursday, while acting as support to law enforcers serving a search warrant against the town mayor, Rasul Sangki.

President Duterte awarded the Wounded Personnel Medal to the following army troopers:

SSG Manuel T. Asana  
SSG Arvin C. Esperanza  
SGT Elmer P. Pelle  
SGT Leonardo C. Remulta  
CPL Raffy B. Matingkal  
PFC Jerusel D. Castañeda  
PVT Alden D. Cahoy  
PVT Eldie T. Mallorca  
PVT Erwin S. Mistoso  
PVT Harold John N. Dionisio  
PVT Cresaldy O. Coronado  
PVT Vincent John M. Gregorio

"I was shown the map where the encounters were. I am earnestly asking, nakikiusap ako sa MN pati MI na do not provide sanctuary itong mga terorista sa lugar ninyo.

Kasi pag ka ganon, then we will be forced to go after them within your territory," the President asked members of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

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



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

"Kasi may atraso sila. Marami sila pinatay na inosente, bombing, and all," the Commander In Chief added.

The President was all praises to the gallant soldiers who risked their lives in law enforcement operations.

"I'm glad that I am here with you. I awarded the wounded personnel medals to all," he said.

President Duterte assured the military of his administration's full support as long as he is president.

"You can have the resources of government to make yourself comfortable and in the years to come, makukuha ninyo lahat 'yung kailangan ninyo. And I will see to it that you are a soldier of this Republic, comfortable with your vocation," the President said.

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

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

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

## Military offensive underway for top terror suspect Hapilon

www.inquirer.net / 04:33 PM January 27, 2017



Armed Forces of the Philippines chief of staff Gen. Eduardo Año. PHOTO FROM AFP's FACEBOOK

MANILA, Philippines— The Philippine military chief says troops have launched airstrikes and ground assaults against one of Southeast Asia's most-wanted terror suspects who is trying to establish a new base for an alliance of armed groups backing the Islamic State group.

Gen. Eduardo Año says airstrikes targeted the group of elusive militant leader Isnilon Hapilon on Wednesday and Thursday. Hundreds of troops began pursuing him and allied militants in the mountainous hinterlands of Butig town in southern Lanao del Sur province.

Ano said Friday that Hapilon, who is on the U.S. Department of Justice list of most-wanted terrorists, moved to Butig from his stronghold on southern Basilan island a month ago to look for a base for his new alliance of small extremist groups.*/rga*

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

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

## **Navy gets help from Manila City in recruiting technically-inclined, skilled individuals**

From Update.Ph (Jan 27): Navy gets help from Manila City in recruiting technically-inclined, skilled individuals

The Philippine Navy is getting the support of Manila City government for its recruitment drive. "The Philippine Navy (PN) on Thursday, January 26, signed a memorandum of agreement (MOA) together with the city government of Manila in the efforts of recruiting more personnel to join its rank in a simple ceremony at Manila City Hall," the Philippine Navy said.

Navy Flag-Officer-In-Command Vice Admiral Ronald Joseph S. Mercado and Mayor Joseph E. Estrada inked the agreement representing the Navy and Manila City government, respectively.

"The MOA signing was part of the continuing initiative of the PN to intensify its recruitment drive by exploring different colleges and universities within Metro Manila as potential sources of future Sailors and Marines," the Philippine Navy said.

The Navy earlier signed similar agreement with Adamson University, Mapua Institute of Technology, Technological University of the Philippines, and the local government of Quezon City.

"The PN is committed to gain technically-inclined and skilled personnel to further enhance its core of professionals and attain its vision of a strong and credible Navy that our maritime nation can be proud of," the Philippine Navy said.

<http://www.update.ph/2017/01/navy-gets-help-from-manila-city-in-recruiting-technically-inclined-skilled-individuals/13634>

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

## **FA-50PHs, attack helicopters launch surgical airstrike against terrorists**

From Update.Ph (Jan 27): FA-50PHs, attack helicopters launch surgical airstrike against terrorists

Making true to Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Chief-of-Staff General Eduardo Año's order to bring all the best troops and war-fighting equipment to Mindanao for fight against terrorism, the Philippine Air Force, with its newly acquired FA-50PH "Fighting Eagle" jets, have conducted airstrike in Butig, Lanao Del Sur midnight between Wednesday and Thursday, 25th and 26th.

Attack helicopters of the Air Force also joined the operation. Troops then conducted ground operation after the airstrike.

"The terror groups are reported to have sustained a major casualty with a number of them dead or seriously wounded after a midnight surgical air strike and a well-directed and observed artillery rounds accurately landing in the identified locations of the terror groups," AFP spokesperson Colonel Edgard Arevalo said.

"They are now cautiously advancing to their designated objectives – the location of ASG leader Isnilon Hamilton, his select group, and the Brothers Abdullah, Omar, and Otto Maute, and possibly other foreigners joining their notorious group," Colonel Arevalo. "We will await the validated details of the results of this operation as soon as we get confirmations from our troops now on the ground."

Philippine military and defense community said Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) senior leader Isnilon Hapilon is in Lanao Del Sur to establish a "wilayat" or an Islamic State.

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

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

"We know he is there so we are conducting operations against them in Lanao Del Sur, near the Butig area, just beside Lake Lanao, we've have been there before with the President sometimes last November or December, so we continue to operate against the ASG," Department of National Defense (DND) Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said Thursday.

<http://www.update.ph/2017/01/fa-50hhs-attack-helicopters-launch-surgical-airstrike-against-terrorists/13620>

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

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

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

## **MILF: Commentary- Mind da News: Bangsamoro: On the Level Lang!**

Posted to the Moro Islamic Liberation Front Website (Jan 20): **Mind da News: Bangsamoro: On the Level Lang!** (By Patricio Diaz)

GENERAL SANTOS CITY, January 18, 2017 – President Rodrigo R. Duterte signed last January 9 the appointment papers of the members of the new 21-member Bangsamoro Transition Commission (BTC). MindaNews reported this January 13. MILF's Luwaran echoed the news on the same day. No national media reported the news. The report, an answer to an information hiatus long overdue, elicited some questions.

MindaNews headline, counting "2 months after signing EO, Duterte finally appoints BTC members", subtly asked: "Why has it taken this long to appoint the members?" But the delay is much longer. The new BTC members could have been appointed last September at the latest – not four months after.

The BTC membership was expanded to 21 in the Bangsamoro Peace and Development Roadmap (BPDR) which President Duterte approved on July 18, 2016 to enhance inclusivity in the redrafting of the Bangsamoro basic law. Subsequently, the GPH and MILF negotiating – now "implementing" – panels accepted BPDR in their meeting in Kuala Lumpur on August 14. The executive order creating the new BTC should have been issued in the next two weeks of August and the members appointed immediately.

QUESTIONS: Why was this not done? EO No.08, s. 2016 was issued more than two months after, on November 7. Why that long? It took two more months to sign the appointment; yet, no names of the appointees have been released. What's keeping this? The release, Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process Jesus Dureza told MindaNews, will be done "shortly". How long is "shortly"?

Dureza also said that the BTC has to hit the ground running as soon as the appointment papers are released and the members have taken their oath; it has to submit the enabling law draft to the Congress in July 2017 as set in the BPDR and before President Duterte delivers his second State of the Nation Address on July 24. When will it hit the ground?

The Secretary was aware of the short time the BTC has – just about six months or less counting from February if it is installed this month – to draft the enabling law. Likened to the Marines scrambling down their helicopters hitting the ground running, the undaunted BTC members will have to do overtime to beat the deadline. No worry. All will be well.

Good picture to see. Is it an honest depiction of the Bangsamoro scenario?

What the picture hides are the diversion in the roadmap and the consequences vital to the fate of the Bangsamoro due to the emergence of Chairman Nur Misuari, the founding chairman of the Moro National Liberation Front -- the acknowledged prime mover of the Moro liberation movement. For all its apparent sincerity, the Duterte government is not on the level with us – not much different from the past governments

The BPDR envisioned a single-track roadmap where the MILF (Moro Islamic Liberation Front)-led BTC with members from all MNLF factions, the IPs (Indigenous People) and the LGUs (Local Government Units) of the ARMM (Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao) will consolidate or converged in the new basic law draft all the past peace agreements of the Moros with the government and the relevant existing laws. This is the side of the picture being shown.

But Misuari refused to join the MILF-led BTC on the BPDR. He has his own "Roadmap to MNLF-Duterte Government Peace Talks (RMDGPT)". This is the second track in the over-all roadmap. The Duterte Government has accepted it. In fact, knowing Misuari, it must have delayed the issuance of EO No. 08 until his meeting with the President to have his

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position known. The EO, almost completely without reference to the BPDR, came out four days after Duterte-Misuari in Malacañang on November 3. Just coincidental?

This is the side of the picture the Duterte government has to clearly show but seems loathe to.

Secretary Dureza has said this much: The BTC will draft a law to create the Bangsamoro to replace the ARMM as agreed in the 2014 Comprehensive Agreement on Bangsamoro; the MNLF-Misuari panel will have RA 9054 amended to enhance the ARMM in accordance with the 1996 Final Peace Agreement – a contradiction: one, to abolish the ARMM; the other, to keep it.

As Dureza told MindaNews on November 3, the GPH-MILF (MILF-led BTC) and the GPH-MNLF (Misuari) peace tracks "will somehow converge in Congress without converging in the process". This means a U-turn away from the original BPDR plan to submit to the Congress only one basic law draft converged in the process of drafting. In the revised scenario, two drafts will be submitted for the Congress to converge.

How can this be done? The Duterte government is not on the level with us.

First, will the two drafts be in the Congress on or before July 24, 2017? Scrambling and running hard on hitting the ground, the MILF-led BTC may be able to. Can the same be said of the GPH-MNLF (Misuari)? Dureza told MindaNews, it is supposed to do so "by July this year".

"Supposed to" means "unsure but hoping". Where are the panels? What are the talking agenda and the mode? There are none to see. Where is Misuari now? Last December 14, he was reported on his way to Jeddah, Saudi Arabia to "seek advice" from the OIC (Organization of Islamic Cooperation) heads of state concerning the peace talks. Is he back? No report. If not, when?

Second, granting the two drafts will be in the Congress on time, MNLF spokesman and head of the MNLF-Misuari panel had warned that converging the two drafts would be a disaster.

Third, how can the ARMM be abolished and retained at the same time as proposed in the contradictory drafts revealed by Secretary Dureza?

This impossible scenario could have been avoided had President Duterte persuaded Misuari to sacrifice his "principles" and bitterness against the MILF and the other MNLF factions for the sake of the Moro unity and the Bangsamoro. He is the only person who can especially with the help of the OIC – a help that has been given.

The OIC, in a statement dated November 11, 2016 and appearing in its official website, commended the decision of President Duterte in releasing Prof. Nur Misuari as "another manifestation of the positive approach of the current administration towards the long-standing problem of the Bangsamoro people"

In that Statement, the OIC acknowledges Misuari's role in the peace process; supports the MILF, its Chairman Al Hajj Murad and the CAB, and avows its desire for the MNLF and MILF to close ranks, merge the two peace tracks and converge all the gains in all peace treaties. The OIC position is clear: It does not favor either the MNLF or the MILF; above all, "it is in full support of the inalienable rights of the Bangsamoro people to determine their future and seek peace and prosperity in their homeland."

In Jeddah, did the OIC advise Misuari in accordance with its November 8 Statement? If he is back in the Philippines, will President Duterte persuade him to follow the OIC's avowed desire and position? If he will not, Why NOT.

The Duterte government must be on the level with us. If it cannot persuade Misuari to follow the single BPDR peace track, presenting the MILF-led BTC side of the picture only is pointless. We all know that is not the whole picture. That is not how to solve the Moro Problem.

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## **50 families forced to evacuate as gov't. forces, bandit group clash in N. Cotabato town**

From the Philippine News Agency (Jan 27): 50 families forced to evacuate as gov't. forces, bandit group clash in N. Cotabato town

**Matalam, North Cotabato:** Some 50 families here were forced to evacuate after a firefight erupted Friday between authorities and a lawless armed group in two remote villages here.

The displaced families were from Sitio Imelda, Barangay Taguranao and adjacent Sitio Maligaya, Barangay Tamped, in this municipality.

Chief Insp. Sunny Leoncito, Matalam police chief, said joint elements of police's elite Special Action Force and Public Safety Company, together with personnel from the Army's 7th Infantry Battalion were conducting a law enforcement operation against fugitives from the North Cotabato District Jail (NCDJ) who bolted out last Jan. 3 when met by resistance from an armed group in the border of the two villages.

According to Leoncito, some of the 50 armed men they encountered were fugitives of the NCDJ who joined the bandit group of Commander Derby operating in the area.

Derby himself was an escapee from the NCDJ in 2015.

Earlier this month, Derby's group stormed the NCDJ in a bid to set free notorious cohorts in the penitentiary.

Although the armed group failed in their mission to set free their imprisoned comrades, 158 other inmates joined in the escape that was described as the biggest jailbreak so far in Philippine history.

Nearly a hundred escapees were recaptured in subsequent pursuit operations but over 60 others remain at large.

Mayor Cheryl Catamco has temporarily suspended classes in Tamped and Taguranao, which included its neighboring villages of Sta. Maria, Kabulacan, and Ilian.

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## **GRP, NDFP conclude 3rd peace talks in Rome; commit to move the process**

From the Philippine News Agency (Jan 27): **GRP, NDFP conclude 3rd peace talks in Rome; commit to move the process**

Peace negotiators of the Government of the Philippines (GRP) and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) concluded the third round-of-talks as both parties agreed to further discuss contentious issues on bilateral ceasefire, amnesty and releases, the Socioeconomic Reforms (SER) and the Political and Constitutional Reforms (PCR) in succeeding meetings.

In an eight-page Joint Statement signed by the chief negotiators Secretary Silvestre Bello III of the GRP and NDFP chair Fidel Agcaoili and members of their panel, both parties remained committed to pursue the peace process.

While both parties were not able to seal a joint bilateral ceasefire, they however agree that ceasefire committees would meet separately to discuss the issue next month.

The NDFP ceasefire committee has formally acknowledged receiving the GRP draft Agreement on an Interim Bilateral Cessation of Hostilities between the GRP and the NDFP.

The NDFP promised to seriously study the proposal and provide an updated version. The ceasefire committees have scheduled to meet on February 22 to 27 in Utrecht, The Netherlands.

On the issue of releases, both parties agreed to continue to study the issuance of an amnesty proclamation consequent to the substantial progress of the peace negotiations with GRP panel assurance to facilitate the release of the three remaining NDFP consultants Eduardo Sarmiento, Emeterio Antalan and Leopoldo Caloza through presidential clemency and other legal modes.

The GRP likewise committed to expeditiously process the release of all the political prisoners listed by the NDFP starting with the 200 qualified prisoners either through bail, recognizance, pardon or other legal processes in compliance with the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for the Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL) and to allow them to participate in activities and mechanisms of the peace process.

The government panel will also worked on the extension of the temporary liberty of the NDFP consultants and staff who were granted bail and released on August 2016 allowing them to continue participate during the duration of the peace negotiations. <>On top of the commitments to move forward the issues of the bilateral ceasefire and releases, both parties have also set the ground rules for the conduct of the formal meetings between the panels of the Reciprocal Working Committees (RWCs) SER.

The RWCs-SER agreed in principle to the free distribution of land to farmers and farm workers as part of the governing framework of CASER (Comprehensive Agreement on SER).

They also created bilateral teams to help reconcile contentious provisions in the GRP and NDFP drafts. In the Army Core Purpose: Serving the people. Securing the land.

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next round of talks, the RWCs-SER will discuss the remaining issues under the Agrarian Reform and Rural Development, National Industrialization and Economic Development, Environmental Protection, Rehabilitation and Compensation and the outputs of the bilateral team.

On the other hand, the Reciprocal Working Groups (RWGs) on PCR formally exchanged full drafts of the tentative agreement on PCR based on the common outline agreed upon during the last round of talks last October 2016.

One of the issues tackled in the meeting of the RWG during the third round is the federal form of government and the need for certain constitutional guarantees and safeguards demanded by the people.

Bello said the joint statement adopted by both panels reflects their unwavering commitment to the peace process with an agreement to hold the fourth round-of-talks on April 2 to 6 back in Oslo, Norway.

Bello said the third round saw both panels drawn to their task of bringing the negotiations to logical conclusion of lowering, if not ending, violence and of finding a closure to the armed conflict.

The past five days of the talks, Bello said the panels were not deterred from exploring new ways and other platforms to advance the talks.

"Our search for common ground on contentious issues such as the release of prisoners and bilateral ceasefire, were spirited by the counsel of our third party facilitator," Bello said, quoting a line from the speech of Norwegian Special Envoy for the GRP-NDFP peace talks Elisabeth Slattum that the peace process is not a zero sum game where there is one winner and one loser, rather one where both parties come out with the winning side.

Bello credited members of both panels for their diligence and patience in holding the talks as these added building blocks on moving the talks forward.

Presidential Peace Adviser Sec Jesus Dureza hoped to see the fruition in the government's towards achieving a just and lasting peace.

Dureza said the third round has been a marathon seven-day parallel long session between the two panels. Already, he said, the peace roadmap is there.

"The road to peace is not always smooth. There are always humps and bumps along the way but it is very important that we keep the course together," he said.

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## 7 Sundalo, Sugatan sa pagtugis sa isang Narco-Politician sa Maguindanao

Lui Claudie

Sugatan ang pitong sundalo matapos masabak sa isang firefight laban sa grupo ng isang puganteng alkalde na kasama umano sa listahan ng Narco-politicians ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte sa Ampatuan, Maguindanao.

Kinumpirma ni Maguindanao's Provincial Police Director Senior Supt. Agustin Tello na pitong sundalo ng Army na tumulong sa pagtugis kay Ampatuan Mayor Rasul Sangki ang sugatan sa Baranggay Salman.

Nagsimula ang pagkakagulo sa naturang Baranggay, nang ang mga taga-suporta ni Sangki na armado ng M-14 at M-16 rifles at may dala pa ang mga ito ng 40-mm grenade launchers ay sinimulang paputukan ang mga tauhan ng Criminal Investigation and Detection Group at ang tropa ng Army nang ihain sa kanilang hideout ang warrant of arrest.

Samantala, 4 sa mga tauhan ni Sangki ang namatay habang tatlo naman ang sugatan dahil sa insidente. – EPJA

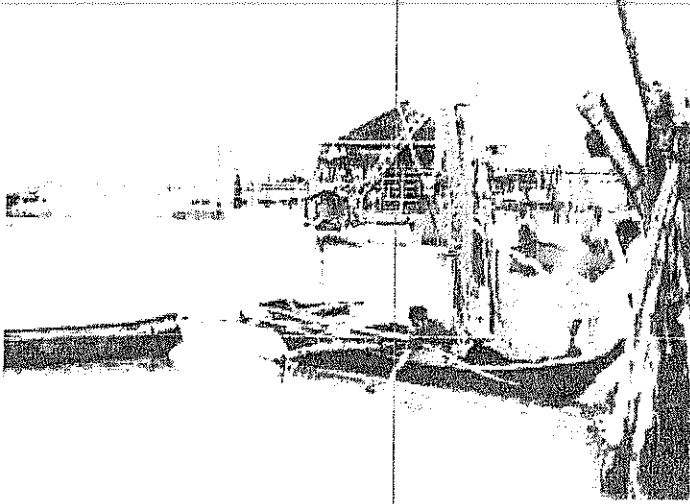
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## AFP, nakibahagi sa pag-baklas ng fish pens sa Laguna de Bay

Lui Claudio



Matapos mag issue ng final warning ang Department of Natural Resources noong nakaraang buwan, inumpisahan na kahapon ang pagbaklas sa mga fish pen at fish cages sa Laguna de Bay.

Ang naturang operasyon ay pinangunahan ng DENR, Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA), National Bureau of Investigation, Philippine Army at ng Philippine Navy.

Ayon kay Environment Undersecretary Arturo Valdez, isinagawa ang operasyon alinsunod na rin sa kautusan ng Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte na linisin ang Laguna de Bay mula sa mga ilegal na fish pen na nagpapasikip dito.

Samantala, sinabi naman ni DENR Secretary Gina Lopez na namamataan nang bumabalik ang mga lokal na mangingisda sa lawa, na ayon kay Lopez, siyang nararapat lamang dahil para naman talaga dapat sa mga tao at hindi sa mga malalaking kumpanya.

Nilinaw naman ni Valdez na hindi tatanggalin ang mga baklad o fish traps na inilagay ng mga lokal na mangingisda. Ang demolisyon sa mga fish pen ay upang ma-save mula sa dagdag na polusyon ang lawa, at para na rin makapag-bigay daan sa mga maliliit na mangingisda.

Sinabi naman ni Commander Armand Balilo, spokesperson ng Philippine Coast Guard na 150 coast guard at 18 vessels ang idineploy para sa pagsasagawa ng clearing operations.

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## 10th ID condemns NPA execution of 2 civilians in Davao City

From the Philippine News Agency (Jan 27): 10th ID condemns NPA execution of 2 civilians in Davao City

The Compostela Valley-based 10th Infantry Division on Friday strongly condemned the New People's Army (NPA) for killing two innocent civilians whom they claimed were military stooges and drug dealers.

The first such killing took place on Jan. 16, when an NPA liquidation squad shot and killed Alberto T. Sablada in Paquibato, Davao City, while the second incident took place on Jan. 23 in Calinan, where rebels gunned down Alfredo Bondoc.

"The 10th Infantry Division takes strong offense on the unfounded allegation of the NPA-SMRC (Southern Mindanao Regional Command) spokesperson Rigoberto Sanchez that an NPA liquidation victim Alberto Sablada was a 'stooge' of the 73rd Infantry Battalion and that the NPA killing was a 'dispensation of justice'," 10th Infantry Division spokesperson Capt. Rhyan Batchar said.

He also contested Sanchez's claims that Bondoc is a drug trader as the latter is known to be only a farmer in the Calinan area.

"The 73rd Infantry Battalion is not or any way connected to Sablada as 'stooge' or to any Alamara group, if there is such, as claimed by Sanchez. Currently, the 73rd Infantry Battalion holds as its area of responsibility the Provinces of Davao Occidental, Davao del Sur and Sarangani and does not operate in Calinan, Davao City," Batchar said.

He added that warrants of arrest can only be implemented by duly authorized authorities such as the PNP or other law enforcement agency as ordered by the court, he added.

He stressed the NPA is not a legitimate law enforcement unit. As such, their actions are criminal.

"The NPA is Never a People's Army, they are a bunch of bandits wantonly killing innocent civilians," Batchar concluded.

<http://www.pna.gov.ph/index.php?idn=1&sid=&nid=1&rid=958677>

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