

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



TEAM ARMY

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NEWS CLIPPINGS**

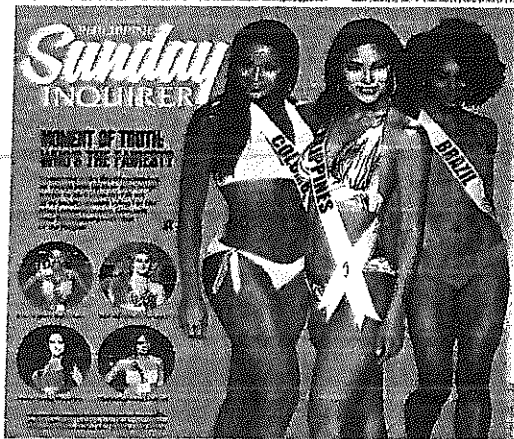
29 January 2017

Sunday

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

NEWS HEADLINES

29 January 2017



DRAMA FIRST
 A woman who was once a beauty queen is now a model. She is now a model who is now a beauty queen. She is now a model who is now a beauty queen.

EJK, WAR ON DRUGS ON BISHOPS' AGENDA

WHILE YOU SLEEP
 The Philippines' war on drugs has become a global issue. The Philippines' war on drugs has become a global issue. The Philippines' war on drugs has become a global issue.

President Duterte's war on drugs and the pontiff's push to reverse the death penalty are the main issues to be discussed at a three-day plenary assembly of the Asian Bishops' Conference in Manila. The assembly about the church's role in today's modern world will also be held during the assembly, which provides a policy direction for the institution.

INQUIRE WITHIN

WHY does it make sense to do about 700? (PH) (18)
 CAN we trust the high court in crucial cases? (PH) (18)
 WHO got mistaken for a suspect in Shanghai? (PH) (18)

NISSAN JUKE N-STYLE
 THREE TIMES THE COMFORT



SUNDAY

MILITARY PURSUES HURT ABU LEADER



ARMY FORMER RECRUIT, MAYOR'S HILLOUT

SITTING DOWN
 WHAT'S ONE UNITED ASIA



TRIP: INDIVISAS
 FOR 7 HOURS IN COURTESY



FRANZMATEL
 FASTS AN UNDERSTANDING



MANHUNT
 UPVS SET IN A SUSPECT

BY JAMES LEE

Tempo

Star Crushes
 Bots, 120-73



DUMLAO SLIPS OUT OF CRAME



Suspect in
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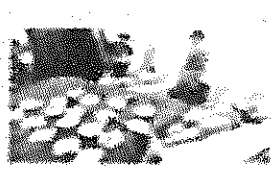
Warrior's wife
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Rains force a 'Code Red'

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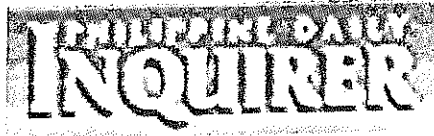
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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS + FEARLESS VIEWS

TODAY'S WEATHER FORECAST | JANUARY 29, 2017 | SUNDAY

PHILIPPINE AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY (PAR)

NORTHEAST MONSOON AFFECTING LUZON TROUGH OF A LOW PRESSURE AREA AFFECTING MINDANAO (As of 5:00 AM - Jan. 29, 2017)

LAOAG CITY 20 - 31 °C

TUGUEGARAO CITY 20 - 28 °C

BAGUIO CITY 13 - 22 °C

SBMA/CLARK 22 - 29 °C

TAGAYTAY CITY 20 - 27 °C

METRO MANILA 22 - 29 °C

LEGAZPI CITY 25 - 28 °C

ILOILO/ BACOLOD CITY 25 - 29 °C

TACLOBAN CITY 24 - 29 °C

PUERTO PRINCESA 25 - 31 °C

METRO CEBU 25 - 29 °C

CAGAYAN DE ORO 23 - 29 °C

ZAMBOANGA CITY 24 - 31 °C

METRO DAVAO 24 - 29 °C

SUNRISE

6:25 AM

SUNSET

5:54 PM

MOONRISE

7:08 AM

MOONSET

7:04 PM

NEW MOON JAN 28 8:07 AM

FIRST QUARTER FEB 4 12:19 PM

LOW TIDE 8:31 AM

HIGH TIDE 10:57 PM

MANILA SOUTH HARBOR

0.22 Meter 1.05 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 29	JAN 30	JAN 31	JAN 31	JAN 31
METRO MANILA	23 - 30 °C	22 - 31 °C			
TUGUEGARAO	20 - 28 °C	21 - 28 °C			
LAOAG	21 - 31 °C	22 - 31 °C			
BAGUIO	13 - 22 °C	14 - 23 °C			
SBMA/CLARK	23 - 30 °C	23 - 31 °C			
TAGAYTAY	20 - 27 °C	21 - 28 °C			
LEGAZPI	24 - 29 °C	25 - 30 °C			
PUERTO PRINCESA	25 - 31 °C	24 - 31 °C			
ILOILO/ BACOLOD	25 - 29 °C	25 - 30 °C			
METRO CEBU	24 - 30 °C	25 - 30 °C			
TACLOBAN	24 - 30 °C	24 - 30 °C			
CAGAYAN DE ORO	24 - 30 °C	24 - 30 °C			
METRO DAVAO	24 - 30 °C	25 - 31 °C			
ZAMBOANGA	24 - 32 °C	24 - 32 °C			

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AIR 21
SABOT KAY, PEDRILA NI NI

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29 January 2017

The Standard

OF THE PHILIPPINE ARMY

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SECURITY OPERATION. Government troops secure the perimeter of Butig town in Lanao del Sur where top Abu Sayyaf leader Isnilon Hapilon was reported to have been injured after continuing military operations. *Mark Navales*

29 January 2017

MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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Abu Sayyaf leader wounded in Lanao skirmish

A top leader of the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) who is on the United States' list of "Most Wanted Terrorists" has been wounded in military airstrikes, the Philippine defense minister said Saturday.

Isnilon Hapilon was indicted in Washington for his involvement in the 2001 kidnapping of three Americans in the Philippines, and has a \$5-million bounty on his head from the US government.

The 50-year-old militant is a senior leader of the ASG, a notorious kidnap-for-ransom gang based in the southern Philippines, and security analysts say the Islamic State (IS) group has recognised him as its leader in Southeast Asia.

Meantime, a sub leader of the ASG who is facing 87 counts of kidnapping, illegal detention and murder was arrested at dawn Friday in Zamboanga City.

Police Regional Office for Zamboanga peninsula (PRO-9) Director Chief Supt Billy Beltran identified the arrested ASG sub leader as Faizal Jaafar with aliases Jaafar Mundi, Abu Jaafar, Aren, Ben and Abu Raba.

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said Hapilon was "seriously wounded" in military air strikes on Wednesday in the mountain town of Butig, 800 kilometres (500 miles) south of Manila.

"As of (Friday, Hapilon) is still being carried by four men in a makeshift stretcher moving northeast of Butig," Lorenzana said.

"Troops are in hot pursuit supported by ground artillery and air support," Lorenzana added the military offen-

sive killed four of Hapilon's companions including an Indonesian he identified as having the alias Mohisen.

The Abu Sayyaf, a loose network of militants formed in the 1990s with seed money from Al-Qaeda, preys on vessels in the waters between Malay-

sia, Indonesia and the Philippines and has earned millions of dollars from kidnappings-for-ransom.

Hapilon was involved in the kidnapping of three Americans from a resort in the western Philippine island of Palawan in 2001, according to the US.

The militants later beheaded one captive in their stronghold in Basilan island in the strife-torn south while another hostage died in the crossfire with soldiers during a rescue operation in 2002.

The third American was freed. (AFP and Nonoy E. Lacson)

29 January 2017



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Shun terrorists, Duterte warns Moro rebs

COTABATO CITY—President Duterte has warned Moro rebels to “forget about peace” if they provide sanctuary to terror groups being pursued by government troops in an ongoing offensive backed by fighter jets and helicopter gunships in Mindanao.

Mr. Duterte issued the warning to the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) on Friday when he visited soldiers who had been wounded in clashes with the Maute and Abu Sayyaf groups, which had pledged allegiance to the Islamic State (IS) group.

Leaders of the MILF and the MNLF, which had signed separate peace deals with the government, assured the President on Saturday there will be no shelter for terrorists in their camps.

Mr. Duterte recalled that in

the 2015 Mamasapano clash, the security forces did not coordinate with the Moro rebels, which was one reason cited for the debacle of a police commando operation against a Malaysian terror suspect inside an MILF-controlled area that resulted in the death of 44 Special Action Force troopers.

“This time, do not allow the Maute and other terrorist groups to enter or seek refuge in your camps. I’d be forced to tell the AFP (Armed Forces of the Philippines) and the police, ‘Get in,’” he said. “We’ll have a serious misunderstanding if that happens.”

“I do not want war ... but if you give territory, that’s another thing. I’d just say forget about peace, let’s just fight,” the President added.

MILF first vice chair Ghadzali Jaafar said “the fear of

the President will not happen.”

“We don’t have any intention to violate all the agreements we signed with the government,” Jaafar said, adding that helping state enemies is a violation of the accord.

Romeo Sema, a member of the central committee of the Muslimin Sema faction of the MNLF, said they made a clear stand years ago not to tolerate terrorism.

“We will never shelter terrorists because we are sincere in the peace agreement,” Sema said.

MILF chief peace negotiator Mohagher Iqbal said they had reactivated their Adhoc Joint Action Group to run after Abu Sayyaf leader Isnilon Hapilon and the Maute brothers in Lanao del Sur.

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said on Saturday that

Hapilon was “seriously wounded” in military air strikes three days earlier in the mountain town of Butig, Lanao del Sur.

Lorenzana told the French news agency Agence France-Presse (AFP) that Hapilon was being carried by four men in a makeshift stretcher.

He said four other companions of Hapilon had been killed, including an Indonesian he identified as having the alias “Mohisen.”

Hapilon is on the US list of “Most Wanted Terrorists” and has a \$5-million bounty on his head from Washington for the 2001 kidnapping of three Americans in the Philippines, two of whom had been killed.

Security analysts say the IS group has recognized Hapilon as its leader in Southeast Asia.

The military said it was

making sure that no innocent lives are lost in the antiterror operation in Sulu, Basilan, Maguindanao and Lanao del Sur by conducting “surgical air strikes” on specific targets.

The Philippine Air Force said two Korean-made FA-50 jets and helicopter gunships conducted the aerial assaults. The FA-50s dropped bombs over rebel positions in Butig on Wednesday, the first time the newly acquired fighter jets had been used in combat.

Duterte said he was “more worried” about Islamic scholars, who allegedly promote terrorism.

“They are not carrying guns but they go around (as) missionaries. They have their agenda—terrorism,” he said.

—WITH REPORTS FROM EDWIN FERNANDEZ, JEOFFREY MAITEM, CHARLIE SEÑASE, LEILA B. SALAVERRIA AND AFP INQ

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29 January 2017

1911 1946
MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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WOUNDED IN ACTION
— President Duterte personally awards medals to 12 soldiers wounded in action during his visit last Friday at Camp Siongco Station Hospital in Awang, Maguindanao. The soldiers, belonging to the army's 6th Infantry Division, clashed Thursday with a lawless armed group loyal to Mayor Rasul Sangki of Ampatuan town, who was issued a search warrant for alleged involvement in illegal drugs. (Courtesy of Robinson Ninal/Presidential Photo)

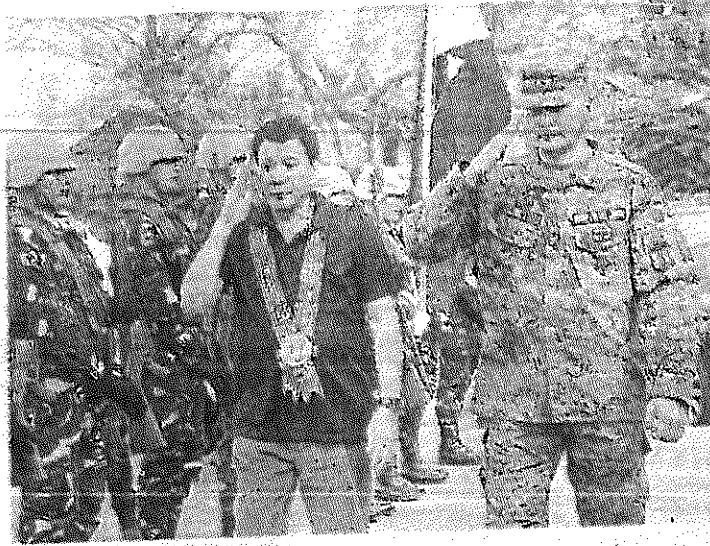


29 January 2017

The Standard

BE BOLD. BE BRAVE. BE BETTER.

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SALUTE. President Rodrigo Duterte and 6th Infantry Division commander Brigadier Gen. Arnel dela Vega salutes a military honor guard Friday at the 6ID Headquarters in Maguindanao. Mark Navafes

6

January 2017

The Manila Times

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Revival of PH-Singapore military exercises eyed

BY FERNAN MARASIGAN

THE Department of National Defense (DND) and the Armed Forces of the Philippines are seeking the revival of military exercises with Singaporean troops, which have been shelved for more than 20 years in the absence of a covenant.

DND Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said Filipino soldiers can learn a lot from Singaporeans who have a well-developed defense establishment even if their country is small.

Dubbed the Anoa Singa, the bilateral exercises started in 1994 following the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the Philippines and Singapore.

The program was stopped two

years later because of the absence of an agreement similar to the Visiting Forces Agreement between the Philippines and the United States.

"We will look into the revival of that Anoa Singa. That's good because we could also learn a lot from Singaporeans. You know Singapore is a very small country, six million people, an area of 675 square kilometers, very small, but they have also developed their de-

fense industries," Lorenzana said.

He disclosed that his counterpart in Singapore broached the revival of the program after noting that Singapore has no bilateral exercises with the Philippines. Singapore has mounted military drills with Australia, Taiwan and other countries in Southeast Asia.

"So the defense minister of Singapore and I talked about it, and he said we'll talk some more about this. They would like to conduct exercises with us also," Lorenzana added.

If both countries can finish the discussion this year and draft a memorandum of agreement, the bilateral exercises could be carried out early next year.

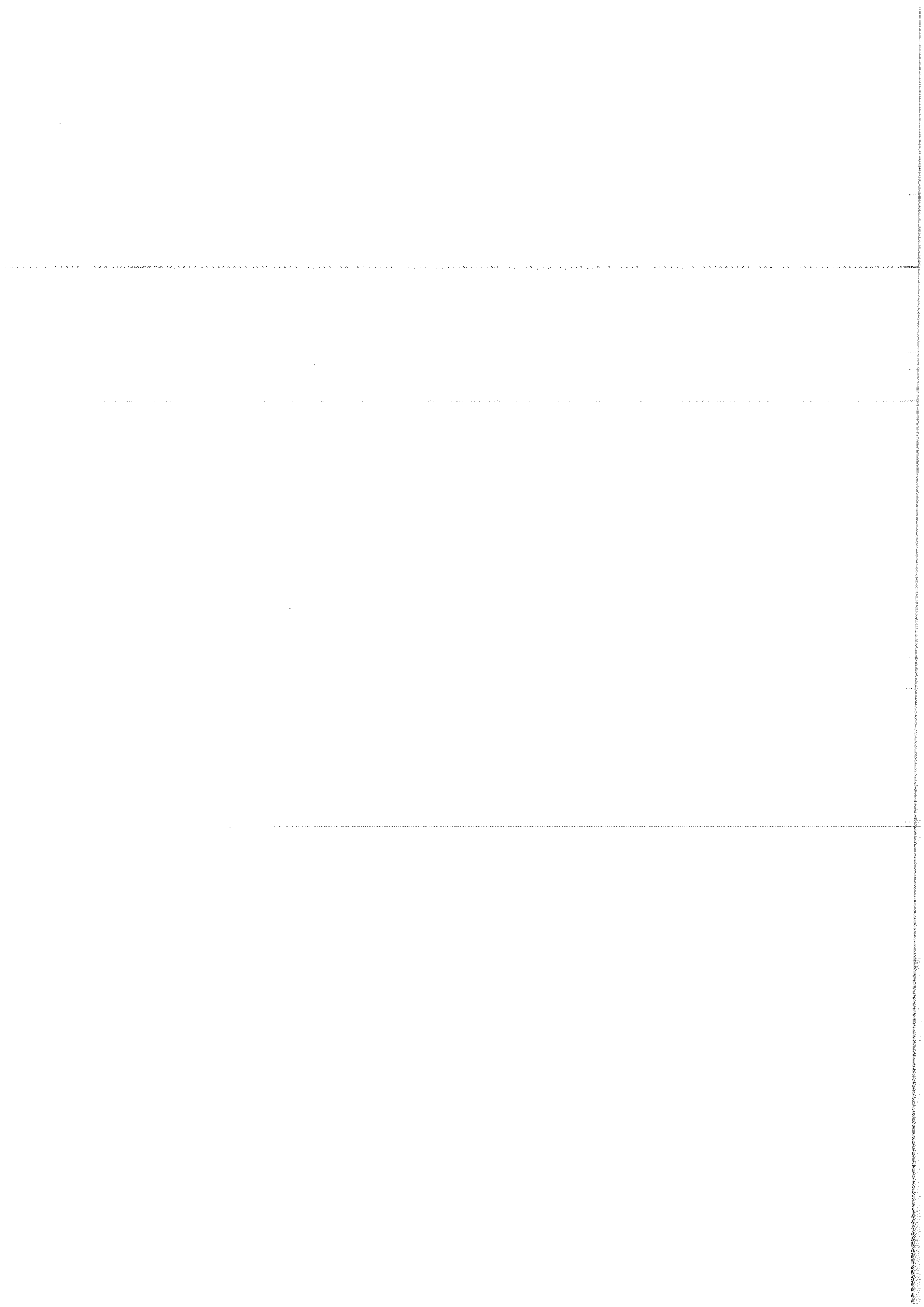
Meanwhile, the defense secretary is seeking an increase in the

defense budget, lamenting that the department has been underfunded for the past 50 years.

In recent meetings with lawmakers, Lorenzana said Singapore has been spending three percent of its gross domestic product (GDP) for defense while other countries in Southeast Asia were spending at least two percent. These are the reasons why these countries have more ships, aircraft, and equipment, Lorenzana explained.

"I told them we should increase our budget, we have been underfunded for the past 50 years that is why we cannot buy equipment," he said.

Lorenzana said if Congress will double the 1.2 percent of the GDP it was allocating to defense spending, Defense and military officials would be content.



29 January 2017



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The Diplomat: US Congress not Rody matters for EDCA

The conduct of American military force's buildup in the Philippines under the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) will be dictated by the US Congress and not the anti-American rhetorics of President Duterte, an authoritative foreign affairs publication said.

The Tokyo-based The Diplomat said funding for the construction of some facilities in the Philippines over the next few years, such as

warehouses or runways "which, to be clear, would offer significant benefits for the Philippine military, would have to be allocated and approved by (the US) Congress." "And the extent to which this gets scrutinized and tied into concerns by some U.S. lawmakers about democracy and human rights concerns in the Philippines will depend on what the Duterte administration does outside of the

Turn to page 2

From page 1

realm of military-to-military ties," it added.

It added that for all the headlines that Mr. Duterte generates, including on his "separation" from the United States, "more often than not his rhetoric does not translate well into reality."

"While Duterte had called for an end of all U.S.-Philippine military exercises, defense officials including Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana had indicated that Duterte in fact had little knowledge about the full extent of ties, even though his anti-Americanism is quite real and deeply-rooted," it added.

It said the "indications we have had so far is that certain aspects of U.S.-Philippine military ties may be downgraded (but) major agreements would remain in place."

"During a January 26 press conference in Camp Aguinaldo, Lorenzana confirmed that the implementation of EDCA was going on as planned," it added.

It noted that Lorenzana was merely restating what he and others have indicated previously that in spite of some changes, the Duterte government would still continue to adhere to all previous agreements between Washington and Manila, which include EDCA.

EDCA goes on - Lorenzana

As Lorenzana subsequently clarified to reporters, the Pentagon has indicated that the United States would continue implementing its plans in "the EDCA-chosen camp" - meaning those that were already approved by both sides last March under the Aquino government," it said.

The first five locations that both sides had agreed to following their

sixth annual Bilateral Security Dialogue (BSD) in Washington, D.C. were the Antonio Bautista Air Base; Basa Air Base, Fort Magsaysay; Lumbia Air Base; and Mactan-Benito Ebuen Air Base.

"The devil here would lie very much in the details. We would have to look at things such as the equipment that the United States is placing in these bases as well as what kind of activities are going on between the two sides," it added.

Both sides approved the initial sites with an understanding that given the controversial history of U.S. military presence in the Philippines in general as well as the scrutiny on EDCA in particular, the initial locations would be the lower-hanging fruit, with more sensitive locations approved further down the line that would allow for more robust cooperation, it said.

It added the degree to which that progression continues under Duterte remains to be seen.

"EDCA is still on and according to the Pentagon (US Department of Defense) they will start constructing some facilities in the EDCA chosen camps (like) Basa Air Base (in Pampanga), Bautista Air Base (Palawan) and Lumbia Airfield (Cagayan De Oro) I think the first camp that they will develop are facilities (that) are in Basa," Lorenzana had announced.

Lorenzana said possible facilities that the Americans will set up are runways, buildings for their troops and storage areas for their equipment.

"They can leave the buildings there and leave and they can come back again, that is the idea of EDCA," the DND chief added.

While construction is expected this year, Lorenzana could not give an exact date on the start of the

construction as it is dependent on the US budgetary allocations.

Lorenzana said Mr. Duterte is aware of these plans.

"(He) is okay with this, because he earlier said that (his administration) will honor all agreements that were entered into by the previous government," he added.

The DND earlier announced that EDCA with the US will continue but it will focus on humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, counter-terror, and anti-narcotics operations.

Earlier, DND public affairs office chief Arsenio Andolong the implementation of EDCA with the US would continue but its focus will be on humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, counter-terror, and anti-narcotics operations.

"EDCA will continue (but it) be under the basis of this new direction," he added.

"Like before all agreements and the treaties are still in place (and) you can say the President hit the reset button and these are new operating parameters when it comes to these agreements," Andolong said.

The DND would also cut down military exercises with the United States, Andolong added.

Last November, American and Filipino officials under the Mutual Defense Board-Security Engagement Board met to define exercises where the Philippines will no longer participate.

"No specific numbers (are available yet), but it (exercises) will be reduced to less than 10," Andolong added.

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ONLINE NEWS

29 JANUARY 2017

www.philstar.com

Duterte assures troops full medical care if wounded in battle

John Unson (philstar.com) - January 28, 2017 - 10:42am

MAGUINDANAO, Philippines -- President Rodrigo Duterte on Friday assured soldiers in central Mindanao of utmost medical care if injured in clashes with terrorists and drug traffickers.

Duterte made the promise before hundreds of enlisted personnel and officers of the Army's 6th Infantry Division while at Camp Siongco in Datu Odin Sinsuat, Maguindanao on Friday afternoon.

Duterte came to pin merit medals on 12 soldiers wounded in firefights with the group of wanted Ampatuan Mayor Rasul Sangki in a hinterland in Ampatuan town in Maguindanao on Thursday.

Sangki, who was elected mayor of Ampatuan in May 2016, is included in Duterte's list of politicians allegedly involved in the trafficking of narcotics.

Duterte said all of the government's fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters can be used anytime to airlift wounded soldiers from the field to any hospital anywhere in the country.

"Don't worry about me, for I can take commercial flights. You can use even the presidential choppers," he told the personnel of 6th ID during a traditional military "talk to the men" session.

While at Camp Siongco Hospital, Duterte lauded physicians, nurses and Army medical attendants for taking care of soldiers wounded in combat.

No fewer than a hundred soldiers from different units of the 6th ID have been wounded in recurring encounters since 2010 with members of the outlawed Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters in areas supposedly covered by the government's ceasefire accord with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

The BIFF, an outlaw group not covered by the ceasefire pact, boasts loyalty to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria.

The group, which splintered from the MILF in 2010, uses the black ISIS flag as banner and has been enforcing a ruthless Taliban-style justice system in isolated areas. Muslim residents reject the practice for being obsolete and barbaric.

Duterte told soldiers at Camp Siongco the spread of local groups with "ISIS ideology" is a problem his administration is trying to address effectively.

He also implored the Moro National Liberation Front and Moro Islamic Liberation Front -- rebel groups that the government has signed peace pacts with -- not to give members of terror groups sanctuary in their camps and communities.

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www.inquirer.net

4 killed, 10 soldiers wounded in antidrug operation vs mayor

Philippine Daily Inquirer / 12:12 AM January 28, 2017

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.

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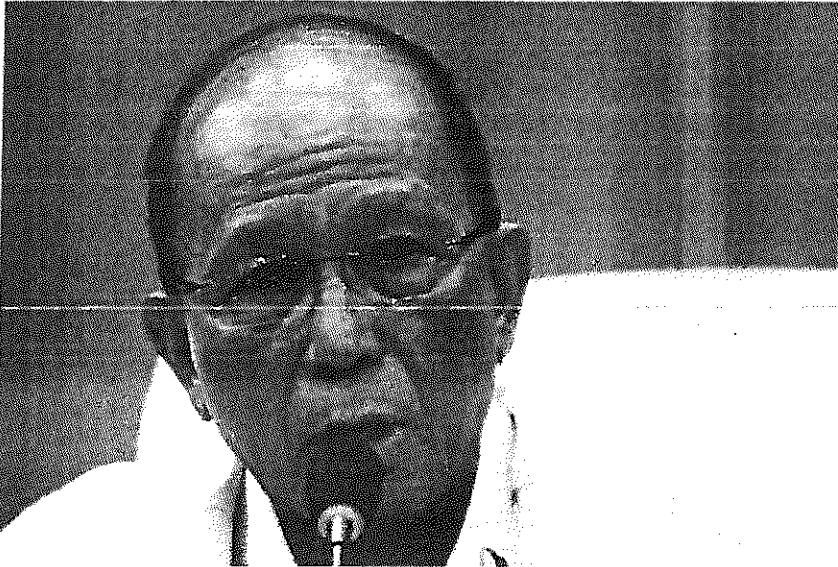
Army vision: By 2028, a world-class Army that is a source of national pride.

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**

www.inquirer.net

Lorenzana: Top terror leader Isnilon Hapilon 'seriously wounded'

Agence France-Presse / 03:48 PM January 28, 2017



Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana. FILE PHOTO

A top leader of an Islamic militant group who is on the United States' list of "Most Wanted Terrorists" has been wounded in military airstrikes, the Philippine defense minister said Saturday.

Isnilon Hapilon was indicted in Washington for his involvement in the 2001 kidnapping of three Americans in the Philippines, and has a \$5-million bounty on his head from the US government.

The 50-year-old militant is a senior leader of the Abu Sayyaf, a notorious kidnap-for-ransom gang based in the southern Philippines, and security analysts say the Islamic State (IS) group has recognized him as its leader in Southeast Asia.

Philippine Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said Hapilon was "seriously wounded" in military air strikes on Wednesday in the mountain town of Butig, 800 kilometers (500 miles) south of Manila.

"As of (Friday, Hapilon) is still being carried by four men in a makeshift stretcher moving northeast of Butig," Lorenzana told AFP.

"Troops are in hot pursuit supported by ground artillery and air support."

Lorenzana added the military offensive killed four of Hapilon's companions including an Indonesian he identified as having the alias Mohisen.

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The Abu Sayyaf, a loose network of militants formed in the 1990s with seed money from Al-Qaeda, preys on vessels in the waters between Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines and has earned millions of dollars from kidnappings-for-ransom.

Hapilon was involved in the kidnapping of three Americans from a resort in the western Philippine island of Palawan in 2001, according to the US.

The militants later beheaded one captive in their stronghold in Basilan island in the strife-torn south while another hostage died in the crossfire with soldiers during a rescue operation in 2002. The third American was freed.

Hapilon has pledged allegiance to IS, which has endorsed him as "amir for Southeast Asia," according to a 2016 report by the Jakarta-based think-tank Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict.

"Southeast Asians in Syria have pledged their loyalty to him," the report said.

Hapilon was based in Basilan but Lorenzana said this week that he had moved to Lanao del Sur province, 300 kilometers (180 miles) east, in a bid to establish an IS presence there.

Lorenzana added Hapilon was "trying to rally" into cooperation the Maute group, another gang which had pledged allegiance to IS.

www.inquirer.net

Bombs drop on terror groups' lair

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

By: [Jeffrey Mattem](#), [Julie Alipala](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 12:24 AM January 28, 2017

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).

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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.

"[Hapilon] moved to Central Mindanao, allegedly on the behest 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.

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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 WIRES REPORTS**

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TraDoC's OCS produces 47 brand-new 2nd lieutenants

MANILA, Jan. 28 (PNA) -- In line with efforts to recruit qualified and competent people for its roster, the Philippine Army's (PA) Officer Candidate School (OCS) graduated 47 brand-new 2nd lieutenants on Friday.

The OCS is operated by the Camp O'Donnell, Tarlac-based Training and Doctrine Command (TraDoC).

Capt. Alberto Caber, TraDoC spokesperson, said the new OCS graduates consist of 36 males and 11 females, all members of the Officer Preparatory Course Class 66-2016.

TraDoC commander, Maj. Gen. Herminigildo Francisco Aquino said the top three graduates were 2nd Lt. Jullymer Aranaydo from Cagayan De Oro City; 2nd Lt. Roel Andog from Catbalogan Samar; and 2nd Lt. Jay Leysa from Iloilo.

Meanwhile, 2nd Lt. Arnold Durias from Caloocan City received the physical fitness award while 2nd Lt. Dennis Gamos from Oriental Mindoro received the leadership award.

"Stay focused on your mission. It may take a lot of forms but all of these contribute to the fulfillment of the Army Transformation Roadmap. As I always say, mission first, welfare of your men always. Always work as a team with your troops. As the saying goes, in union, there is strength," PA vice commander, Maj. Gen. Harold Cabrereros said.

"Work together closely with our subordinates, as well as with our stakeholders and you will accomplish greater things for the good of the PA and of our country. Remain faithful to the oath you have taken this day, and be the best leaders that you can be. God bless and protect you as you begin your journey of leadership. I expect to hear good news from your class very soon." (PNA)

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3 retiring Army generals given testimonial honors

MANILA, Jan. 28 (PNA) -- For their long and faithful service to the country, three retiring Philippine Army (PA) generals were given a traditional testimonial review in Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City Friday.

The three -- Maj. Gen. Rolando Picar, chief of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Resource Management Office; Brig. Gen. Allan Martin, commander of the General Headquarters and Headquarters Service Command of the AFP; and Brig. Gen. Nelia Valmonte, chief nurse of the AFP -- will retire from service in February after reaching the mandatory retirement age of 56.

Picar, a member of the Philippine Military Academy (PMA) "Sandigan" class of 1982, rendered 38 years and nine months in the military service.

Prior to his current position, he held vital posts in the Philippine Army, such as battalion commander of the 66th Infantry Battalion, 3rd Infantry Division in 2002; assistant chief of staff for operations, G3 of the 6th Infantry Division in 2004; and later as commanding officer of the Finance Center of the Philippine Army.

During Picar's stint as commander of the 66th Infantry Battalion, he strengthened the unit's community partnerships and led successful Internal Security operations in Negros Oriental, Negros Occidental, and Sultan Kudarat.

Likewise, Martin is a member of the PMA "Matikas" class of 1983.

He rendered 37 years and nine months in military service and took up key roles in the field while he was in the Army.

He served as battalion commander of the 39th Infantry Battalion, 6th Infantry Division in 2000 and as commander of the 302nd Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division in 2014.

As commander of the 302nd Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, Martin successfully led the "Bayanihan" team activities, bringing the army closer to the community. Such efforts greatly helped address the insurgency in the provinces of Siquijor, Bohol, and Cebu.

On the other hand, Valmonte is one of the few female star officers of the AFP.

She has a bachelor's degree in nursing and a master's degree both in nursing and hospital administration. Prior to Valmonte's current position, she served as the Army's Chief Nurse.

During her stint, she was named as one of the Outstanding Professionals of 2015 by the Professional Regulations Commission. She worked to improve the Army's nursing care services and ensured that the Army nurses are capable of providing the best medical and health care services to soldiers. (PNA)
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Defense chief eyes revival of joint military training with Singapore

By Priam F. Nepomuceno

MANILA, Jan. 28 (PNA) -- Department of National Defense (DND) Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said they are seriously considering the revival of joint military training with Singapore.

Formerly dubbed as Anoa-Singa, the joint military training started in 1994 after the Philippines and Singapore signed a memorandum of understanding in 1993.

It was however stopped in 1996 due to the lack of a formal agreement between the two military forces.

Lorenzana said the DND is interested in reviving this partnership as the country can learn a lot from Singapore, especially in the development of its defense industries.

"Singapore is a very small country, (with) 6 million people, an area of 675 sq. km. -- very small, but they have also developed their defense industries," he added.

Lorenzana said the Singaporeans are producing their own artillery and the Terex, an infantry fighting vehicle that is of their own design.

What Singapore is lacking is an area where they can hold military exercises, hence it conducts its training and drills in Australia, Taiwan and other countries in Southeast Asia.

Lorenzana said he will discuss the revival of the Anoa-Singa with his Singaporean counterpart within the year.

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