

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



TEAM ARMY

Serving the people. Securing the land.

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OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

NEWS CLIPPINGS

12 June 2017

Monday

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

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www.panahon.tv /PanahonTV

BALANCED NEWS - FEARLESS VIEWS

TODAY'S WEATHER FORECAST | JUNE 12, 2017 | MONDAY

LOW PRESSURE AREA
375 KM WEST OF IBA, ZAMBALES
(As of 3:00 AM - June 11, 2017)

PHILIPPINE AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY (PAR)

LADAG CITY 26 - 33 °C	TUGUEGARAO CITY 25 - 35 °C
BAGUIO CITY 17 - 26 °C	TAGAYTAY CITY 22 - 30 °C
SBMA/CLARK 26 - 35 °C	LEGAZPI CITY 27 - 33 °C
METRO MANILA 25 - 34 °C	TACLOBAN CITY 25 - 31 °C
ILOILO/BACOLOD CITY 26 - 32 °C	METRO CEBU 26 - 33 °C
PUERTO PRINCESA 26 - 33 °C	CAGAYAN DE ORO 25 - 32 °C
ZAMBOANGA CITY 25 - 34 °C	METRO DAVAO 25 - 33 °C

SUNRISE 5:27 AM	SUNSET 6:25 PM
MOONRISE 8:36 PM	MOONSET 7:29 AM
FULL MOON JUN 5 6:50 PM	LAST QUARTER JUN 17 7:33 PM
LOW TIDE 7:36 PM 0.04 Meter	HIGH TIDE 11:07 AM 1.19 Meter

MANILA SOUTH HARBOR

Partly cloudy to at times cloudy with rain showers and/or thunderstorms.
Clouds clear with rain showers and/or thunderstorms.

	JUNE 13	JUNE 14	JUNE 13	JUNE 14	JUNE 13	JUNE 14		
METRO MANILA	26 - 34 °C	26 - 34 °C	TAGAYTAY	21 - 30 °C	21 - 30 °C	TACLOBAN	25 - 31 °C	25 - 31 °C
TUGUEGARAO	25 - 35 °C	25 - 36 °C	LEGAZPI	26 - 32 °C	26 - 32 °C	CAGAYAN DE ORO	25 - 32 °C	25 - 32 °C
LADAG	26 - 33 °C	26 - 33 °C	PUERTO PRINCESA	26 - 33 °C	26 - 33 °C	METRO DAVAO	25 - 33 °C	25 - 33 °C
BAGUIO	18 - 26 °C	17 - 25 °C	ILOILO/BACOLOD	26 - 33 °C	26 - 33 °C	ZAMBOANGA	25 - 33 °C	25 - 33 °C
SBMA/CLARK	25 - 34 °C	26 - 33 °C	METRO CEBU	26 - 32 °C	25 - 32 °C			

MONDAY - FRIDAY
11AM & 5PM

WEEKDAYS
6AM, 6:30 PM & 9PM
WEEKENDS
6AM

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HIGH NOON SALUTE TO MARAWI HEROES

STORY BY NIKKO DIZON

The names of soldiers and civilians who have died in Marawi City will be read on television and radio while taps plays and church bells toll, as the nation celebrates Independence Day today



FROM A1

By Nikko Dizon
@NikkoDizonINQ

The nation today salutes soldiers and civilians killed in the fighting between government forces and Islamic State (IS)-inspired terrorists in Marawi City as it commemorates the 119th anniversary of its independence.

Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla Jr., spokesperson for the Armed Forces of the Philippines, on Sunday said Malacañang had requested television networks and radio stations to air the salute at 12 noon.

Presidential spokesperson Ernesto Abella confirmed the request.

"The names of our gallant soldiers who died fighting in Marawi City will be flashed on TV and read over the radio. While we couldn't name all the noncombatants in the tribute, we will ensure that the civilians who perished will also be given the proper honor," Padilla told the Inquirer.

Taps

Taps will be sounded after the reading of the fallen soldiers' names, he said.

Padilla said he had asked the Catholic Church for a tolling of church bells to follow the bugle call.

He also urged the public to join the honors for the fallen troops and civilians by honking their vehicles' horns.

As of Sunday, 58 soldiers have been killed in battles with Maute and Abu Sayyaf gunmen who have laid siege to Marawi in an attempt to establish a province in the Philippines for

the ultraradical Islamic State (IS) group in Iraq and Syria.

The military said 20 civilians and 138 terrorists had been killed in the fighting.

The death toll on the government's side rose to 58 on Friday with the deaths of 13 Marines in a 14-hour gun battle in the vicinity of Lilot Madaya village in Marawi.

It was the biggest single-day battlefield loss for the government since the crisis began on May 23.

Friday's clash began with an assault launched by the Marines on a Maute position at around 3:30 a.m. that led to a close-quarter battle that lasted up to 5 p.m.

The military said the Marines inflicted heavy losses on the terrorists, but lost 13 of their own.

Forty other Marines were wounded in the fighting, it said.

Mourning

Malacañang on Sunday mourned the deaths of the 13 Marines as a lawmaker urged the immediate passage of legislation that would grant financial assistance and benefits to families of soldiers and policemen killed in action.

"The Palace is deeply saddened by the news on the 13 Marines killed in action during a firefight in Marawi City," presidential spokesperson Ernesto Abella said in a statement.

"They fought gallantly for the liberation of our Maranao brothers and sisters," he added.

"This incident, albeit un-

fortunate, gives us greater impetus to clear Marawi of lawless elements, save the trapped civilians, and restore order, security and normalcy to the city and its residents," Abella said.

"Let us continue showing our strong support to our courageous and heroic men and women in uniform fighting for Marawi and defending the republic," he added.

Sen. Sonny Angara also issued a statement urging immediate passage of measures that would grant special financial assistance and benefits to families of security forces killed in action and troops permanently incapacitated after sustaining injury in battle.

Angara is one of the authors of Senate Bill No. 1462, or the Uniformed and Law Enforcement Personnel Educational Assistance Act, which would grant special benefits to military and police families.

Among the benefits are six months' salary, including allowances and bonuses.

Angara conveyed his condolences to the families of the 13 Marines killed in Marawi on Friday.

Forever grateful

In a separate statement, Sen. Francis Pangilinan thanked the Marines for their sacrifice and joined their families in mourning.

"We will be forever grateful to our soldiers who have offered their lives in the service of our nation. We grieve with all the families who have lost a loved one in [these] ongoing armed hostilities," Pangilinan said.

Padilla said the military was grateful for the public's show of support.

Social media has been abuzz with tributes to the soldiers who have perished battling the terrorists.

The rogue AFP Twitter account @altTeamAFP and the Philippine Defense Forces Forum, a Facebook public page, have been compiling lists of soldiers killed in action, accompanied by photographs of the fallen troops, brief biographies and stories of their heroism.

Among the stories were those of Marine 1st Lt. Frederick Savellano and Army Pfc. Dhan Ryan Bayot.

Savellano was the commander of the 37th Marine Company of the Marine Battalion Landing Team that last week found P79 million in banknotes and stale checks in a house in Marawi that terrorists had used as a sniper's nest.

He was killed in action on Saturday. He was a graduate of the US Marine officer basic course and had been set to marry his fiancée, also a Marine officer, this year.

Bayot, 24, urged his commanding officer to direct artillery fire on his location in Lilod village as enemy forces closed in on him and his dead companions on May 24. His body was recovered four days later.

As the nation marks Independence Day, Marawi defies the terrorists by raising the Philippine flag at the Lanao del Sur provincial capitol today.

Norhanie Marohombsar, city director of the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) in Marawi, said the flag-raising would be held even if fighting was going on in some parts of the city.

Marohombsar said the DILG gathered Marawi's village lead-

ers in a hotel in Iligan City on Sunday for a briefing on the flag-raising.

She said all the village leaders were accounted for, but not all made it to the meeting because some had relocated to other places, including Cagayan de Oro and Lanao del Norte.

The DILG issued identification cards to the village chiefs and volunteers to stop potential infiltrators.

Freedom by Monday

The military said it hoped to "liberate" Marawi from the terrorists who had pledged allegiance to IS by Monday.

Wahab Dia, chair of Lumbac Marinaut village, said he hoped the city could finally be cleared so that the displaced residents could return to their homes.

Lumbac Marinaut is a village of more than 1,000 residents.

The government has allocated P10 billion for the rehabilitation of Marawi, with the Department of National Defense leading the rebuilding of the city ravaged by more than two weeks of fighting.

Dia said he hoped Lumbac Marinaut could get a rehabilitation package so that residents whose homes had been damaged in the fighting could be compensated and village infrastructure destroyed could be rebuilt. —WITH REPORTS FROM PHILIP C. TUBEZA, CHRISTINE O. AVENDAÑO AND JIGGER J. JERUSALEM INQ



WATCH VIDEO: Aerial images show explosions, destruction in Marawi
<http://inq.news/MarawiAerialimages>

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INQUIRER

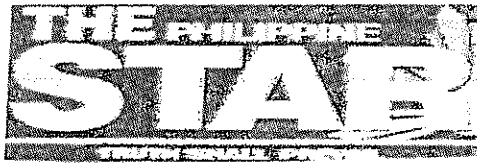
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'ANG MAMATAY NANG DAHIL SA 'YO'



SOURCE:
OFFICE OF THE
ARMY CHIEF
PUBLIC AFFAIRS
QUARTER
PARRA
2017

12 June 2017



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IS leader ordered Marawi siege – Rody

Maute assets seizure pushed

By ALEXIS ROMERO and PAOLO ROMERO

The leader of the Islamic State (IS) himself ordered the siege of Marawi City, which has been ravaged by prolonged clashes between government forces and Maute militants for the past three weeks, President Duterte said yesterday.

Speaking to reporters in Cagayan de Oro City, Duterte said IS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi "specifically ordered the conduct of terroristic activities in the Philippines."

"We had known all along the buildup here in Marawi. That is why if you were tracking my statements in public, (what I said) was, 'Do not force my hand into it.' Because there were already terroristic acts... the victims were innocent men and women and children," Duterte said.

"We suffered several casualties. I did not expect it to be that serious. Now, *lumabas na si Baghdadi mismo* (it turned out that Baghdadi himself), the leader of the ISIS, has specifically ordered terroristic activities here in the Philippines," he added.

Duterte previously claimed that the Maute group has links with the IS, which adheres to

IS leader From Page 1

an extremist interpretation of Islam and promotes violence against non-Muslims. He said wanted terrorist Isnilon Hapilon has been named leader of the IS in the Philippines and is seeking to establish a caliphate in the country.

The Philippines was a bit complacent on the looming threats in Mindanao, according to the President.

"But the military and the police, they warned me that it has become critical in Mindanao," he said.

Duterte also took a swipe at critics of his decision to declare martial law in the entire Mindanao region, calling

them "fools."

"*Alam mo kung hindi talaga bobo yan mga oppositors* (if they were not fools), you know, you have to declare martial law in southern Mindanao," he said, adding that the militants could always slip to Lanao del Norte and Basilan to evade government forces.

"Now, they are on the run. You have to pursue them. And if they are collared, they might just opt to (sow) terror. Bombings here, bombings there."

Duterte claimed that the drug problem was used to divert the

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government's attention away from the terrorists.

"Sabi ko, nilululong mga tao natin sa droga. Dito sa Mindanao, 'yung Maute, simpleng pangkaraniwang negosyante. 'Yun pala, sige sila produce ng shabu para magkaroon ng problema ang gobyerno at ma-divert ating attention (They are trying to make drug addicts out of our people. In Mindanao, we thought that the Mautes were just simple businessmen. It turned out, they were producing shabu, so the government can have a problem and be distracted)," he said.

"So, habulin natin ang drugs, pero di natin alam na what was fueling, ang nagbibigay ng gasolina sa terrorism ay ang droga (So, let us chase drugs but we did not know, what was fueling terrorism is drugs)."

Stop money flow

Senators yesterday asked the authorities to seize or freeze assets of the leaders and relatives of Maute militants to stop the flow of money reportedly funding the operations of the IS-linked terror group in Mindanao.

Sen. Panfilo Lacson, chairman of the Senate committee on public order and safety, and Sen. Francis Escudero, chairman of the Senate committee on banks and financial institutions, cited laws that can be used to

stem the flow of funds to the Maute group.

"The Human Security Act, as amended, shall apply, although seizure of assets in favor of the government can only be accomplished after due process, meaning only the court can order the same," Lacson said, referring to the country's anti-terrorism law enacted in 2007.

Escudero said the Anti-Terrorism Financing Act of 2012, the Anti-Money Laundering Act, as well as forfeiture laws, can be applied to members of the Maute clan or suspected financiers.

"Those businesses connected to the Mautes should be seized and frozen so that all sources of funding for their terroristic activities should be blocked," Sen. Joseph Victor Ejercito said.

Authorities in the past days have arrested leaders of the extremist group, including the parents of its founders Abdullah and Omar who have been caught carrying bundles of cash and were found to be operating or owning several business establishments.

Security officials said the Maute group appeared to be well-organized and have access to funding.

Last Friday night Maute matriarch Ominta Romato was arrested in Masiu, Lanao del Norte as she was trying to escape along with two wounded men and seven women.

Romato, also known as Farhana, is the first wife of Cayamora Maute and mother of brothers Omar and Abdullah. Farhana and Cayamora,

who was arrested earlier by government forces, are said to be the masterminds behind the Maute operations.

Civilians reported Romato's presence in Barangays Unda Dayawan and Tamboro Cormatan, both in Masiu town, after she was seen buying vehicles and firearms days before the attempted getaway from Lanao del Sur.

Her reported safehouse was in Dayawan but she was arrested in Tamboro Cormatan.

An M-14 rifle, four rifle grenades, two improvised explosive devices and an undetermined amount of cash bundled with Landbank money bands were recovered from the vehicle that she and her group used to try to escape.

Romato is said to be a fiercely astute businesswoman and politician.

She reportedly manages several business interests, including renting out several buildings in Quezon City and other key cities in the country.

She is also said to have administered the Maute-owned houses in Iligan, Cotabato and Davao cities.

Armed Forces of the Philippines - Eastern Mindanao Command deputy commander Brig. Gen. Gilbert Gapay said Romato "has so many houses" that if Cayamora is considered "big fish" in the Maute group, Romato is an even bigger fish.

"Romato is the mastermind of the Maute group, the couple have all the money. It is important that she should also be arrested," Gapay said.

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AFP SAYS RP FLAG WILL BE RAISED

Heavy IS resistance foils free Marawi bid

By Mario J. Mallari

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) will hoist the Philippine flag in Marawi City for today's Independence Day but the targeted liberation of the Mindanao city from Islamic State (IS)-inspired groups will not be met amid heavy resistance from the bandits led by Isnilon Hapilon and the Maute brothers.

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana, however, said government troops are gaining headway in the ongoing military operations, 20 days since the extremists laid siege on the Islamic City.

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"The AFP has greatly diminished the number of the terrorists. So far 391 were confirmed dead while an undetermined number of deaths were being validated," said Lorenzana. The defense chief said that security forces have seized 154 firearms.

In a broadcast interview, AFP spokesman Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla Jr. said the plan to raise the national flag at the provincial capitol of Lanao del Sur in Marawi City will push through as planned. It was not clear, however, who will lead the flag-raising ceremony.

"However, the recalcitrant remnants of the Maute-ISIS continue their stiff resistance while holed in fortified buildings and structures," Lorenzana said.

"They are employing hostile sniper fires, mortar fire, anti-tank rounds, and IEDs to kill anyone from government security forces, relief and rescue workers, to civilians—who get in the way of their anatomical desire to dismember Marawi from the Philippines and establish it as a "Wilayat" or an ISIS province in this part of Asia," he added.

Lorenzana, however, vowed that government troops will not relent in trying to flush out all the terrorists.

At the same time, Lorenzana used the necessity to use military assets and artillery against the enemies who have established heavily fortified positions.

"Your AFP and PNP will continue break the heavy resistance of and clear Marawi from the Maute-ISIS group, restore normalcy in the city, and make way for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Marawi," Lorenzana said.

"To be able to do that and given the manifest capability of the terrorists to kill indiscriminately and with no qualms to blast and destroy places of worship, there is an extreme necessity to employ armor, artillery, and airpower capabilities in support to our infantry units to reach the fortified walls, decks and upper grounds of buildings constructed to be virtual fortresses," he added.

Lorenzana emphasized that the ongoing Marawi conflict has become a fight of every peace-loving Filipino not only of police and military troops.

"This war is between good and evil. Everyone needs everybody to stand up, unite, fight against, and repulse the onslaught of the forces of evil attempting to establish a stronghold in our land," he stressed.

"We would not and should not surrender even an inch of our soil to the harbingers of doom and misery!" Lorenzana added.

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Hapilon still in Marawi—Padilla

As at press time yesterday, government security forces continued to conduct clearing operations in some parts of Marawi City.

Padilla said that the military believes that Hapilon is still holed up, along with foreign jihadists, somewhere in Marawi City as indicated by last Friday's heavy resistance in Barangay Lilod Madaya.

Acknowledged as the emir or leader of the IS in Southeast Asia, Hapilon was shown in video footages, along with Omar and

Abdullah Maute of the Maute terror group when they were planning the Marawi City siege.

Padilla said military ground assault will continue against identified enemy positions.

So far clashes have resulted in the killing of 58 government troops—including the 13 Marines killed in action last Friday—the biggest single day casualty on the military side.

Among those killed was Lt. John Frederick Savellano, commanding officer of the 37th Marine Company which earlier recovered P70.2 million cash and checks during house to house clearing operations last week.

Last June 1, 10 soldiers were killed in a friendly fire. On the other hand, the military claimed to have killed 138 terrorists.

At least 21 civilians were also confirmed dead.

Fallen Marines honored

Eight of the 13 Marine troops killed in an intense firefight with the terrorists in Barangay Lilod Madaya last Friday were flown to Manila yesterday. They were expected to be brought to their home provinces immediately.

About 40 other Marines were wounded during the 14-hour clashes.

The Marines were sent to the area to secure civilians and rescue hostages believed to being kept there by the terrorists. However, the troops were met by heavy resistance from the enemy side. Padilla said that the Marines managed to penetrate deep into the terrorists' lair where they (Maute group) have established "highly fortified" positions.

The AFP spokesman also raised the possibility that the engaged terrorists band in Barangay Lilod Madaya were composed of high value targets, including Hapilon and his foreign followers.

He said the extremist group could also be holding hostages.

Authorities believed that about 1,000 civilians are trapped within Marawi City while more than 1,500 have been rescued.

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Malacañang, in a statement, honored the troops killed in battle. "The Palace is deeply saddened by the news on the 13 Marines killed in action during a firefight in Marawi City. They fought gallantly for the liberation of our Maranao brothers and sisters," Presidential spokesman Ernesto Abella said.

"This incident, albeit unfortunate, gives us greater impetus to clear Marawi of lawless elements, save the trapped civilians, and restore order, security and normalcy to the city and its residents," he said.

"Let us continue showing our strong support to our courageous and heroic men and women in uniform fighting for Marawi and defending the Republic," he added.

Rody calls for heroism

President Duterte rallied the Filipino people to be heroic during his first Independence Day message, while avoiding making a reference to the ongoing conflict in Marawi City but instead reminded the current generation of Filipinos of the country's liberation from colonial forces that he said was a noble but protracted struggle.

Filipinos of today, Mr. Duterte stressed, should emulate such audacity by being responsible citizens.

"We showed our colonizers and the rest of the world what Filipinos are made of. Let us take inspiration from our forebears who valiantly fought and offered their lives so that we may have the liberties that we enjoy today," the President said.

"Let us pay homage to their heroism by preserving our sovereignty and performing our own civic rights and responsibilities. After all, it is our inherent duty as citizens to ensure that the Philippines fulfills its destiny as a great and prosperous nation," he added.

Mr. Duterte also praised Filipino heroes who, he said, are the foundations of the nation.

"More than a century ago, thousands have laid down their lives so that we may live with the dignity and rights befitting a free nation. The journey to freedom was a long and arduous one — which our countrymen paid for with blood, sweat and the ultimate act of selfless sacrifice," the President said.

"Despite the insurmountable hardships, the patriotism and undaunted spirit of the Filipino led to our triumph against the shackles of slavery and abuse," he added.

Mr. Duterte, along with Vice President Leni Robredo, will lead today's Independence Day celebration at the Rizal Park in Manila.

5285, 5295

5285, 5295

The Chief Executive, however, has decided to cancel the traditional *vin d'honneur* in Malacañang saying that he has to "attend to matters pertaining Mindanao."

Known as one who avoids pomp, Mr. Duterte has hosted his only *vin d'honneur* with members of the diplomatic corps last January.

ARMM rescues Marawi refugees

The Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao Humanitarian Emergency Action Response Team (ARMM-HEART) reported rescuing 11 trapped Maranaos who braved swimming through Agus River amid gunfire and intermittent air strikes last Friday night.

With light from explosions guiding their way, Aminola Disonimba, 40, and 10 other civilians trapped since May 23 at Marawi's Padian business district, an area controlled by the Maute and Abu Sayyaf militants, swam through the Agus River at 11 p.m.

Aminola said they braved the heavy firefight, intermittent air strikes and the strong river current to make it to waiting rescuers—the seven-man team ARMM-HEART.

His group crossed the treacherous Agus River by swimming from Padian to the Buadi Sacayo district.

"We feared bombs may land in the river," Aminola said. "We just had the determination to cross because that was the only way out in that situation," Aminola said.

Aminola and his wife Delma, 48, were in Marawi for the month of Ramadhan. The couple was staying with Aminola's brother in Padian.

Like all civilians in the city, Delma could not believe the havoc and chaos caused by the terror groups. "We have gone through armed conflict but did not expect it would last this long," she said in the vernacular.

Delma could not count the hours she was able to sleep since most of the time she is awake, hoping to

IC AFFA

find an opportunity to escape.

Her group was very close to terrorists snipers thus the area was the objective of government forces.

After a few days of hiding, food supplies ran out and they had to rely on rainwater for drinking. She said if they will not escape they might die by stray bullets or bombs or starvation.

Meanwhile, in a statement, the ARMM-HEART said the team refused to halt its humanitarian action as more and more people are asking for help.

Although physically and mentally drained, the team also braved possible stray bullets that could hit them anytime while asking lives to save others' lives.

Civilians still trapped in Marawi's war zone strive for survival as the battle to free the city of the remaining militants rages on to its third week.

The ARMM-HEART rescue team was only armed with a megaphone, mobile phone, orange reflector shirts, training and years of experience in rescue and removal operation to save lives.

To date, the team had managed to rescue more than 4,000 trapped individuals since May 24, in coordination with the region's Crisis Management Committee (CMC) in Cotabato City and the Provincial Management Committee of Lanao del Sur. Distress calls are received and processed through the ARMM-CMC emergency hotline.

Based on distress calls, the ARMM-CMC reported that 1,379 civilians are still trapped in Marawi. These individuals are vulnerable to attacks from both the terror groups and government troops.

Around 240,000 individuals have also been forced out of their homes, mostly staying with relatives while some are in different evacuation centers.

mail.com – Tel no. (02) 845-9555 Local: 5285, 5295

Aminola and his wife were among the more than 2,465 evacuees getting treatment at the provincial capitol grounds. Relief goods for them were provided by ARMM-HEART.

Aside from the CMC in Cotabato City, the ARMM has set up operation centers in Marawi and Iligan City and in the town of Malabang in Lanao del Sur to coordinate the region's humanitarian response to the ongoing crisis.

Every three to four days, the internally displaced persons received relief packs from the regional government.

AFP holds day of prayer

In honor of government security forces and civilians who died in the ongoing Marawi City battle, the AFP is observing a Day of Silence and Prayer starting yesterday until early today, AFP's Padilla said.

"For the rest of the day today (Sunday) and early tomorrow (Monday), we shall not be providing updates. The AFP will observe a Day of Silence and Prayer in tribute to the fallen heroes of Marawi and also in remembrance of the innocent lives lost to rebel atrocities," he added.

Thirteen of the recent losses were Marine troopers who were killed in a major engagement between Marine units and Maute Group terrorists which lasted for some 14 hours in Barangay Lilot Madaya in Marawi City Friday.

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Two troops killed, 6 others hurt in clash with NPAs in Davao

By Mario J. Mallari

Two soldiers were killed while six others were wounded after government troops clashed with communist New People's Army (NPA) rebels in Davao City yesterday.

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From page 1

Maj. Ezra Balagtey, civil military operations officer of the military's Joint Task Force Haribon, said elements of the Army's 16th Infantry Battalion (IB) encountered undetermined number of rebels along Sitio Bajada in Paquibato district.

"The troops were responding to a reported consolidation of NPAs planning to conduct atrocities in Paquibato district when they were fired upon that led to the intense exchange," he added.

"Initially two soldiers were killed and another six were wounded. They were all evacuated for medical attention," the military official said.

Balagtey withheld the identities of the slain Army troops pending notification of their next of kin.

According to him, the troops were able to recover one M653 Colt AR18 with one magazine, two jungle bags, one civilian bag, electrical wire and other belongings.

Maj. Gen. Noel Clement, commander of Joint Task Force Haribon, vowed to pursue the NPA band as he expressed grief over the killing of the two Army troops.

"While it is sad that we loss two of our soldiers, their ultimate sacrifice is worth noting, they displayed the finest core value of honor, duty and patriotism as they prevented a possible atrocity against our people," Clement said.

Pursuit operations were subsequently launched against the encountered communist group.

Elsewhere, two ranking communist leaders, operating in Northern Luzon areas, gave themselves up to the military.

Lt. Col. Eugenio Julio Osias IV, commanding officer of the Army's 81st Infantry Battalion (IB), said that persistent efforts and close coordination with local officials the two NPA leaders to voluntarily surrender.

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Osias identified the surrenderees as alias "Gunman," listed as Number 8 in the battalion's watch list being the team leader of the NPA's Squad Uno, Kilusang Larangan Gerilya Montes operating in the tri-boundaries of Ilocos Sur, Mountain Province and Abra, and a certain "Batman," leader of the NPA's Squad Dos-KLG Montes.

Gunman yielded an Ehsco M-16 rifle while Batman brought with him a caliber .30 M1 Garand rifle.

The military withheld temporarily the true identities of the two former NPA leaders pending follow-up operations.

According to Osias, the two said they are tired of fighting "purposeless" war against the government that prompted them to surrender.

The two, he added, also cited the ongoing efforts of the Duterte administration in pushing inclusive development in the country.

He also said the government's livelihood and financial assistance to rebel returnees are attracting communists to join the mainstream society.

The latest surrender brought to 19 the total number of NPA rebels who were convinced by the 81st AB to return to the folds of the law since last year.

Earlier this year, the said military unit already received five former rebels who surrendered to the government.

"We will continue to advocate peaceful resolution of the internal security problem. Despite the ongoing crisis in Mindanao area, we will not cease our efforts in neutralizing the NPA rebels here in Northern Luzon in any way we could," said Osias.

Maj. Gen. Angelito de Leon, commanding general of the 7th Infantry Division, and Col. Henry Robinson, commander of the 702nd Infantry Brigade, welcomed the surrender as a clear sign of the dwindling communist ranks.

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2 NPA fighters surrender in Ilocos Sur

TWO members of the New People's Army (NPA) surrendered to the Army's 81st Infantry (Spartan) Battalion over the weekend at its headquarters in Santa Cruz, Ilocos Sur.

Lt. Col. Eugenio Julio C. Osias IV, commander of the 81st IB, said they were temporarily withholding the true names of the rebels pending the processing of their integration into the government.

Osias said the rebels, whom he identified through their aliases as "Gunman" and "Batman", surrendered one M16 rifle and an M1 Garand rifle.

Both are residents of Barangay Tabacda, Tubo, Abra.

"Gunman" is the team leader of Squad Uno, Kilusang Larangang Gerilya (KLG) Montes that operates in the tri-boundaries of Abra, Mountain Province and Ilocos Sur.

"Batman" is the team leader of Squad Dos, KLG Montes.

"What drove Batman to surrender was that the protracted people's war for almost five decades now, with the future of thousands of young people sacrificed and wasted on that war,

is now purposeless," Osias said. "He said the government's development projects are now gaining its momentum under the Duterte administration."

Recently, the 81st IB also facilitated the surrender of five other rebels.

"Spartan Battalion will continue to advocate a peaceful resolution to the internal security problem. Despite the ongoing crisis in Mindanao, we will not cease our efforts in neutralizing the NPA rebels here in Northern Luzon in any way we could," Osias added.

Osias said 10 former rebels who surrendered in 2016 were awarded with Comprehensive Local Integration Program (CLIP) benefits amounting to P807,000 at the Ilocos Sur Provincial Capitol in Vigan City by Gov. Ryan Luis V. Singson.

Seventh Infantry Division commander Maj. Gen. Angelito de Leon said the snowballing of surrenderees was a result of the persistent efforts of the soldiers in Northern Luzon for a peaceful solution to the Communist insurgency. *Rene Acosta*

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2 NPA rebels killed in Cotabato clash

By **MALU CADELINA MANAR**

KIDAPAWAN CITY – Two suspected communist guerillas operating in North Cotabato and Sultan Kudarat in south and central Mindanao were killed after engaging government troops in a running gun battle in Makilala, North Cotabato, around 10:30 p.m., Saturday.

Lt. Silver Belvis, spokesman for the 39th Infantry Battalion, identified

the slain New Peoples' Army (NPA) rebels as Ka Lupe, platoon leader of Front 72 of the NPA sub-regional committee in Southern Mindanao Region (SRG-SMR), and Ka Radin, presumed to belong to the same group.

Belvis said their troops proceeded to Barangay Malasila right after they confirmed the presence of 30 rebels in the area.

Their troops exchanged fire with the

NPAs for about an hour, but the rebels later withdrew to the southwest portion of Makilala town, he added.

After the clearing operations, the Army recovered the two bodies, an improvised explosive device, and a pistol, Belvis said.

The bodies of Ka Lupe and Ka Radin were brought to Saint Peter's Funeral Homes at Barangay Saguing in Makilala.

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2 NPA patay sa engkwentro sa Kidapawan City

NAPATAY ang dalawang hinihinalang miyembro ng New People's Army (NPA) sa bayan ng Makilala, sa Kidapawan City, Sabado ng gabi.

Ayon kay Lt. Silver Belis, tagapagsalita ng 39th Infantry Battalion ng Philippine Army, kinilala ang mga rebelde na sina Ka Lupe, platoon leader ng Front 72 ng NPA sub-regional committee sa Southern Mindanao Region, at Ka Radin.

Naganap aniya ang engkwentro sa Barangay Malasila bandang 10:30 ng gabi.

Nabatid na nag-operate ang dalawang rebelde sa Cotabato at ilang probinsya sa Sultan Kudarat.

Ayon pa kay Belis, natagpuan ang bangkay ng mga hinihinalang rebelde habang isinasagawa ang clearing operations.

Nakumpiska sa mga ito ang isang improvised explosive device at isang baril.

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Pahina. 2

2 NPA rebels na nagtanim ng bomba sa highway, todas

Dalawang miyembro ng New People's Army (NPA) ang napatay nang makaengkwestro ng tropa ng pamahalaan karnakalawa ng gabi habang nagtatanim umano ng bomba sa Purok Pomelo, Barangay Malasila, Makilala, Cotabato.

Kinilala ni 39th IB, PA Commanding Officer Lt Col Harold Argamosa ang mga nasawi na sina Almas Lupe Gamay ang kumander ng Sentro De Gravidad ng Guerilla Front 72 na pinaniniwalaang ordnance and bomb expert

kasama ang assistant nito na si Raden Joshua. Batay sa ulat, alas-10:30 ng gabi ng Sabado nagka-engkwentro ang mga elemento ng North Cotabato Provincial Public Safety Company at mga tauhan ng 39th IB sa mga NPA GF72 sa ilalim ng Far South Mindanao Region na nagtatanim umano ng land mine sa nasabing lugar.

Wala namang may nasaktan sa hanay ng pamahalaan habang narekober ang isang undetonated anti-vehicle improvised explosive device na tumitimbang sa

(16) na kilo, kasama sa mga nasamsam ang detonating switch, isang kalibre .45 na pistol at backpack.

Sa ulat ni PCI Elias Diosma Colonia, hepe ng Makilala PNP, inilatag nila ang operasyon matapos na may ilang sibilyan ang nag-report na may mga armadong grupo umano sa lugar na humukay malapit sa National Highway para magtanim ng improvised explosive device para magsagawa ng pananambang sa tropa ng militar o PNP na dadaan sa lugar. ~~Roderick Beñez~~

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AFP: 'A few more days to clear Marawi'

BY VICTOR REYES

ARMED Forces chief Gen. Eduardo Año yesterday sought understanding from the public over the delayed clearing of Marawi City of members of the Maute Group.

Año said the operations are being hampered by the presence of an undetermined number of civilians who remain trapped in the fighting in the city. He said government forces need "a few more days" to completely clear the city of Maute presence.

The fighting broke out on May 23 when Maute members fought it out with security forces out to arrest senior Abu Sayyaf leader Isnilon Hapilon.

The Maute and the Abu Sayyaf groups have pledged allegiance to the terrorist group Islamic State of Iraq and Syria. Hapilon is said to have been appointed by the ISIS as its leader in the Philippines.

The fighting has so far resulted in the death of 58 soldiers and policemen, including 13 Marines who died Friday during fighting that lasted about 14 hours.

Malacañang and the Armed Forces skipped its "Mindanao Hour" briefing and instead devoted the time for prayers as a tribute to the killed government forces and civilians.

Twenty civilians have been killed by the Maute men.

On the Maute side, there are 191 fatalities so far, said Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana.

Last Friday, AFP spokesman Brig. Gen. Resituto Padilla said the military was hoping to liberate the city by today, in time for the celebration of the 119th anniversary of Independence Day.

Año acknowledged some quarters are criticizing government for

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AFP

ts handling of the conflict but said, “Just a little more patience but rest assured that we have enough forces and this Maute-ISIS will not actually win.”

Año described the combat environment as a combination of conventional and non-conventional warfare. Compounding the situation, he said, are the trapped civilians whose lives the military want to spare.

Also, Año said, the enemy has established sniper positions.

“In a few more days, we will be able to clear Marawi... It’s a matter of time when we will be able to clear (the city),” Año said.

He said soldiers are doing their best to liberate the city but they

have to be deliberate in their actions to prevent the loss of more lives.

“We are doing it deliberately and carefully. We cannot rush it. As you can see, we are pushing hard at the expense of losing the lives of our soldiers, especially the Marines,” said Año, who condoled with the families of the 13 Marines.

Padilla said the military is making adjustments following the death of the 13 Marines.

“There will be many adjustments made. Our losses are because we put premium on saving more civilian lives and complete respect for IHL/HR (International Human Rights/Human Rights),” said Padilla.

Lorenzana said the military has “greatly diminished” the strength

of the Maute Group, noting the death of 191 group members and scores others for validation. He said 154 firearms of the group have been recovered by the operating troops.

“However, the recalcitrant remnants of the Maute-ISIS continue their stiff resistance while holed up in fortified buildings and structures,” he said.

“They are employing hostile sniper fire, mortar fire, anti-tank rounds, and IEDs (improvised explosive devices) to kill anyone -- from government security forces, to relief and rescue workers, to civilians -- who get in the way of their fanatical desire to dismember Marawi from the Philippines and establish it as a ‘wilayat’ or an ISIS province in this part of Asia,” he

also said.

He justified the use of armor, artillery, airpower, and ground forces “to breach the fortified walls, decks, and undergrounds of buildings constructed to be virtual fortresses.”

Romina Marasigan, spokeswoman of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council, said the agency has begun preparations for the rehabilitation and recovery of the city.

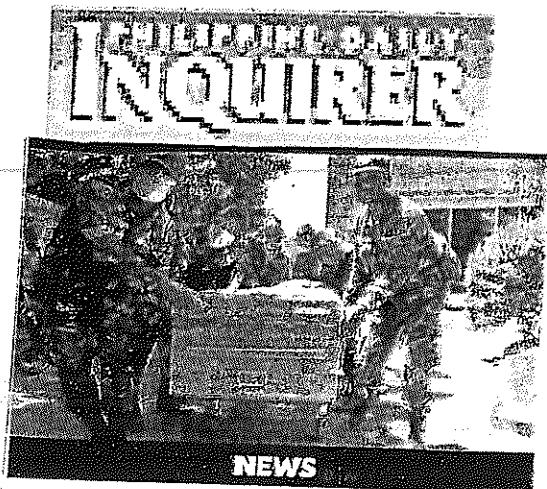
Marasigan said a post-conflict assessment will be conducted by a team of agencies, including the public works and social welfare departments, to determine priorities and budgets.

Some 200,000 persons have reportedly been displaced by the fighting – *With Jocelyn Montemayor*

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A painful window on war in Marawi

MARAWI CITY—From the third-story window of an abandoned government-office building he now lives in as a refugee, Nasir Abdul is watching his city being destroyed.

Nearly every day for the past three weeks, the military has pounded the lakeside town of Marawi with rockets and bombs as it tries to wipe out militants linked to the Islamic State (IS) group, also called Isis, in some of the most protracted urban combat to hit this volatile region in decades.

And on nearly every one of those days, Abdul has stood at the window and watched along with dozens of others who can't turn away from the deadly spectacle taking place just a kilometer away.

As plumes of thick black smoke wafted above the city's minarets again on Friday—a day of intense skirmishes that saw the Army lose 13 Marines—Abdul stood transfixed.

Two helicopter gunships had just finished strafing the city, and now the people beside him were pointing toward a Vietnam-era attack aircraft circling overhead.

The plane, an OV-10 Bronco, turned suddenly and dove almost straight down on the city center, letting loose two bombs before pulling its nose up and spiraling away.

Moments later, blasts shook the city and more smoke billowed skyward.

People dying with every bomb

"It hurts to watch because we know people are dying with every bomb," the 45-year-old Abdul said, as the sound of gunfire crackled in the distance.

When "I see the bombings, I can't help but cry. I can't help but think what's happening to my relatives, my family, my business, my house," he said.

"We know a lot of people are buried under that rubble," he added.

Three weeks after a new alliance of Islamic militants tried to seize this city in their boldest attack yet, large chunks of downtown have been leveled.

Militants remain holed up in several pockets scattered around the city center, along

with at least 100 civilians, including hostages. Most of the town's 200,000 inhabitants have fled, and more than 200 people have died.

The military says the dead include at least 138 militants, 58 government troops and 29 civilians—among them a teenager who was shot on Friday as he sheltered inside a Marawi mosque.

Fighting so intense

But the fighting is so intense, it's impossible to fully recover bodies to get an accurate casualty toll.

The conflict in Marawi has raised fears that the IS group's violent ideology is gaining a foothold in southern Philippines, where Moro separatists have fought for greater autonomy for decades.

The military says militants are trying to establish a caliphate here, similar to the one IS has attempted to create in the Middle East that stretches from the Syrian city of Raqqa to embattled Mosul in Iraq.

Forty foreign fighters have reportedly participated in the fighting in Marawi, including Malaysians and Indonesians.

The government has asked the United States to provide intelligence and other technical support, and at least one American surveillance plane has flown in support of the Philippine forces.

Abdul said that while people in Marawi supported autonomy, few backed the extremist militant groups who had grown notorious for carrying out kidnappings and beheadings.

However, Lt. Col. Jo-Ar Herrera, spokesperson for the

Vision.

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Army's 1st Infantry Division, said the insurgents had "a lot of sympathizers, a lot of supporters in this area."

is a source

@gmail.com

Maute roots in Marawi

The main group leading the siege, the Maute, has deep roots in the city—"in terms of relatives, in terms of connections, in terms of culture heritage," he said.

The Maute, named after three militant brothers, staged a similar attack last November on nearby Butig, on the opposite side of Lake Lanao, which lasted six days.

But the intensity of the latest assault, and the ability of the militants to hold out for so long, appears to have caught the government off guard.

Herrera said insurgents had prepared for as much as a year,

stocking secret caches in basements with food, weapons and ammunition.

Rexson Tamano, who is sleeping on the floor of an outdoor hallway in the same provincial government building as Abdul, said he saw no suspicious activity and no sign an attack was imminent.

When gunfire heralded the start of the siege on May 23, Tamano called his pregnant wife on the other side of town to check on her and their four children.

'Too dangerous'

"She said 'stay where you are, please don't come for us, it's too dangerous,'" Tamano recalled. But he ran home anyway.

On the way, he was stopped near a hospital at a checkpoint manned by militants. They

wore black ski masks, and each held a machine-gun.

"I tried to walk away but they called me over and asked whether I was Muslim or Christian," Tamano said. He told them the truth—he was Muslim, and they waved him through.

The city's minority Christians have been singled out for execution.

Mikee Rakim, a humanitarian volunteer, said a group of 10 Christians told him they had been taken hostage when the fighting started.

Militants beheaded two of them and were preparing to kill the rest when an airstrike hit a neighboring house, enabling them to escape.

While most of the displaced have headed inland, about 200 are sheltering at the headquarters of the provincial government, which has distributed food, water and sleeping mats to the families camped out here.

Every time airstrikes take place, they gather in small groups at the windows, which look east toward the city.

'It's so painful'

While explosions shook Marawi on Friday and fighter jets buzzed overhead, one boy pushed a baby on a stroller through a hallway. In a corner, several other children sat making toy tanks out of paper.

"Isis! Isis" cried one boy, laughing as he pointed to a tiny black flag on one of the tanks.

Fahadda Camim, who was conducting an assessment for Community Family Services International, a Filipino humanitarian organization, said the children were "copying what they see outside" and were in need of counseling.

Abdul said he did not want to watch the fighting. But he could not resist, either.

"It's our city," he said. "It's so painful. It's impossible to turn away." —AP

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Day of silence for Marawi heroes

THE Armed Forces of the Philippines on Sunday observed a day of silence in tribute to the soldiers who died fighting the terrorists in Marawi City, Malacañang said Sunday.

"Today there is no airing of the Mindanao Hour. We will just post statements," the Palace said in a statement.

"The Armed Forces of the Philippines will observe a Day of Silence and Prayer in tribute to the fallen heroes of Marawi and also in remembrance of the innocent lives lost to rebel atrocities.

"These brave men served the flag and country with honor and we ask you to join us in prayer that the Almighty bless and guide their souls and comfort their bereaved families in this moment of grief."

In a separate statement, Presidential Spokesman Ernesto Abella said the Palace expressed its sadness over the death of 13 soldiers during a firefight in Marawi.

"The Palace is deeply saddened by the news on the 13 Marines killed in action during a firefight in Marawi City, Abella said.

"They fought gallantly for the liberation of our Maranao brothers and sisters.

"This incident gives us greater impetus to clear Marawi of lawless elements, save the trapped civilians and restore order, security and normalcy to the city and its residents.

"Let us continue showing our strong support to our courageous and heroic men and women in uniform fighting for Marawi and defending the Republic." **Sandy Araneta**

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Palace pays tribute to 13 fallen Marines

The government is not giving up on the battle to clear Marawi of extremists and restore normalcy in the conflict-torn city despite losing 13 Marines in a clash Friday.

Malacañang has mourned the heavy government casualties but the unfortunate incident has not weakened its resolve to put an end to the Marawi conflict.

"The Palace is deeply saddened by the news on the 13 Marines killed in action during a firefight in Marawi City. They fought gallantly for the liberation of our Maranao brothers and sisters," presidential spokesman Ernesto Abella said.

"This incident, albeit unfortunate, gives us greater impetus to clear Marawi of lawless elements, save the trapped civilians, and restore order, security, and normalcy to the city and its residents," he said.

Abella called on the public to continue rallying behind the troops combating armed groups in Marawi.

"Let us continue showing our strong support to our courageous and heroic men and women in uniform fighting for Marawi and defending the Republic," he said.

The Palace temporarily suspended the regular "Mindanao Hour" briefing yesterday to remember the country's fallen soldiers. The day of silence and prayer for the fallen heroes of Marawi was initiated by the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

"These brave men served the flag and country with honor and we ask you to join us in prayer that the Almighty bless and guide their souls and comfort their bereaved families in this moment of grief," Malacañang said.

The Armed Forces has promised to liberate Marawi from terrorists by today, June 12, the 119th anniversary of Philippine Independence. The military plans to observe Independence Day by raising the nation's flag in the battle zone.
(Genalyn D. Kabiling)

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191 Maute terrorists killed – DND

By **FRANCIS T. WAKEFIELD,**
YAS D. OCAMPO, ALIG. MACABALANG,
and **GENALYN D. KABILING**

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said yesterday that government troops have greatly diminished the

number of Maute Group terrorists with the killing of 191 of its members while isolating them in only four villages of Marawi City. Continued fighting has raised the death toll to 221.

Twenty days after the Islamic State-influenced Maute militants, backed by

the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), laid siege on Marawi, Armed Forces Chief of Staff General Eduardo Año said. "They are currently isolated in four barangays of Marawi City. We sealed off the exits. It's just a matter of time before we clear the area of the Maute

►6

Group." Both speaking at a press briefing in Cagayan de Oro City, Lorenzana and Año expressed confidence in overcoming the challenge and resistance posed by Maute terrorists isolated in Marawi.

Apart from those killed, there is a still undetermined number of terrorists wounded, said Lorenzana. He said 154 firearms were seized by government security forces, including 50 Caliber machine guns, M60 machine guns, sniper rifles, assault rifles, and thousands of ammunitions among others at various battle sites.

He lamented that a total of 20 civilians have been killed, but was quick to point out that military and police assisting government and non-government organizations have saved 1,613 helpless civilians and brought them to safer ground.

This figure includes the recent rescue from the rubbles of war three iconic Maranao octogenarians – Retired Regional Trial Court Judge Pukumu, Pundogar, Engr. Mama Mangorangca and erstwhile Moro fighter Meno Manabilang.

They were rescued from their abodes in war-torn suburbs in Marawi last week, according to Zia Alonto Adiong and the Ranaw Response Team (RRT).

In Davao City, the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao's Humanitarian Emergency Action and Response Team (ARMM-HEART) reported that there were still around 1,379 civilians trapped inside Marawi.

The ARMM-HEART team said that the trapped civilians were noted as of last week, June 8.

The team said the trapped civilians remain vulnerable to attacks from both the terror groups and government troops.

Yesterday, the AFP said that Peace Corridor volunteers from government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) rescued four more civilians trapped in the conflict area.

The civilians include three Maranaos, and one Christian. They were retrieved

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tary units under Gen. Carlito Galvez, the commander of the Western Mindanao Command (WestMinCom).

The four were immediately processed by the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) for their identities.

Lorenzana said despite the accomplishments, the recalcitrant remnants of the Maute-ISIS continue their stiff resistance while holed up in fortified buildings and structures.

"They are employing hostile sniper fires, mortar fire, tank rounds and IEDs to kill anyone – from government security forces, to relief and rescue workers, to civilians – who get in the way of their fanatical desire to dismember Marawi from the Philippines and establish it as a "Wilayat" or an Isis province in this part of Asia," Lorenzana said.

Lorenzana, however, assured that the AFP and Philippine National Police (PNP) will continue to break the heavy resistance of and clear Marawi from the Maute-ISIS group, restore normalcy in the city, and make way for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Marawi.

Año appealed to the public for understanding especially those criticizing the AFP for its alleged slow pace in taking over the city.

"We hope you understand the situation. We are gaining and winning this endeavor. Kaunting pasensya na lang (please have patience)," he said.

"We are pushing hard despite losing our men. We have enough forces on the ground. Hindi magtatagumpay ang Maute forces (The Maute forces won't succeed)," he added.

Meanwhile, AFP spokesman Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla, said that many adjustments have to be made with regard to operations as a result of the death of 13 Marines during heavy fighting last Friday.

"There will be many adjustments made. Our losses are because we put premium on saving more civilian lives and complete respect for International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights" Padilla said.

Mourning

Malacañang yesterday mourned the heavy government casualties but said the unfortunate incident has not weakened its resolve to put an end to the Marawi conflict.

"The Palace is deeply saddened by the news on the 13 Marines killed in action during a firefight in Marawi City. They fought gallantly for the liberation of our Maranao brothers and sisters," presidential spokesman Ernesto Abella said. "This incident, albeit unfortunate, gives us greater impetus to clear Marawi of lawless elements, save the trapped civilians, and restore order, security, and normalcy to the city and its residents," he said.

Abella likewise called on the public to continue to rally behind the troops combatting the armed groups in Marawi. "Let us continue showing our strong support to our courageous and heroic men and women in uniform fighting for Marawi and defending the Republic," he said.

Earlier, Duterte said the Filipino nation is "forever grateful" to the brave government forces keeping the country safe and strong. "The country and people are forever grateful to our brave soldiers who left their families and the comforts of their homes to defend our sovereignty and uphold the Constitution," the President said before an assembly of soldiers in Sultan Kudarat.

₱1,000 each

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) will be providing a one-time financial assistance worth ₱1,000 to each family displaced by the ongoing armed conflict in Marawi City.

As of 6 a.m. Sunday, 55,149 families or 266,092 persons have been displaced in the Marawi clash. Of those displaced, 4,105 families or 19,907 persons are staying in 71 evacuation centers.

Meanwhile, 49,525 families or 238,886 individuals are outside the evacuation centers and opted to stay with relatives or friends.

Through the DSWD's Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situations, the displaced families would receive ₱1,000 each for their purchase of food during the observance of Ramadan. (With a report from Ellalyn B. de Vera)

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Assault on Maute holdouts pushed

Defense chief vows to use 'extreme power' vs terrorists

By Francisco Tuyay and Florante S. Solmerin

THE government will launch fewer airstrikes in the coming days and push the ground assault on rebel holdouts in Marawi City, a military spokesman said Sunday.

"We will still call down airstrikes where needed, but we will avoid them as the fighting gets up close," Armed Forces of the Philippines spokesman Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla said in Filipino.

Padilla said the Philippine flag would be flown over the city's capitol to mark Independence Day, though it seemed likely that the military would miss its target to clear the entire city of Maute group terrorists by Monday as fighting continued.

As fighting continued onto the third week, Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana vowed that the government would use "extreme power" to decimate the Maute

group terrorists.

"There is an extreme necessity to employ armor, artillery and air capabilities in support of our infantry units to breach the fortified walls, decks and underground [tunnels] of buildings constructed to be virtual fortresses," Lorenzana said.

Also on Sunday, President Rodrigo Duterte said he was not aware that US troops were providing technical assistance to Filipino soldiers combatting the Maute ter-

rorists in Marawi City.

Duterte, who has distanced the country from Washington, said he did approach the Americans for help.

"I was not aware of that until they arrived," Duterte said during a press briefing.

The Palace said Saturday that the US forces were providing only technical assistance, and were not involved in the actual fighting.

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In Marawi City, Abu Sayyaf leader Isnilon Hapilon and foreign terrorists were likely holed up in a heavily fortified village where 13 Marines were killed in a 16-hour clash Friday night and Saturday morning, Padilla said.

Padilla added that they believe the terrorists were holding civilian hostages in the same village.

Foreign fighters could have already been in Mindanao before fighting broke out in Marawi on May 23, and were ready to reinforce the Maute group terrorists when they rampaged through the city, Padilla said.

On Sunday, the death toll on the government side was 58, while an estimated 138 militants were killed. Maute group gunmen also killed 21 civilians during their attack.

Some 1,613 residents in the war-torn city have been rescued, military officials said.

In Pantar, Lanao del Norte, four Maute group members were killed after a police patrol car was ambushed by unidentified gunmen.

The four killed had been arrested along with the mother of the Maute brothers who head the terrorist group fighting in Marawi.

Police said the four were being transported to Cagayan de Oro City for inquest proceedings when the patrol car was attacked.

The four suspects were pronounced dead after they were taken to hospital. Three police officers were also wounded during the ambush.

As government troops closed in on Marawi City holdouts, state security officers were monitoring the movement of rebel groups and Islamist extremists in anticipation of terror attacks in urban areas.

A security official who requested anonymity said Islamic State-inspired extremists were planning terror attacks in Davao, some areas of Maguindanao and Cotabato City, as well as the cities of Zamboanga, Lamitan and General Santos.

Abu Sayyaf attacks in Palawan were also a possibility, the security official said. **With Sandy Araneta**

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Civilians in Marawi to hoist PH flags in defiance of Maute

By **CANCER ORDONEZ**

ILIGAN CITY, Lanao del Norte — Wearing white T-shirts and carrying white flags, barangay officials will lead residents of some villages in

Marawi City as they try to gain entry into their respective villages today, Independence Day, and hoist the Philippine Flag

The Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) of

the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) and the City Government of Marawi called on the barangay officials of Marawi to a meeting yesterday in Iligan City. Eighty-five percent of the 96

▶ 6

Civilians in Marawi...

◀ 1

village officials attended the meeting. Norhane Marohombsar, city local government operations officer V, DILG-ARMM, said they have issued corresponding identification tags and volunteer's IDs for the barangay chairmen and other officials who will join in the celebration of Independence Day at the Lanao del Sur Capitol inside Marawi, but admitted that the military has yet to approve the planned "assessment-visit" of some village officials to their barangays.

Hopes are high for the village chiefs – although not all 96 barangay chairmen were present during the Sunday meeting since they had evacuated to Cagayan de Oro and other towns far from Iligan – that they can set foot on their villages today and assess the conditions there.

Wahab Dia, barangay chairman of Lumbak Maronaut, Marawi, said that aside from the white flags they were asked to bring for security and safety today, he has prepared a Philippine flag that he will raise at the first instance he will have the chance to enter his barangay hall.

The village officials will be accompanied by civic-religious leaders in entering their villages Monday.

"Gane, pag abot namu didto, amung tan-awon ang among barangay unsay nahitabo, labi na katong mga barangay na naigo jud sa kumbate og amo pud tan-awon kung nausan na ang mga panimalay sa among mga constituents og i-secure ang llaheang mga kagamitan (As soon as we reach our village, we will make an inspection as to the condition of village, especially those really hit by combat operations, along with the residents

and their belongings)," Dia said

Dia said three villages are still under the control of the armed group.

"We hope and pray that plans come true tomorrow (Monday) Independence Day – that everything is clear in Marawi and that we can already go back to our homes," Dia – who has more than 1,000 constituents – said in the vernacular.

Dia said he expects his barangay to be badly damaged since the first fire-fights erupted in his village.

Efforts to locate the constituents of Marawi's villages have been the priority of the village officials, along with the DILG, which tries to account for all the displaced persons.

Marohombsar cited two major concerns affecting the village officials. One is the actual status of their villages are not yet known and the other is access in passing through layers of military checkpoints.

"Minsan hindi sila na re-recognized kaya isa rin yan sa mga concerns nila – ang makapasok-labas sila sa Provincial Capitol na nasa Marawi upang ma-monitor nila ang kalagayan ng kani-kanilang barangays and naiwang mga residente (Sometimes, they are not recognized and that is one of the concerns – for them to be able to go in and come out of Marawi to monitor their villages and remaining residents)," said Marohombsar.

For Michael Datu Dakula, an evacuee from Marawi who is now in Iligan, he and his family miss their home. Asked if they wanted to go back today to their homes, he said: "Siyempre naman po, kasi andoon yung ari-arian namin, mga paninda namin. Hirap na hirap na po kami dito sa Iligan (Of course, because

that's where our belongings and trade items are. It's been difficult for us here in Iligan)."

He hopes that on Independence Day, Marawi will be liberated from the terrorists and that President Duterte will rehabilitate their damaged homes.

AFP: Properties will be protected

Lt. Gen. Carlito Galvez, the commander of the Armed Forces of the Philippines-Western Mindanao Command (AFP-WestMinCom), lauded the troops in Marawi and vowed to make every possible step to safeguard the properties of the people.

Galvez also assured that government troops are committed to take all actions to free remaining trapped civilians inside terrorists' stronghold.

AFP Public Affairs Office chief Marine Col. Edgard Arevalo said fellow soldiers can draw inspiration and pride

from the heroism of the troops engaged in the conflict in Marawi City.

According to reports reaching the General Headquarters in Camp Aguinaldo, a major armed engagement that spanned 14 hours erupted between the Marines and the Maute-ISIS Group in the vicinity of Barangay Lilot Madaya in Marawi City.

Arevalo said the Marines were able to inflict heavy casualties on the terrorist group but at the cost of 13 killed in action and 40 others wounded in action. "We salute these enormous display of heroism and raw courage of these fallen Marines in the course of the fight to clear Marawi of the remaining members of the Maute-ISIS group," he said.

Marines' morale high

The resolve of Philippine Marine forces to defeat the ISIS-influenced Maute and Abu Sayyaf groups in Marawi City has not waned, Captain Ryan F.

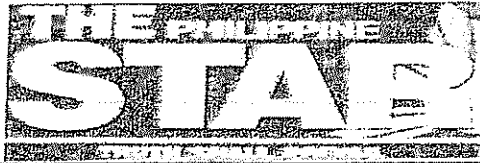
Lacuesta, director of the Marine Corps Public Affairs Office, said yesterday.

Lacuesta said despite the death of 1st Lt. John Frederick S. Savellano, the company commander who led troops in confronting Maute and Abu Sayyaf men in house-to-house fighting and recovered cash amounting to ₱52 million and checks worth ₱27 million on Monday, the morale still runs high among Marines deployed in the conflict area.

"Patuloy ang ginagawa niang combat clearing operations sa lugar (They continue to conduct combat clearing operations in the area)," he added. There are currently three battalions of Marines deployed in Marawi City, he said.

AFP spokesman Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla, said despite the setback sustained by government troops, military operations continue to clear the city of terrorists. "Operations continue but we are observing a day of prayer for our fallen (soldiers)," Padilla said.

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4 Maute men slain, 3 cops hurt in ambush

By ROEL PAREÑO

ZAMBOANGA CITY—Four suspected members of the Islamic State-inspired Maute group were killed and three policemen were wounded when gunmen ambushed a police

convoy ferrying suspects in Lanao del Norte Saturday night, security officials said.

A source in the military yesterday confirmed the attack.

The police convoy — composed of personnel from the

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Regional Public Safety Battalion and an investigation team — was bound for Cagayan de Oro when it was ambushed between 6 p.m. and 7 p.m. in a village that bordered the towns of Pantar and Balo-i.

Killed in the ambush were suspected terrorists Zulkifli Risales Maute, Aliasgar Hadji Suluman, Salah Gasim Abbas and Allan Capal Sulaiman.

Chief Supt. Reuben Theodore Sindac, police director of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, identified the wounded policemen as Chief Inspector William Santos, Senior Inspector Jans Vladimir Hilarion and PO1 Danny Giovanni Mapula, all of the ARMM police.

They sustained bullet wounds when terrorists shot their vehicles with assault rifles while traveling through a stretch of highway in Barangay Kalanganan in Pantar, a predominantly Maranao town not far from Marawi City.

At about 10 p.m., the four suspected Maute members were brought to Doctor Uy Hospital and City Hospital and died while undergoing treatment. As of yesterday, the cadavers were still in the hospitals.

The wounded policemen are now in stable condition.

The patrol vehicles with body number 81 and 05 incurred multiple bullet holes in different areas on the left side. During investigation, police found blood pool and voluminous spent shells of different calibers.

The ambush occurred a day after personnel of the ARMM police arrested in Masu, Lanao del Sur Ominta Romato, mother of wanted terrorists Omar and Abdullah Maute, founders of the outlawed Dawlah Islamiya.

The arrest of the Maute clan matriarch happened five days after Cayamora, the father of Omar and Abdullah, was nabbed by soldiers in Davao City. Also arrested along with Cayamora was his other wife, Kongan Balawag.

The Dawlah Islamiya, comprised of Maute and Abu Sayyaf gunmen, operates in the fashion of the IS.

But the military and the police could not say if the attack was a diversionary tactic or related to the ongoing operations against the Maute and Abu Sayyaf in Marawi City. — John Unson, Cecille Suerte-Felipe

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MAUTE, MILITARY SUPPORTERS IN MARAWI WAGE DIFFERENT KIND OF WAR ON SOCIAL MEDIA

By Allan Nawal
@anawalINQ

MARAWI CITY—There's another war being waged in this city aside from the one involving bullets and bombs.

It is one being waged online through text messages and social media between supporters and enemies of the Maute group, which had claimed to be Islamic State followers and sent members to set up a caliphate in this predominantly Muslim city.

On Saturday, text messages and social media posts chal-

lenged Maranaos to assert their *maratabat*, or pride, by helping flush Maute out.

"Our Maranao brothers, where did our pride go?" one text message said.

The same text said it appeared that Maranaos "have surrendered this pride to Isnilon Hapilon, who is from Basilan."

Out to destroy

It said Hapilon was out to destroy Marawi "He destroyed the land of the Maranaos and he is not even from here," it said.

On social media, posts criti-

cized Maranaos who had been complaining about the military operations here.

One said it appeared that those criticizing the operation were either "ignorant of the real situation or they are only antimilitary."

"What have we become? We are now against efforts that would help free us from this terror," it said.

The military was mum on whether it was behind the pro-military operation posts or text messages.

What it had confirmed so far

was that it had asked Facebook Philippines to take down at least 63 fake accounts believed to be those of supporters and sympathizers of Maute.

Lt. Col. Jo-an Herrera, spokesperson for the Army's 1st Infantry Division, said the Facebook accounts were being used to spread false information against military operations.

Images

Lt. Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr., head of the military's Western Mindanao Command, asked social media users not to share or

post images of the destruction of Marawi City, saying it could generate more support for the terrorists.

Some Maranao residents agreed with Galvez's observation that the bombing run could deepen antigovernment sentiments.

"Generally, the people of Marawi are not extremists. We are Muslims but we are civilized also," said resident Dino Gandarosa.

Saripada Pacasum, provincial disaster risk reduction management officer, said he also did not think that the bombing of the city could lead to sympathy

for Maute.

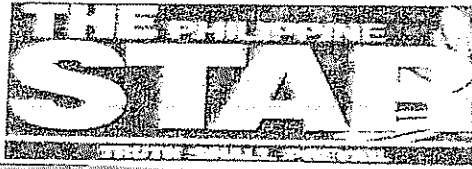
"Basically, our roots are here," Pacasum said.

"Our forefathers started here. So if any of us see the images of destruction, we are deeply hurt. We cannot imagine that this would really happen—things that we see only in movies," he said.

But Pacasum said what happened to the city should not further divide Muslims and Christians along religious lines.

"I hope people should not fuel the sentiments anymore," he added. INQ

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AFP: Hapilon holed up in Marawi village

Abu Sayyaf leader Isnilon Hapilon is believed to be hiding with foreign terrorists in the area in Marawi City where 13 Marines were killed in a clash with the Maute militants over the weekend, according to Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) spokesman Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla Jr.

He was referring to Baran-

gay Lilod Madaya, where the Philippine Marines clashed with the Maute group last Friday from around 3:30 a.m. to around 6:30 p.m.

Padilla told radio station *dzBB* that foreign fighters have been in Mindanao even before the Marawi hostilities started on May 23, and suspected Hapilon's presence in the area,

which could be the reason it was highly fortified by the Maute group.

Hapilon is reportedly the emir of Islamic State (IS) terrorists in the Philippines.

The Maute group are also believed to be holding civilian hostages in the same village, the report further said.

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"Sila ay napunta sa sektor na mukhang napasukan ng napakatinginang depensa dahil po sa kinaroroonan na maaari ng mga hostages (They had gone to a sector that seemed to have a very strong defense because the hostages might be there)," Padilla said, referring to the Marines whose main objective was to secure the civilian hostages in the barangay.

Padilla said the military would try to conduct fewer air strikes and more ground assaults on areas still held by the terrorists in the coming days.

As for the government's plan to raise the Philippine flag at the Lanao del Sur provincial capitol in Marawi City today, Independence Day, Padilla said it would push through despite the loss of Marines.

4 civilians rescued

In a related development, four more trapped civilians were rescued by Peace Corridor volunteers from the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), in coordination with the AFP-Western Mindanao Command units under commander Gen. Carlito Galvez, early yesterday in the city's Bangolo area.

This has brought to 221 the total number of rescued non-combatants, the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP) said in a statement.

Reports indicate that the three Maranaos and one Chris-

tian have been trapped in Barangay Moncado Colony, Marawi City since the start of the conflict. They were immediately processed by the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group to establish their identities.

Following the rescue mission, the civilians were transferred to the medical clinic in the capitol grounds of Marawi and were given medical assistance.

'Friendly fire' report out

Meanwhile, the military's Board of Inquiry has finished its probe on the "friendly fire" that killed 11 soldiers amid the ongoing skirmishes in Marawi City.

Maj. Gen. Rafael Valencia, who chairs the board, told *The STAR* that he signed last Friday the board's report on the results of the probe.

Valencia, however, refused to divulge any information or detail about the report itself.

"For sure it is already with the Armed Forces chief of staff," he said, stressing it would be up to AFP chief Eduardo Año on what to do next.

Day of silence, prayer

Malacañang also canceled yesterday's airing of "Mindanao Hour" to join the AFP in observing a day of silence and prayer from yesterday to early

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morning today to honor "the fallen heroes of Marawi."

"These brave men served the flag and the country with honor and we ask you to join us in prayer that the Almighty bless and guide their souls and comfort their bereaved families in this moment of grief," a Malacañang advisory read.

"There will be many adjustments made. Our losses are because we put premium on saving more civilian lives and complete respect for the International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights," Padilla said.

Hopeful on Independence Day

Village officials of the besieged Marawi City are expectant that their constituents could go back to their respective homes in time for the celebration of the 119th Philippine Independence Day today.

Barangay Lumbac Marinaut chairman Wahab Dia said he is hopeful that Marawi can finally be cleared by today so that the people could return and begin restarting their lives, and he and members of his council could assess the damage.

Dia and other village leaders of Marawi will join ARMM officials, government executives and state security forces in raising the Philippine flag at the Lanao del Sur provincial capitol today, according to Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) - Marawi City director Norhanie Marohombsar.

"All of the Marawi barangay

officials are accounted for," Marohombsar said, adding that none of them were killed in the conflict and that they were issued identification cards.

'Nothing wrong with US aid'

Senators saw nothing wrong with the involvement of the US special forces in the Philippine government's military operations against IS-linked Maute militants.

The lawmakers were commenting on reports that the US military has been assisting government troops, who have been battling the terrorists entrenched in Marawi City for nearly three weeks now.

The US embassy on Friday confirmed the deployment of a P-3 Orion surveillance aircraft over the battle zone, upon the request of the Philippine government, which the AFP admitted.

Sen. Gregorio Honasan, chairman of the Senate committee on national defense and security, said the US military is providing only technical information and equipment support to Filipino troops.

"As long as the involvement involves technical assistance and providing intelligence information, the support of the US military should be a welcome move," said Sen. Panfilo Lacson, chairman of the Senate committee on public order.

Vigilance, persistence

Philippine National Police - ARMM director Chief Supt. Reuben Theodore Sindac yes-

terday urged all policemen in Mindanao to be more vigilant and persistent so that Marawi may be liberated from the present crisis.

"The government is serious in its fight to end the cultists' terror attack in Marawi and preempt their atrocious plans in the entire nation," he said.

Sindac issued the call after the arrest of Maute matriarch Ominta Romato last Friday night while she was about to escape.

Australia's concern heightened

The IS' links in South-east Asia have heightened Australia's concern with the risk posed to the region by violent extremist organizations and returning foreign fighters who may resume positions in their own countries.

Australian Defense Minister Marise Payne said at the 27th Australia-US Ministerial Consultations that Australia is united with countries in their resolve to defeat the IS.

"They will come back with battlefield skills, they will come back with hardened ideology, they will come back angry, frustrated, and we need to be aware of that," Payne said.

— With Michael Punongbayan, Jose Rodel Clapano, Edith Regalado, Alexis Romero, Gerry Lee Gorit, Paolo Romero, Cecille Suerte Felipe, Pia Lee-Bravo

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17 June 2017



Pahina. 2

HAPILON, HOSTAGES MAGKASAMA

Ni Betchai Julian

Malaka ang duda ng pamunuan ng Armed Forces of the Philippines na posibleng namumugad sa lugar kung saan napatay ang 13 miyembro ng Philippine Marines ang Abu Sayyaf Group leader na si Isnilon Hapilon kasama ang mga foreign terrorists at kanilang mga binihag na sibilyan sa Marawi City.

Ayon kay AFP spokesman Brig Gen Restituto Padilla, malaki ang paniwala nilang nagtatago pa rin sa usang lugar sa Marawi City si Hapilon kaya ito ang dahilan kung bakit matindi ang depensa sa lugar na napasok ng mga Marines noong Biyernes.

"Paniwala pa po kami na si Hapilon ay narayan pa po sa Marawi dahil nakita namin na matindi ang kanilang depensa. Wala pa po kaming eksaktong bilang kung ilan pa po sila, estimate po natin ay may ilan pa po pero exact figure po ay hindi namin masabi," wika ni Padilla.

Dito sinabi ni Padilla na may duda silang kaya

matindi ang depensa ng kalaban sa lugar na pinasok ng mga Marines na sinawing palad na masawi noong Biyernes ay posibleng naroroon si Hapilon at ilang dayubang terorista at maging ang kanilang mga bihag.

Noong Biyernes napatay ang 13 Marines habang sugatan ang 40 iba pa sa pakikipagsagupa sa mga terorista sa Brgy. Lilod Madaya sa Marawi City.

Ayon kay Padilla, tanging layunin ng Marines ay bigyan ng seguridad ang mga bihag na sibilyan sa Brgy. Lilod Madaya pero sinawing palad ang mga ito.

AIRSTRIKE BABAWASAN, GROUND ASSAULT PALALAKASIN

Matapos ang pagkasawing 13 Marines, babawasan na ng militar ang airstrikes at sisikapin na madagdagan naman ang ground assaults sa mga lugar na hawak pa rin ng Maute group.

Sinabi ni Padilla na layunin nitong mapropektahan ang mga pribadong ari-arian at gusali sa Marawi City.

DEATH TOLL

Umaabot na sa 191 terorista ang kumpirmadong nasawi habang 58 sundalo at 21 sibilyan ang nasawi sa mahigit dalawang linggong sagupaan sa Marawi City.

Sa isang press briefing kahapon ng hapon sa Cagayan de Oro City, sinabi ni Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana na ang nasabing bilang ay ang pinakahuling nasa talaan ng AFP sa pagpapatuloy na sagupaan sa nasabing lungsod.

Kinumpirma rin ni Lorenzana na tumutulong na rin sa pamahalaan ang bansang Amerika sa

pamamagitan ng pagbibigay ng tactical assistance mula sa U.S. forces.

Pero nilinaw ni Lorenzana na ang pagtulong ng Amerika ay hindi sa pamamagitan ng tinatawag na 'operation on the ground' dahil mahigpit itong ipinagbabawal sa alalim ng Saligang Batas.

Ipinaliwanag naman ni AFP chief of staff Gen. Eduardo Año na ang tulong ng US Forces ay sa pamamagitan ng pagkuha ng mga larawan. Nagbigay na aniya ng tactical assistance ang Amerika para mapabilis ang pagpapalaya sa Marawi City.



Nagpapatrolya ang isang grupo ng mga sundalo habang patuloy ang opensiba ng mga tropa ng gobyerno para mabawi sa mga terorista ang Marawi City. (AFP)

12 June 2017



Pahina. 2

Kuta ni Hapilon sinusuyod na

Patuloy na inaalam ngayon ng AFP ang pinamumugaran ng Abu Sayyaf leader at sinasabing emir ng ISIS sa Pilipinas na si Isnilon Hapilon at mga dayuhang terorista ang isang barangay sa Marawi City kung saan napatay ang 13 miyembro ng Philippine Marines

Ayon kay AFP spokesman Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla, naniniwala sila na sa naturang lugar nagtatago si Hapilon, kasama ang ilan pang mga dayuhang terorista

Sinabi pa ni Padilla na posibleng nasa Mindanao na ang mga foreign terrorist bago pa man sumiklab ang kaguluhan sa Marawi City noong May 23

Napag-alaman na noong nakaraang Biyernes, napatay ang 13 Marines habang sugatan ang 40 iba pa sa pakikipagsagupa sa mga bandido sa Barangay Lilod Madaya sa Marawi

Malaki aniya ang posibilidad na nasa lugar si Hapilon kung kaya ang naturang barangay ay punung-puno ng mga miyembro ng Maute group.

Bukod dito, naniniwala din ang AFP na mayroong mga sibilyan na bihag ang

Maute group sa nasabing barangay

Dagdag ni Padilla, ang tanging layunin ng Marines ay bigyan ng seguridad ang mga hostage na sibilyan sa Barangay Lilod Madaya

Matapos ang insidente, babawasan na aniya ng militar ang airstrikes at siskapin na madagdagan naman ang ground assaults sa mga lugar na hawak pa rin ng Maute group

Sa ngayon, ay hindi pa nila masasabi kung ilang Maute members at foreign fighters ang nananatili pa rin sa Marawi City, kabilang na sa Barangay Lilod Madaya

Maitatlabas lamang aniya ng mga detalye ukol sa dayuhang terorista kapag natapos na ang operasyon

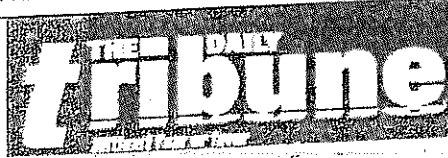
sa Marawi.

Samantala, tumutulong na ang special forces ng Amerika sa ating pamahalaan para lugisin at pulbusin ang puwersa ng Maute group sa Marawi City

Batay sa ipinalabas na pahayag ng US Embassy sa Maynila, sinabi nito na humingi ng tulong sa kanila ang pamahalaan para sa mabilis na pagsugpo sa nasabing grupo

Kinumpirma naman ito ni Lt/Col. Jo-ar Herrera tagapagsalita ng 1st Infantry Division ng Army ngunit sinabi nito na hanggang tactical support lamang ang ibinibigay ng US troops at hindi sila kasama sa aktwal na combat operations (Rhoderick Bernez/Ricky Tulipat)

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Rody says he didn't seek US forces help

By Ted Tuvera

President Duterte said he was not aware of the involvement of assistance from US forces in the government effort to clear Marawi City of self-styled Islamic

State (IS) affiliates in Marawi City despite the Palace saying it sees nothing wrong with the Americans entering the fray.

Talking to reporters yesterday in Cagayan De Oro City, Mr. Duterte said that he never asked the help of US troops

in the bid to end the Marawi City siege from Islamic State (IS)-inspired bandits.

"I never approached America for help," Mr. Duterte said. "I am not aware of that until they arrived," he added.

In a statement also yesterday, how-



ever, Presidential spokesman Ernesto Abella appears aware of the circumstances that led to the American involvement in the battle for Marawi City as he cited

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the existing defense and security agreements between Manila and Washington, which he said was "invoked"

"The United States is assisting the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) in its operations in Marawi but this is limited to technical assistance," Abella said.

"We have standing protocols which are already in-place under the Mutual Defense Board-Security Engagement Board with the US under the purview of the RP-US Mutual Defense Treaty of 1951," he added.

Abella pointed out that American forces are not sending combatants to help Philippine troops.

"It does not involve any boots on the ground nor is there any direct participation in combat operations, a matter prohibited by law," he said.

The Palace official insisted that radical Islamist terrorism is a common enemy that has to be confronted not only by the Philippines but by the international community.

"The fight against terrorism, however, is not only the concern of the Philippines or the United States but it is a concern of many nations around the world," Abella said.

"The Philippines is open to assistance from other countries if they offer it," he added.

Bayan queries US role

A left-wing group, meanwhile, questioned the American troops involvement in the military campaign in Marawi City.

Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) secretary general Renato Reyes, in a statement, said the American forces' intrusion, among others, will be raised in a major demonstration today led by former and incumbent lawmakers, religious leaders and human-rights activists in Manila.

"We oppose US meddling and intervention in the Marawi crisis. The US still has a lot to answer for when it comes to the people of Mindanao," Reyes said.

Over the weekend, the US Embassy in Manila said American forces were providing assistance to the Filipino troops, although it declined to give details for security reasons.

"At the request of the

government of the Philippines, US special operations forces are assisting the (Philippine military) with ongoing operations in Marawi," the embassy said in a statement.

Joint Task Force Marawi spokesman Lt. Col. Jo-an Herrera on Saturday confirmed the US help, adding that the special forces were not fighting, but "providing technical support."

The leftist group also raised the possibility that the AFP could have been insinuated by the intelligence reports coming from the US that IS-Philippine leader Isnilon Hapilon was spotted in Marawi City.

Bayan even accused the American government of having orchestrated Hapilon's occupation effort at a time when Mr. Duterte was in an official visit in Moscow, which is Washington's long-time political and ideological rival.

"Did the US provide the intelligence on Isnilon Hapilon and the Maute Group which was used by the AFP in conducting the botched arrest that sparked the Marawi crisis? Did the US urge the AFP to carry out the arrest of Hapilon at the exact time Duterte was in Russia, with the knowledge that things may get out of hand and affect Duterte's Russia trip?" Reyes asked.

Reyes also criticized Mr. Duterte for supposedly not standing up to his "independent foreign policy" and frequent diatribes against the US.

It is recalled that the Chief Executive mulled months ago that he wants to stop dovetailing US military policies. At one point he even said that he wants all foreign troops out of the Philippines.

"The Duterte regime has backtracked on its vow to remove foreign troops from Philippine soil and has now allowed foreign intervention in a domestic issue. There will be serious repercussions," Reyes added.

Mobilization vs ML, rights breach

Meanwhile, today's major protest dubbed as the "National Day of Prayer and Action for Peace and Human Rights" will center on the Duterte administration's assumed human rights violations due to his war on drugs and as well as his declaration of martial law in Mindanao.

Demonstrators, from various sectors, planned the mobilization to coincide with the celebration of the country's 119th Independence Day.

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"Drug abuse, criminality, social unrest and rebellion are but symptoms of deep-seated, historical problems that cannot be solved by wars against the poor or the imposition of martial law. We need to address the roots of the problems - massive poverty, social injustice, corruption, and failure to assert national sovereignty and genuine independence," the protesters' unity statement read.

Among the unity statement's signatories are former senators Rene Saguisag, Wigberto Tañada, members of the Makabayan Bloc in Congress, Manila Auxiliary Bishop Broderick Pabillo and other leaders from religious, artist and advocacy-based groups.

"We shall continue to pursue various paths to peace based on justice and the full respect for human rights. It is our hope and prayer that President Duterte and all government officials can still listen and change," it added.

Malacañang, for its part, welcomed the supposed demonstration as an example that the Duterte administration is tolerant of everybody's civil liberties, especially on Independence Day.

"Today's rally, dubbed 'National Day of Prayer and Action for Peace

and Human Rights,' at the Andres Bonifacio Shrine beside the Marula City Hall shows how vibrant democracy is in the Philippines," Presidential spokesperson Ernesto Abella said.

Abella also cited President Duterte's frequently repeated quote: "He may not agree with what you say, but he'll defend to the death your right to say it."

"This right includes the right to air people's grievances, including opposition to the proclamation of martial law in the whole island of Mindanao," the Palace official added.

Hapilon seen to execute IS grand plan

The announcement of Hapilon's designation as the 'emir' of the IS in Southeast Asia proved the terror group's plan to expand in the Philippines.

This was stressed by Major Gen. Melquiades Feliciano, AFP Civil-Military Operations deputy chief-of-staff, during PTV-4's Countering Violent Extremism Forum Friday.

"So another indication of (ISIS) the expansion in the Philippines, Isnilon Hapilon was (earlier) declared by (ISIS leader) Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi as the "Emir" in Southeast Asia," he added.

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The Manila Times

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Military confirms asking US for help

THE Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) on Sunday confirmed that it sought the assistance of the United States as Filipino troops continue to battle Islamist militants in Marawi City.

"We asked for their (Americans') assistance because we do not have the kind of technical capability we sought. If we

had it, we would not have done so," Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla, spokesman of the AFP, said in a text message.

"Congress can further allocate resources and strengthen the Armed Forces so that we will have the capabilities we seek to defeat enemies of the Republic

► **Help A8**

ster. In that situation, it will be unnecessary for the Armed Forces to ask help from allies," Padilla added.

On Saturday, the US Embassy in Manila said that the United States, in response to the request of the Philippine government, dispatched its special operations forces to provide technical assistance to Philippine soldiers fighting members of the Maute terror group in Marawi.

Journalists covering the siege have reported seeing a US P-3 Orion surveillance plane flying over Marawi on Friday.

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana also confirmed that the US is providing technical assistance to help Filipino troops end the Marawi siege.

National Security Adviser and former Armed Forces Chief Her-

mogenes Esperon said the provision of assistance should not be a surprise because the US has always helped the Philippines in its counter-terrorism programs.

'No boots'

Malacañang also acknowledged that the US is helping the Philippine military but the assistance is limited to intelligence gathering and technical support.

"We have standing protocols which are already in place under the Mutual Defense Board-Security Engagement Board with the US under the purview of the PH-US Mutual Defense Treaty of 1951. It does not involve any boots on the ground nor is there any direct participation in combat operations, a matter prohibited by law,"

presidential spokesman Ernesto Abella said in a statement.

"The fight against terrorism is not only the concern of the Philippines or the United States but it is a concern of many nations around the world. The Philippines is open to assistance from other countries if they offer it," he added.

'We can manage'

President Rodrigo Duterte on Sunday grudgingly thanked the US for its assistance.

"*Maski wala man silang tulong. Pero meron. Nagpapasalamat ako, nariyan na rin* (It would have been fine without them. But they helped us. I thank them)," Duterte said after visiting wounded soldiers who fought Maute terrorists in Cagayan de Oro.

"I've never approached any American. I am not aware of that until they arrived. But to say that *kaya naman natin* (we would have managed). Look at this one, he is ready to come back [in Marawi]," Duterte added, referring to a soldier in the audience.

Last year, President Rodrigo Duterte expressed his disgust over the presence of American troops in the country, saying "they have to go."

"Those (US) special forces, they have to go. There are many white (people) there. They have to go. There are many whites there. If they (insurgents) see an American, they would kill him. They would demand ransom then kill him. Even if you're a black or white American, as long as you are an American, (they will kill you)," he said of US troops stationed in Mindanao.

In September 2016, Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said in a congressional briefing that the 107 US troops in Mindanao are part of the Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines (JSOTF-P) that provides immediate medical assistance to Filipino soldiers wounded in the battlefield.

The JSOTF-P operates under the auspices of the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) between the Philippines and the US—a pact that allows US troops to train and advise the Philippine military in its fight against terrorists but bans US forces in combat operations.

No objection

Some senators expressed no objection to the involvement of US Special Forces in the military operations in Marawi City.

Sen. Gregono Honasan, head of the national defense and security committee, said the assistance be-

ing provided by the US is limited to technical information and equipment support to Filipino troops.

"We honor our troops, relief effort volunteers and government agencies involved in the Marawi clearing recovery and rehabilitation operations," Honasan said.

Senator Panfilo Lacson shared Honasan's stance.

"As long as the involvement involves technical assistance and providing intelligence information, the support of the US military should be a welcome move," said Lacson, chairman of the Senate committee on public order and dangerous drugs.

Senator Francis Escudero agreed that US troops cannot engage in actual combat missions and operations.

"They can only serve in a technical or advisory capacity under existing laws and treaties," he said.

**LLANESCA PANTI AND
JEFFERSON ANTIPORDA**

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BAYAN MUNA STAND

LEFTISTS ASSAIL US 'MEDDLING' IN MARAWI CRISIS

By **Vince F. Nonato**
@VinceNonatoINQ

On the eve of Independence Day, the left-wing Bayan Muna party-list group questioned what it called "meddling" by the United States in the Marawi City crisis.

In a statement on Sunday, Rep. Carlos Isagani Zarate urged the Duterte administration to reject support from the United States, because it "does not reflect well on the purported independent foreign policy of the administration."

After taking office last year, President Duterte veered away from the country's longtime security ally the United States and sided up to China and Russia, in what he called independent foreign policy.

'Intelligence sharing'

Yet the Armed Forces of the Philippines on Saturday confirmed the presence of US support was "limited to intelligence sharing" to help end the three-week siege.

A Reuters report quoted the US Embassy in Manila as saying US Special Forces had assisted the military "at the request of the government of the Philippines."

A Bayan Muna statement on Sunday characterized the US assistance as "meddling."

It noted that such military aid usually came with strings attached and recalled that the United States also took part in the bungled police operation in Mamasapano, Maguindanao province, that led to the deaths of 44 police commandos in January 2015.

Zarate said the military's statement that support was limited to intelligence and technical assistance was "highly suspect."

He claimed that US troops were already in Marawi even before the Maute group laid siege to the city on May 23, as they had a military facility at a nearby AFP camp.

"The question is, did the US troops know beforehand that there would be a Maute/[Islamic State group] attack but allowed it to happen as payback for President Duterte's anti-US rhetoric?" Zarate said. INQ

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'DND, AFP have free hand to seek US help'

By Nikko Dizon
@NikkoDizonINQ

President Duterte has allowed his top security officials to decide whether to enlist US military support in crushing Islamic State-inspired local terrorists who have seized Marawi City, a military official said on Sunday.

And they apparently have asked the United States for help, as a US surveillance plane has been seen flying over the city while government forces assault positions held by gunmen from the Maute and Abu Sayyaf terror groups.

"The Commander in Chief gave the Department of Defense (DND)/military a free hand,"

Brig Gen Resituto Padilla Jr., spokesperson for the Armed Forces of the Philippines, told the Inquirer when asked about reports that the United States was providing technical assistance to government troops battling the terrorists in Marawi.

A self-styled socialist, Mr. Duterte has upended Philippine foreign policy since becoming President last year, loosening security ties with the United States and making overtures to China and Russia.

Running what he calls independent foreign policy, he has scaled down joint exercises between Philippine and US troops and spoken of removing Ameri-

can forces from Mindanao, where the US military has a small contingency of advisers training Philippine troops in counterterrorism.

On Friday, however, as the AFP took its biggest single-day battlefield loss in Marawi, a US P-3 Orion spy plane was seen flying over the city.

The US Embassy in Manila also confirmed that US troops were helping the AFP fight the terrorists on the request of the Philippine government.

Speaking in Cagayan de Oro City on Sunday, Mr. Duterte did not know that US troops were helping the military fight the terrorists.

"I'm not aware of that, but

under martial law I gave the power to the defense department," he said.

Lt. Col. Jo-Ar Herrera, a spokesperson for the Army's 1st Infantry Division, confirmed the US assistance but said no American troops were involved in combat.

Herrera said the US role was limited to providing intelligence to the Philippine military.

"They have always been there with us," National Security Adviser Hermogenes Esperon Jr., a former military chief, said on Sunday when asked about the US assistance.

Malacañang said the Philippines was open to assistance

not only from the United States but also from other countries in fighting the terrorists.

Presidential spokesperson Ernesto Abella said the fight against terrorism was a global concern.

"The fight against terrorism ... is not [the concern of only] the Philippines or the United States but [also the] concern of many nations around the world," Abella said.

He said the US military's support in Marawi was limited to "technical assistance" and this was covered by protocols under the 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty between the Philippines and the United States.

Abella said the US support did

not involve boots on the ground, "a matter prohibited by law."

The US presence in Marawi indicates a softening of Mr. Duterte's policy on the United States, according to security analyst Chester Cabalza.

"[W]e cannot get rid of the US military prowess on counterterrorism since both countries are confronted with such security threats," Cabalza said.

Cabalza said the United States remained the Philippines' ally dealing with the country's internal security threats by providing "sophisticated technical support" to the AFP. —WITH REPORTS FROM PHILIP C. TUBEZA, ALLAN NAWAL, FRINSTON LIM AND REUTERS INQ

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Duterte cites troops' resolve to keep peace

By GENALYN D. KABILING

The Filipino nation is "forever grateful" to the brave government forces keeping the country safe and strong, President Duterte said, amid intensified operations to finish off the Islamic State-linked extremists in Marawi City.

The President has commended the troops for their "strong resolve" to keep peace and order and encouraged them to swiftly eliminate the threat of terrorism and insurgency.

"The country and people are forever grateful to our brave soldiers who left their families and the comforts of their homes to defend our sovereignty and uphold the Constitution," the President said before an assembly of soldiers in Sultan Kudarat last Friday.

"I commend you for your strong resolve in going after various terrorist and extremist groups in your area of (operations). Because of your efforts to go after the enemy, we have upheld the rule of law," he said.

The commander-in-chief extended his "sincere thanks" to the troops for the 24-hour checkpoints in major entry and exit points, intensified foot and mobile patrols, and enforcement of curfew in area of operations.

The President said he enjoins the soldiers to "remain determined in pursuit of the enemy and save the people they have sworn to protect."

He said there were persisting threats of terrorism and insurgency that "we must rid of swiftly and decisively."

Resolving these security threats would enable the government to rebuild lives, houses, and communities, and "regain the peace and freedom that our people long for," according to the President.

In the past few days, the President made rounds in some military camps in Mindanao to boost the morale of troops amid the battle against extremists in Marawi.

He also paid his final respects to soldiers slain in Marawi clashes, extending his condolences to the grieving families. He likewise tried to boost the morale of wounded soldiers during his recent hospital visits.

"It is my honor to express our deepest admiration and gratitude (to) your fallen and wounded comrades who selflessly put their lives on the line to keep our country safe and strong," Duterte told the troops in Sultan Kudarat.

"Let me assure you that your valiant efforts in restoring order and keeping peace in Sultan Ku-

darat and the surrounding areas will not go unnoticed," he added.

Apart from anti-terror operations, he praised the soldiers for their hard work and relentlessness in the fight against illegal drugs.

He said the operations have led to neutralization and apprehension of drug personalities and the confiscation of drugs and drug paraphernalia which made their area of responsibility safer from the drug menace.

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Rody, focused on drug war, ignored IS rise - NYT

It was classic bravado from the Philippines' tough President Duterte.

The Maute group, a militant Islamic band fighting government troops near the southern Philippines city of Marawi last year, had asked for a cease-fire.

The president rejected the overture.

"They said that they will go down upon Marawi to burn the place," Duterte recounted in December. "And I said, 'Go ahead, do it'."

He got his wish.

Hundreds of militants belonging to the Maute group and its allies fighting under the black flag of the Islamic State, also known as ISIS, seized Marawi three weeks ago, leading to a battle with the Philippine armed forces and the biggest test yet of Duterte's leadership during his tumultuous first year in office.

A president who has focused on a deadly anti-drug campaign that has claimed the lives of thousands of Filipinos seems to have been caught unprepared for a militant threat that has been festering in the south for years.

"The government has largely been in denial about the growth of ISIS and affiliated groups," said

Zachary Abuza, a professor at the National War College in Washington who specializes in Southeast Asian security issues. "Duterte has been preoccupied with his campaign of gutting the rule of law by using police and other security forces for the extrajudicial killing of drug pushers."

Government forces have been unable to dislodge the militants despite deploying ground troops and bombing the city of 200,000 people from the air. More than 200 people have been killed, including 24 civilians, 58 soldiers and police officers, and at least 138 militants, according to the Philippine military.

Tens of thousands of civilians have fled, and much of the city center lies in ruins. The military says that it has cleared 90 percent of the place but that militants remain in three neighborhoods in the center. Analysts say the military has less experience fighting on an urban battlefield, where the militants are mixed in with hundreds of civilians.

Duterte has declared 60 days of martial law for the southern island of Mindanao, which includes Marawi and his hometown, Davao City. He has twice



An image sent to GMA News purportedly shows Madie Maute, who may have been killed in a firefight with government troops in Marawi City, holding a mobile phone indicating that he was alive on June 10. Task Force Marawi spokesman Lt. Col. Jo-ar Herrera confirms that it is Madie in the photo.

set deadlines for troops to retake Marawi, the country's largest predominantly Muslim city, but each deadline has passed with the battle still raging.

On Friday, Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla predicted that the government would retake Marawi by Monday, Philippines Independence Day. On Saturday, 13 Philippine marines were killed in a clash with militants there. - NYT

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Lawyers' group alleges martial law abuses in Marawi City

By ALIG MACABALANG

MARAWI CITY – The Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP)-Lanao del Sur chapter has called for an immediate stop in alleged abuses of martial law enforcers in this war-ravaged central Muslim city.

Citing “first-hand data and information fresh from the battlefield,” the IBP local chapter released Saturday afternoon a statement, and addressed to President Rodrigo Roa Duterte and Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana, asking them to put a stop to alleged abuses committed by the military and police as they conduct searches in residences that have been abandoned in the city since the Maute Group laid siege on the city last May 23.

The IBP chapter said it “has been

utterly shocked by sheer magnitude of wanton disregard of sanctity of domicile, the right against deprivation of property without due process of law, the right to be secure in one’s person, house, papers and effects against unreasonable searches/seizures and the privacy of communication and correspondence of innocent civilians committed by the AFP (Armed Forces of the Philippines) and PNP (Philippine National Police) who take pride of being the protector of the people.”

The statement was signed by IBP-Lanao del Sur chapter president Amin-oden Macalandap.

The lawyers’ group said that while it supported President Duterte’s martial law declaration in Mindanao, “it has not closed its eyes on any forms of abuses committed in the implementation process.”

“Residential and commercial establishments have been laid open to looters all over the besieged city. The remnants of ransacked residential and commercial establishments bear imprints of gruesome acts of blatant violations of laws. As shown in video footages and pictures posted in social media, military men who committed these criminal acts in public exhibited no remorse,” the IBP chapter statement said.

The group particularly sought the suspension of “searches without warrants on residential and commercial entities “bearing no badge of suspicion linking to Maute Group, unauthorized intrusions (into private) establishments without the presence of owners, media or any authorized person, and the total disregard of plain view doctrine in searches and seizures activities,” among others.

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Approval of measures on benefits for men in uniform, kin sought

By **HANNAH L. TORREGOZA**

Senator Juan Edgardo Angara yesterday urged Congress to expedite the passage of various bills that seek to grant special financial assistance and benefits to uniformed and law enforcement personnel and their families.

Angara made the call in light of the intense armed conflict between government forces and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS)-inspired Maute terror group in Marawi City.

Rising toll

The senator expressed his alarm over the loss of 13 troops from the Philippine Marines during a 14-hour clearing operation in the city last Friday, bringing the number of fallen soldiers since May 23, 2017 to 58.

The government has lost at least 40 members from the Philippine Army, 15 from the Philippine Marines, and three from the Philippine National Police (PNP).

"As the siege by extremist groups continue to drag on in Marawi City, our brave soldiers need all the support they can get. It's unfortunate that this conflict has cost the lives of many of our troops. *Nakikiramay po tayo sa kanilang mga pamilya. (We condole with their*

families)." Angara said.

Perks and benefits

Angara is one of the authors of Senate Bill 1462 or the Uniformed and Law Enforcement Personnel Special Financial Assistance Act, as well as SB No. 1463 or the Uniformed and Law Enforcement Personnel Educational Assistance Act.

Under SB 1462, a special financial assistance equivalent to the average six months salary, including allowances and bonuses, will be provided to the families and beneficiaries of any personnel of the PNP and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) who is killed or permanently incapacitated while in the line of duty.

The measure gives surviving spouses or designated beneficiaries priority in employment in government agencies and offices where their qualifications are fitted.

Scholarships

On the other hand, SB 1463 grants all surviving children of the fallen or incapacitated PNP or AFP member automatic, and without qualification be extended, full scholarship from kindergarten to tertiary level.

Such scholarship privileges include payment of tuition and miscellaneous

fees, allowance for books and school supplies, and allowance for food and transportation.

"In recognition of their sacrifices it is important that we secure the future of the loved ones they left behind. Upgrading the assistance and benefits of our uniformed personnel is long overdue," Angara said.

"I call on our colleagues to prioritize the passage of such bills," he reiterated.

Dependents Welfare Office

Due to the slow delivery of benefits, the proposed measure also seeks to create a Dependents Welfare Office to expedite the grant of special financial assistance and benefits.

Under the bill, the granting of the benefits should be done within three days from receipt of a written certification of the fact of death or permanent disability or incapacity.

If any personnel is injured or wounded in the performance of official duties, the government should shoulder hospitalization expenses, including necessary medicines and medical equipment.

The proposed measure also expanded the coverage of the special assistance to uniformed personnel of the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP),

Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP), National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA), Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), and the Bureau of Corrections (BuCor).

"Such special assistance befits the selfless service of our fallen heroes who have offered their lives to preserve peace, defend the dignity of the country, and ensure the safety of all Filipinos," the lawmaker said.

Hazard pay

Angara also pushed for the passage of a measure that seeks to increase AFP's hazard pay to 25 percent of their base pay.

The lawmaker pointed out that currently, pursuant to Executive Order 201, members of AFP receive ₱540 in hazard pay.

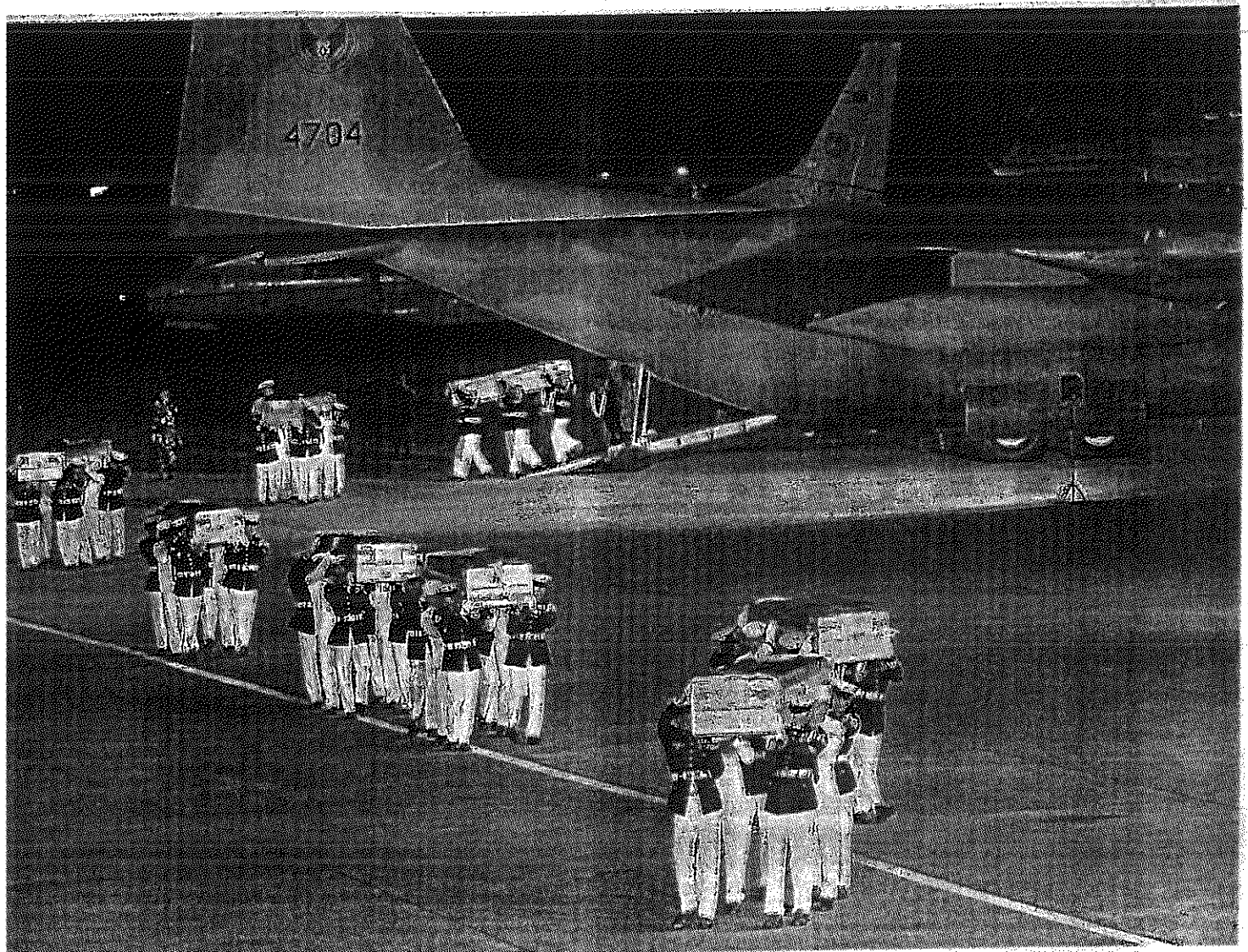
"If our bill passed into law, we will see an eightfold increase in the hazard pay. For instance, if a Private First Class has a monthly base pay of ₱15,600, their hazard pay would increase from ₱540 to ₱3,900," the senator explained.

"Let's give our armed forces the proper incentives for their heroic acts and for their willingness to face danger day by day," the lawmaker stressed.

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TRIVAL HONORS Marines carry the coffins of 13 of their own who were killed in fighting terrorists in Marawi City on Friday as they arrive at Villamor Air Base in Pasay City on Sunday night. President Duterte led the arrival ceremony and condoled with the families of the fallen soldiers. —GRIG-C. MONTEGRANDE

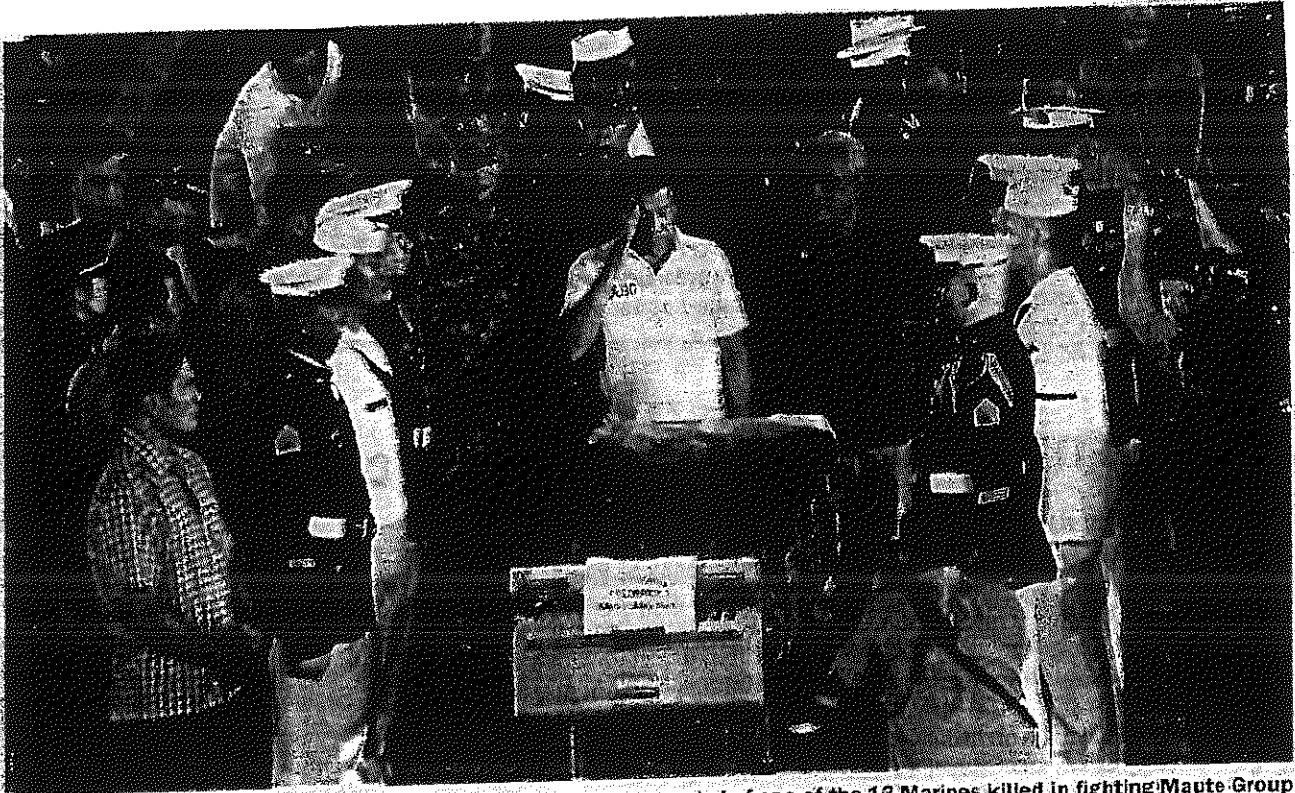
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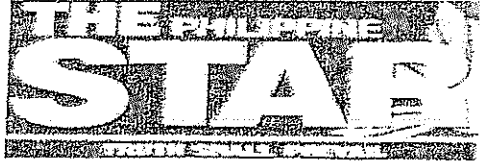
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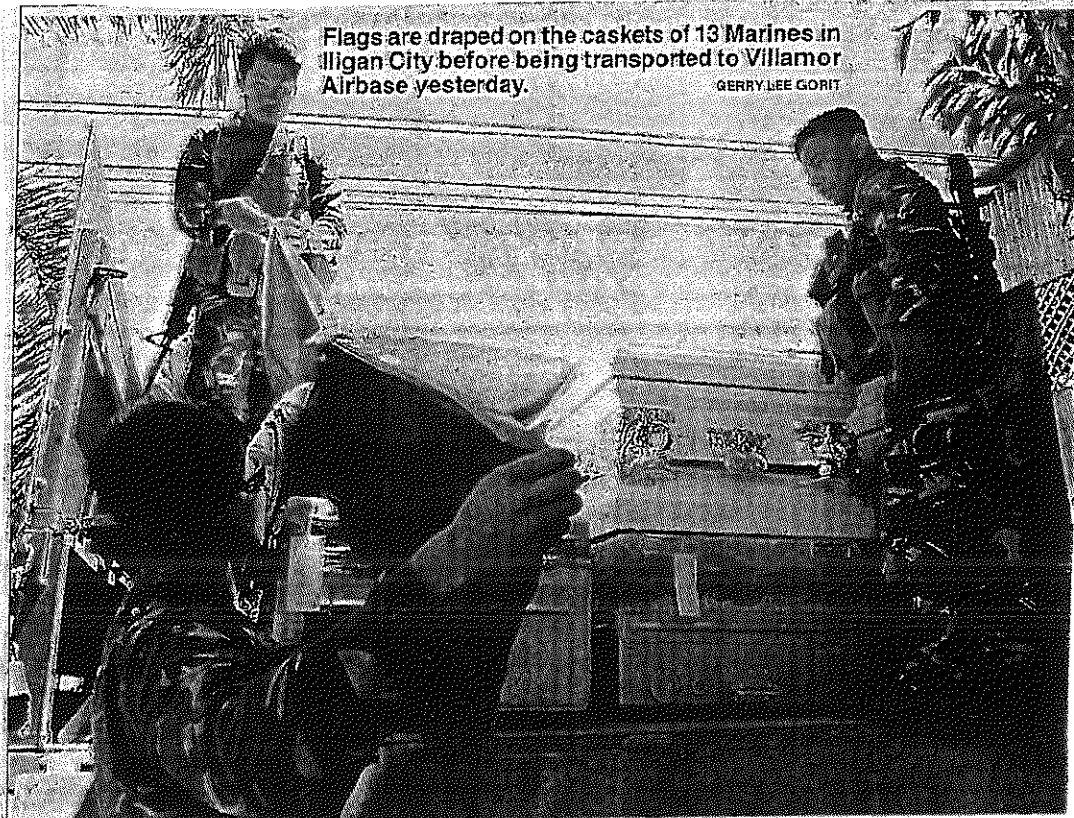


'THANK YOU, SOLDIER' — President Duterte salutes the flag-laden casket of one of the 13 Marines killed in fighting Maute Group terrorists in Marawi City as their remains arrive yesterday at Villamor Air Base in Pasay City. (Czar Dancel)

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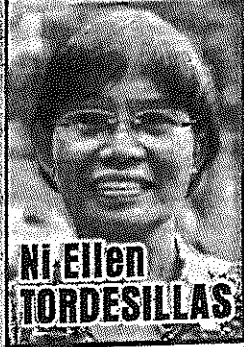


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Pahina. 4

PRANGKAHAN



**Ni Ellen
TORDESILLAS**

Dasal para sa Marawi sa pagdiriwang ng 119 na anibersaryo ng Kalayaan

Sa pagdiriwang natin ngayon araw ng ating ika-119 na Kalayaan ng Pilipinas, ipagdasal natin ang ating mga kababayan sa Marawi City.

Nakapagtibay ng pag-asa ang pahayag ng military na ngayong araw, itataas nila ang bandila sa Marawi City.

Sa kanyang briefing sa Malacñang noong Biyernes, sinabi ni

Brig Gen Restituto Padilla, tagapagsalita ng Armed Forces sa inanunsyo ni AFP Chief of Staff Gen Eduardo Año “maa-ari na nating iwagayway sa bawat sulok ng Marawi ang bandila ng Pilipinas”

“Ginagawa naming sa aming makakaya para mapagkasatuparan ang inanunsyo ng Chief of Staff” sabi ni Padilla

Nakataas ng moral at para bang masabi na makakahinga ka ng maluwag sa pahayag ng military

Ngunit nakakalungkot din ang sumunod na balita. Ang pagkamatay ng 13 na Marines ni General Eduardo Año at pagkaugat ng 40 pa sa umiitng pa ring bakbakan laban sa mga terorista sa Marawi. Ayon sa mga report, base sa mga dokumento, video at iba pang pruwera na nakuha ng military, nagsanib puwersa ang Abu Sayyaf, Maute Group, Jemaah Islamiya at ngayong daw ay ISIS laban sa hukbo ng Pilipinas.

Gusto kasi ng mga militanteng Muslim na mahawakan nila ang buong Marawi City, dahil hinhiingi ng ISIS na bago nila madeklara na caliphate o sangay ng kanilang organisasyon, kailangan may bahagi ng bansa na kontrolado ng kanilang ‘emir’ sa naturang bansa.

Sa pagkamatay ng 13 Marines, umabot na sa 58 ang namatay sa hanay ng mga sundalo. Sabi ng military 138 na raw sa mga militanteng Muslim ang namatay at 20 na sibilyan. Libu-libo ang nasa evacuation center at marami na rin ang nagkakasakit dahil siyempre sa hindi maayos na sitwasyon doon.

Sobra isang libo pa raw ang na-trap o naka-kulong sa ilang bahay, hindi sila makalabas sa takot na barilin sila o mata-maan ng bomba. Wala silang makain at mamom. Yung mga may sakit, kawawa

Yung iba naman daw, ginagawang human shield o pantakip ng mga militante. O hostage para ihinto ng military ang pagbu-bomba.

Hanggang ngayon, hindi pa rin nabuhuli si Isnilon Hapilon, ang Abu Sayyaf lider na ang tangkang paghuli sa kanya ng military noong Mayo 23, ang nagsimulang bakbakan at siyang rason para mag-deklara si Pangulong Duterte ng Martial Law sa buong Mindanao.

Ang labanan daw ngayon ay urban warfare o bahay-bahay. Sabi ng military, hindi naman sila basta-basta makabomba dahil nga dikit-dikit ang mga bahay. Noong isang linggo nga natamaan mismo ang mga sundalo.

Sa giyera, lahat ay talo.

Nakakalungkot na nagdiriwang tayo ng 119 na anibersaryo ng Kalayaan ngunit may mga parte pa ng ating bansa na kailangan pangi-liberate o maalís sa hawak ng mga masasamang mga grupo.

Ipagdasal natin ang ating bansa.

Blog: www.ellentordesillas.com
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Pahina. 4

Pagpupugay sa mga kawal Filipino

Puspusan na ang ginagawang opensiba ng mga tropa ng pamahalaan para ganap na mabawi ang Marawi City sa kamay ng mga terorista. Katunayan ay humingi na rin ng tulong sa Estados Unidos ang ating gobyerno para malinis ang Marawi sa mga nagkakanlong pa rito na mga terorista.

Gustong mangyari ng administrasyong Duterte na mapalaya ang Marawi mula sa mga terorista at nagtakda pa ito ng deadline ngayong pagdiriwang sa Araw ng Kalayaan.

Saludo tayo sa ating mga kanilang buhay para lamang yusan sa Marawi City. Ipinakanilang propesyonalismo bilang buwis ng buhay para sa kapayapaan.

Nakita ng taumbayan ang gol sa atung bayan laban sa mga luhan. Namalas sa kanilang mga na ang isang kawal Filipino ay tu sa sarili nilang bayan.

Martial Law sa Mindanao lakas ng Pilipinas na mga propel. Wala tayong nakitang pang-aa-

Nakakalungkol lamang na pumanaw sa kamay ng mga terorista. Marapat lamang na saluduhan din ang kanilang mga naulila. Higit pa riyon, nararapat lamang na pagkalooban kaagad sila ng tulong ng ating pamahalaan para sa mga naulilang anak, asawa, magulang at kapatid.

Sa lahat ng kawal ng sandatabang lakas saludo kami sa inyo. Mabuhay kayo!



kawal dahil sa pagtataya ng maibalik ang kapayapaan at kaa-ta ng mga kawal Filipino ang mga sundalo na handang magpaan ng sambayanang Filipino kanilang katapatan sa pagtatang-nais maghasik ng ligalig at kaguginagawa ngayon sa Marawi City nay na matapat at mapagmahal

subalit ipinakita ng sandatabang syunal na sundalo sila ng bayan buso

marami rin sa kanilang hanay ang

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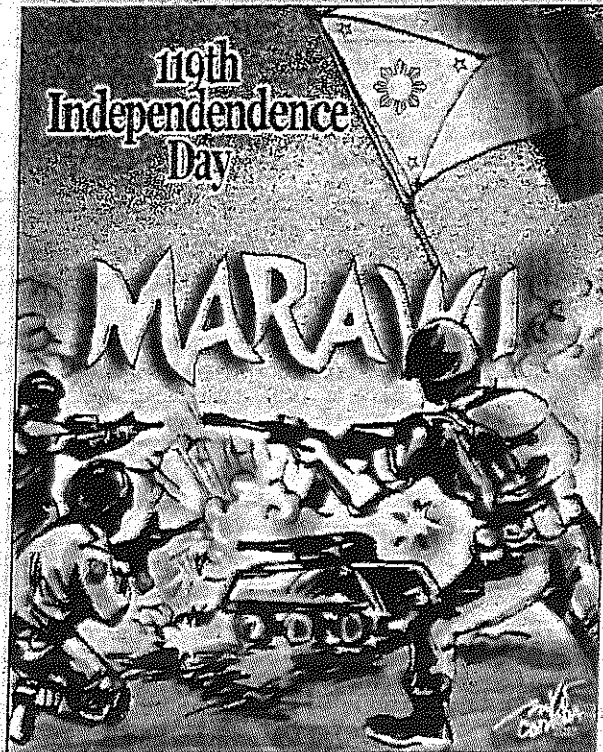
Pahina. 3

Editorial

Ang mga tunay na bayani

EKSAKTO sa paggunita ng ika-119 na Araw ng Kalayaan ang nangyayaring bakbakan sa Marawi City na marami na ang namamatay na sundalo. Kahapon, dumating na sa Villamor Air-base ang mga bangkay ng 13 Philippine Marines na napatay ng teroristang Maute noong Biyernes. Nagsasagawa ng bahay-bahay na paghahanap sa mga naipit na sibilyan ang mga sundalo nang salubungin sila ng mga putok mula sa kung saan-saang direksiyon. Pawang sa snipers nagmula ang mga bala. Dahil madilim, hindi makita ng mga sundalo kung nasaan ang kalaban. Ang mga napatay na sundalo ay kabilang sa unit na nakarekober ng P52 milyong cash sa isang bahay na pinaniniwalaang pondo ng Maute group.

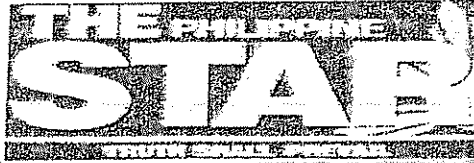
Ganunman, sa kabila na maraming sundalo



ang nalagas, desidido pa rin ang AFP na tapusin ngayong araw na ito ang mga terorista. Tukoy na umano nila ang pinaglulunggaan ng mga ito at mababawi na nila nang lubusan ang Marawi City. Itatayo nila ang bandila ng Pilipinas sa Marawi bilang simbolo na durog na ang local terrorist na Maute na tinutulungan ng Abu Sayyaf sa pangunguna ni Isnilon Hapilon. Wala raw atrasan ang laban na ito at naniniwala silang hindi mananalat ang mga may maitim na balak sa bansa.

Mga tunay na bayani ang mga sundalong nalagutan ng hininga habang nakikipaglaban maipagtanggol lamang ang Marawi sa mga terorista. Sila ang dapat gawaran nang lubusang pagkilala. Ang mga sundalong nasa Marawi at patuloy na nakikipaglaban ay dapat pagkalooban ng medalya ng kagitingan sapagkat sila ang tunay na bayani. Sila ang dapat pagkalooban nang mataas na suweldo at hindi ang mga lingkod-bayan kuno na nagpapasarap sa malamig na opisina. Kaawaawa ang mga bayani na kahit butas-butas ang combat shoes ay patuloy na tinutugis ang kalaban. Kahit sardinas at kanin ang laman ng tiyan, sapat na at matapang na hinaharap ang mga kalaban. Sila ang mga tunay na bayani.

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COMMONSENSE

MARICHU A. VILLANUEVA

'Murphy's Law'

Murphy's law is defined simply as a rule that states "If something can go wrong, it will." An addition to this law reads, "and usually at the worst time." As to who is "Murphy," his identity is unknown. However, "Murphy's law" traces its roots that is said to have started to be used during the 1940's. It is widely believed it may have originated with members of the armed forces during World War II.



The original "Murphy's Law" is, "If there are two or more ways to do something, and one of those ways can result in a catastrophe, then someone will do it." Murphy's law is sometimes expressed as "Anything that can go wrong, will – at the worst possible moment."

President Rodrigo Duterte adverted to "Murphy's law" during his "Talk to the Troops," a day after at least eleven of Army soldiers were killed by the so-called "friendly fire" last May 31. As their Commander-in-chief, President Duterte immediately went out his way to condole with the families and relatives as well as fellow troopers of the fallen soldiers.

Ignoring personal safety, the 72-year old President flew as close as to the battlegrounds where government troopers are trying to flush out the Maute terrorists from their strongholds in Marawi City, Lanao del Sur. The President also visited the wounded soldiers at Camp Evangelista Station Hospital at the 4th Infantry Division in Cagayan de Oro on June 2.

Doing his usual pep talk with the soldiers, including some of the families and relatives of slain soldiers in the on-going military offensive in Marawi City, the President tried to explain how such un-intentional mistake could happen in the heat of the battle.

"And then there is what you would call the Murphy's Law. The Murphy's law states that if anything can go wrong, it will go wrong. *Pag posible ba itong mangyari, mangyayari talaga 'yan,*" President Duterte said and translating the same to his audience.

"We are sorry that it happened. And I hope that this will not be repeated. But there is no guarantee. Any war, everything is stretched and it can break any moment," the President pointed out.

Again, President Duterte reiterated, he takes full responsibility even for this "friendly fire" incident that happened in the course of implementing the orders of the Commander-in-chief to crush the siege laid in Marawi by Islamic State (IS)-inspired Maute bandits.

"Sometimes, in the fog of war, a lot of things could happen," the martial law administrator waxed philosophically.

"I will not hesitate the armed might of the Republic of the Philippines, the Armed Forces, to use every power available in their hand to quell the rebellion and terrorism," the President vowed. But he hastily added his own mis-givings: "It is a very sad commentary. But this thing will happen again and again and again." *of national pride*

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The unfortunate "friendly fire" incident happened while a Marchetti SF-260 aircraft was on a bombing run over militant positions in Marawi City. One bomb hit an Army position locked in close-range combat with the Maute and Abu Sayyaf extremists.

Friendly fire, as defined in Wikipedia, is an attack by a military force on a non-enemy, own, allied or neutral, forces while attempting to attack the enemy, either by misidentifying the target as hostile, or due to errors or inaccuracy.

"So those bombings were under my orders and I will account for it," the President cited as these were carried out during the martial law implementation in Marawi and elsewhere in Mindanao under Proclamation 216 he issued last May 22. The President's designated martial law administrator Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana quickly ordered an investigation into the "friendly fire" incident as it involved two warplanes of the Philippine Air Force (PAF), one of which errantly hit the government forces on the ground.

Having been in combat field during his active military service, Lorenzana initially theorized either those on the plane or those coordinating from the ground made the faulty call during the air strike operation. Precision-guided bombs were supposedly being used earlier in airstrikes in areas where Maute jihadists were suspected to be in hiding and holding forts.

Taking place on the second week of the Maute siege, Lorenzana admitted, the military has already ran out of the high-tech munitions. And for that fateful bombing run, the PAF is using already conventional munitions.

"Sometimes, in the fog of war, a lot of things could happen," the martial law administrator waxed philosophically.

For a brief while, air strikes were suspended after this "friendly fire" incident. But the AFP resumed its full attack, including air strikes in a quick recovery from this un-intended setback. If it is any consolation, Lorenzana cited, the May 31 "friendly fire" incident was the first time for the AFP to encounter such tragic accident.

Getting on its first month of implementation, martial law in Mindanao enabled vigilant government forces to capture Cayamora Maute, the patriarch of Maute brothers Omar and Abdullah. The Maute patriarch and his three companions in a vehicle were nabbed at Army-led Task Force Davao checkpoint while trying to enter Davao City.

They were obviously trying to escape the military clearing operations in Marawi. Alert policemen under the command of Southern Police Regional Office head, Chief Superintendent Manny Gaerlan were able to identify them from the watch list they keep at the checkpoint.

The elder Maute is facing five kidnapping charges in Marawi. Although there is no warrant of arrest against the elder Maute, a hand grenade and a .45 caliber pistol were found in his possession inside the vehicle when caught at the checkpoint.

Gaerlan is not taking any chances now that they have captured such a high-value prisoner. Given the track record of Maute bandits of daring raids on provincial jails to free their detained comrades, Gaerlan sneaked out from Davao the elder Maute. At the wee hours last Thursday, the elder Maute was flown to Manila.

The Maute patriarch was brought to one of the most secured detention centers at Camp Bagong Diwain Taguig City where many of the Abu Sayyaf kidnap-for-ransom bandits were being jailed. Make no mistake about it but jailed Abus tried but died trying to escape from that camp in the past.

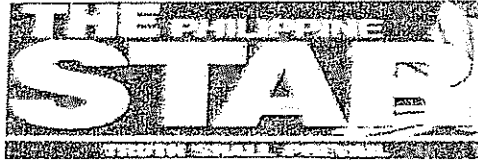
Like President Duterte, may we also invoke the same "Murphy's law" to an erroneous spelling of Gaerlan that appeared at The STAR headline news last week on the capture of the Maute patriarch. The surname of Gaerlan became "Garland" due to an automatic spell-check of the Microsoft software. Our deep apologies, sir.

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Liberating Marawi

The Armed Forces of the Philippines, according to reports, wants to declare Marawi a liberated city today, to coincide with the country's 119th Independence Day anniversary.

Before celebrating, the nation must pay tribute to those who have paid with their lives, and those who continue to risk life and limb to liberate Marawi from the Islamic State-inspired Maute and Abu Sayyaf terrorists, and to keep the threat from spreading to other parts of the country.

Although seemingly outnumbered and outgunned by the AFP, the terrorists appear to be enjoying the support of moneyed individuals and certain sectors. Over the weekend the terrorists managed to kill 13 Marines during 16 hours of fierce firefights, in an area in Marawi where the AFP believes Abu Sayyaf commander Isnilon Hapilon, said to be the IS leader in the Philippines, is holed out.

Security officers are verifying reports that Maute brothers Omar and Abdullah, founding chieftains of the group, were

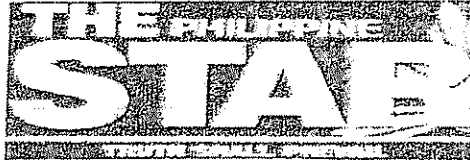
EDITORIAL

among those killed over the weekend as government forces closed in on the core group that is trying to carve out an IS enclave in Mindanao.

Much progress has been made since the AFP launched its offensive in Marawi, supported by commandos of the Philippine National Police. While the deaths of the Mautes are still being validated, the government definitely has in its custody the brothers' parents, both of whom are believed to have played a critical role in providing financing, weapons and logistics to the terrorist group. Matriarch Ominta "Farhana" Romato in particular should be investigated for the source of her substantial assets, which should be frozen and seized if these were illegally amassed.

Honoring those who have given up their lives in liberating Marawi should include determined efforts to ensure that the Mautes can no longer recover and threaten any part of the country again. That certainty would provide a great cause for celebrating Independence Day.

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ANA MARIE PAMINTUAN

Independence

Happy Independence Day! We're celebrating today as US drones are deployed in Marawi City to assist in "pulverizing" Maute and Abu Sayyaf terrorists.



The US, our treaty ally, has also provided missiles and other weaponry to the Armed Forces of the Philippines for the battle to liberate Marawi. With dozens of AFP soldiers dying in the fire-fights, it looks like President Duterte has not exaggerated the magnitude of the threat posed by the Islamic State and its fans in the Mautes and Abu Sayyaf. Now he's even being criticized by the foreign media for failing to detect the IS threat early enough.

Fighter jets obtained by the government from South Korea, declared useless for the AFP not too long ago by Duterte, are now being used in the bombardment. There are reports that defense and military officials are recommending the procurement of more of the jets.

Australia has expressed concern over the risk of the IS threat spreading from Marawi. Some sectors see the statement as an indication that the Aussies might also wade into the battle with some technical support.

Such support, against a group that is believed to also enjoy backing by foreign elements, is a good reminder to the Duterte administration that in this global village, nations pursue an independent foreign policy without losing sight of the geopolitical reality of interdependence.

* * *

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Military men in the government

COMMENTARY

MELITON B. JUANICO

that they are leaders who are goal- or result-oriented and trained to act boldly and with dispatch. They are deliberate men trained to win battles and to shun "paralysis by analysis." Also, military officers, such as the graduates of the Philippine Military Academy, are trained in engineering and in construction work, for instance, and engineers are trained to observe what is called the critical path analysis that strictly schedules the completion of a structure by phases. Failure to meet project completion deadlines could result in compromising a military plan.

To me, the President's state of mind resembles that of the American patriot Thomas Paine in 1776, when he rued the colonists' attitude and cried out, "These are times that try men's souls." This was the first statement in 16 pamphlets Paine wrote that rallied the wavering American people to unite and fight to gain their independence from Great Britain. To Mr. Duterte, these are trying times indeed amid the political, social, economic and environmental ills tearing our country apart. He wants to recruit men with a mirror-image of himself to get things done quickly amid an apathetic population bereft of a siege mentality and a sense of urgency.

I've observed in dismay so many local government leaders spending money to produce land use and development plans that are

either implemented at a snail's pace or just gathering dust on their shelves. But I've also seen decisive and strategic leadership marked by swift and strict implementation of plans. There was Richard Gordon's tenure in the Subic Freeport, Bayani Fernando's in Marikina, Edward Hagedorn's in Puerto Princesa, Mr. Duterte's in Davao City, and Victor Corpuz's in eastern Panay.

Even now, except for the eastern Panay highlands that are being denuded again after Corpuz left, signs of order can still be seen in the local areas that the other leaders had governed. In Subic, there is no need for traffic lights and motorists simply follow the rule of "first to come, first to go." In Marikina, there are no hawkers blocking the sidewalks. In Puerto Princesa, city spaces are clean and even schoolchildren report litterbugs to the police. In Davao City, there are no loitering smokers poisoning the air in public places.

It is my prayer that the military men tasked by the President with even greater responsibilities will derive inspiration from the performance of these personalities.

Meliton B. Juanico, a retired professor of geography at UP Diliman, is a licensed environmental planner and is active in consultancy work in urban and regional planning.

THERE'S THE RUB

CONRADO DE QUIROS IS
ON MEDICAL LEAVE. —Ed.



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Independence means defense of WPS

The nation's attention is riveted to the beautiful but now heavily damaged city of Marawi, hopeful that the Armed Forces would meet its self-imposed deadline of clearing the storied place of Maute and Abu Sayyaf terrorists by Independence Day. The scale of the destruction, the magnitude of the displacement, the lengthening list of the military's dead—these are a source of deep concern for all Filipinos, whether supportive of the imposition of martial law or not.

We understand the military's choice of deadline, completing the campaign on the day we remember the country's birth as an independent nation is genuine symbolism—the same kind that animates our armed services' dedication to flag and Constitution.

But it is not only those who serve the country in uniform who have the responsibility, in the words of the people's preamble to that same Constitution, to "secure to ourselves and our posterity, the blessings of independence and democracy." The fourth principle on which our constitutional order is based recognizes that that responsibility can extend to citizens rendering "personal, military or civil service."

But that fundamental responsibility includes much more than just military service. This is the context, the philosophy of citizenship, behind Supreme Court Justice Antonio Carpio's urgent challenge to all Filipinos to exercise our "civic duty" and defend the West Philippine Sea (WPS).



We are not being called to take up arms, because we have renounced war as an instrument of national policy, because China is a military power, and because the Duterte administration's "we either talk or we go to war" policy is a false choice. There are other ways to defend Philippine sovereign rights and jurisdiction in the West Philippine Sea.

But one thing must be clear, to all Filipinos, whether they support the current administration or long for the previous one, whether they believe the Americans are manipulating the strings or China's extreme nationalism is a substitute for the ruling communist party's abandonment of communism: China's aggressive expansionism in the South China Sea means it will take over or assume control of as much as 80 percent of our exclusive economic zone (in itself larger than the country's total land area) and 100 percent of our extended continental shelf.

As Justice Carpio writes, "This Chinese aggression is the gravest external threat to the Philippines since World War II."

This form of aggression is based on the ridiculous nine-dash line China first put forward only in 1947, and it is a claim resoundingly rejected by the arbitral tribunal ruling on the landmark Philippines vs China case in 2016. Any historic rights China may have enjoyed have been superseded by the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, this claim is incompatible with the Convention, not least, there is no real evidence supporting China's claim that it had historically exercised control over the extremely large area defined by the nine-dash line.

In sum, all Filipinos—and citizens of other countries adversely affected by China's expansive claims to the South China Sea—can rejoice in the tribunal's sweeping judgment. As far as the Philippines is concerned, the judgment allows the country to exercise its rights over most of its exclusive economic zone and all of its extended continental shelf.

How do we defend these rights then? First, we must reject the narrative of fear and smallness: We may be a small country compared to China, but we have the law (and the support of the international community) on our side. How sad to see Filipino lawyers argue that the legal victory we won cannot be enforced. As recent history should tell us, it is in fact possible for smaller nations (e.g., the Netherlands, Mauritius, Nicaragua) to force much larger countries (e.g., Russia, the United Kingdom, the United States) to substantially satisfy the requirements of international justice. Second, we must encourage the strengthening of our alliances—with the Asean, with our traditional allies, with our defense treaty partners. Third, we must seek to engage China. At the turn of the 20th century, Chinese democrats learned important lessons from the Philippine Revolution. As friends, we have much to teach each other.

BUT IT IS NOT ONLY THOSE WHO SERVE THE COUNTRY IN UNIFORM WHO HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY, IN THE WORDS OF THE PEOPLE'S PREAMBLE TO THAT SAME CONSTITUTION, TO 'SECURE TO OURSELVES AND OUR POSTERITY, THE BLESSINGS OF INDEPENDENCE AND DEMOCRACY'

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ONLINE NEWS

12 JUNE 2017

www.pna.gov.ph

AFP observes Day of Silence & Prayer for fallen soldiers, civilians in Marawi conflict

MANILA, June 11 --- In honor of government security forces and civilians who died in the ongoing efforts to clear Marawi City of remaining Maute Group remnants, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) is observing Day of Silence and Prayer starting Sunday until early Monday, AFP spokesperson Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla said.

"For the rest of the day today (Sunday) and early tomorrow (Monday), we shall not be providing updates. The AFP will observe a Day of Silence and Prayer in tribute to the fallen heroes of Marawi and also in remembrance of the innocent lives lost to rebel atrocities," he added.

As of Saturday, the military reported that security troops sustained 58 dead in the ongoing efforts to liberate Marawi City from the terrorists and another 20 civilians executed by the lawless elements early in the conflict which started May 23.

Thirteen of the recent losses were Marine troopers who were killed in a major engagement between Marine units and Maute Group terrorists which lasted for some 14 hours in Barangay Lilot Madaya in Marawi City Friday.

Fighting started 3:30 a.m. and ended 5 p.m. of June 9. Around 40 were also reported wounded.

"Our men served with honor and we ask you to join us in prayer for the repose of their souls, strength for the bereaved families in this moment of grief and for peace in our land," Padilla concluded. (Priam F. Nepomuceno/PNA)

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Maute death toll now at 191 — AFP

MANILA, June 11 -- The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) on Sunday announced that it has so far neutralized 191 Maute Group terrorists in the ongoing operations to clear Marawi City of the lawless elements.

"The AFP has greatly diminished the number of the terrorists. So far 191 were confirmed dead while undetermined number of them killed were being validated," AFP public affairs office chief Col. Edgard Arevalo said.

A total of 158 firearms were also seized in the ongoing operations, he added.

Government losses as of Saturday stands at 58 troops with 20 civilians executed by the terrorists.

"However, the recalcitrant remnants of the Maute-ISIS continue their stiff resistance while holed in fortified buildings and structures," Arevalo pointed out.

Using these defensive positions, the terrorists are using sniper fires, mortar fire, anti-tank rounds, and improvised explosive devices to kill anyone -- government security forces, relief and rescue workers, and civilians -- who get in the way of their fanatical desire to dismember Marawi from the Philippines and establish it as a "Wilayat" or an ISIS province in this part of Asia, the military official said.

"Your AFP and PNP will continue to break the heavy resistance of and clear Marawi from the Maute-ISIS group, restore normalcy in the city, and make way for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Marawi," he added.

And to be able to fulfill that mission, Arevalo said that there is need to use armor, artillery and air power assets to breach the terrorists stronghold and their underground fortresses.

"This has since become a fight not only of your security forces, but also of every peace-loving Filipino deserving of a peaceful and progressive nation," he pointed out.

"This war is between good and evil. Everyone needs everybody to stand up, unite, fight against, and repulse the onslaught of the forces of evil attempting to establish foothold in our land. We would not and should not surrender even an inch of our soil to the harbingers of doom and perfidy," Arevalo concluded. (PRIAM F. NEPOMUCENO/PNA)

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Naming Hapilon as ISIS 'Emir' highlight terror group's plan to expand in PHL

MANILA, June 11 -- The announcement of Abu Sayyaf leader Isnilon Hapilon's designation as the 'Emir' of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in Southeast Asia indicates that the group is planning to expand in the Philippines.

This was stressed by Major Gen. Melquiades Feliciano, AFP Civil-Military Operations deputy chief-of-staff, during PTV-4's Countering Violent Extremism Forum Friday.

"So another indication of (ISIS) the expansion in the Philippines, Isnilon Hapilon was (earlier) declared by (ISIS leader) Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi as the "Emir" in Southeast Asia," he added.

Feliciano also stressed that Hapilon decided to go to Lanao Del Sur because there was unrelenting military operations in the traditional Abu Sayyaf areas in Basilan, Tawi-Tawi and Sulu and the latter saw an opportunity to establish a caliphate in the province with the help of Maute Group and other local terrorist groups.

In the same forum, Dr. Rohan Gunaratna, a Singaporean analysts on security affairs, said ISIS is looking at Philippines, especially Mindanao, after its failure to establish a caliphate in Indonesia.

The terror group's expansion started in 2014 when ISIS decided to go beyond the borders of Iraq, Iran, Syria and the Middle East and look into Africa, the Caucasus and Asia, he added in the network's Skype interview.

"The Philippines was selected because they could not establish a caliphate in Indonesia," Gunaratna added.

Also, in the Philippines, ISIS found local terrorist groups willing to support its extremism cause.

This includes Hapilon's group in Basilan, ASG sub-leader Hatib Hajan Sawadjaan band in Sulu and the Ansar Khalifa Philippines in the SOCCSKSARGEN region, and the Maute Group in Lanao Del Sur and the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters to name a few.

With these new alliances, Gunaratna said ISIS saw an opportunity to create a new threat landscape in the southern Philippines. (Priam F. Nepomuceno/PNA)