

*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**

**25 June 2017**

**Sunday**

**Copy for: CG, PA**

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

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

TODAY'S WEATHER FORECAST (JUNE 26, 2017) / SUNDAY

**INTERTROPICAL CONVERGENCE ZONE AFFECTING CP SOUTHERN MINDANAO (As of 5:00 AM - June 24, 2017)**

PHILIPPINE AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY (PAR)

|                            |                      |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>SUNRISE</b>             | <b>SUNSET</b>        |
| 5:29 AM                    | 6:28 PM              |
| <b>MOONRISE</b>            | <b>MOONSET</b>       |
| 6:28 AM                    | 7:40 PM              |
| <b>NEW MOON</b>            | <b>FIRST QUARTER</b> |
| JUN 24<br>10:31 AM         | JUL 1<br>8:51 AM     |
| <b>LOW TIDE</b>            | <b>HIGH TIDE</b>     |
| <b>MANILA SOUTH HARBOR</b> |                      |
| 6:34 PM                    | 10:04 AM             |
| -0.20 Meter                | 1.45 Meter           |

Partly cloudy to at times cloudy with rainshowers and/or thunderstorms

|                     |  |            |                        |  |            |                       |  |            |
|---------------------|--|------------|------------------------|--|------------|-----------------------|--|------------|
| <b>METRO MANILA</b> |  |            | <b>TAGAYTAY</b>        |  |            | <b>TACLOBAN</b>       |  |            |
| 25 - 34 °C          |  | 25 - 33 °C | 21 - 30 °C             |  | 21 - 30 °C | 25 - 31 °C            |  | 25 - 31 °C |
| <b>TUGUEGARAO</b>   |  |            | <b>LEGAZPI</b>         |  |            | <b>CAGAYAN DE ORO</b> |  |            |
| 25 - 35 °C          |  | 25 - 34 °C | 26 - 33 °C             |  | 26 - 33 °C | 24 - 32 °C            |  | 24 - 32 °C |
| <b>LAOAG</b>        |  |            | <b>PUERTO PRINCESA</b> |  |            | <b>METRO DAVAO</b>    |  |            |
| 26 - 33 °C          |  | 25 - 33 °C | 26 - 33 °C             |  | 25 - 32 °C | 25 - 32 °C            |  | 25 - 32 °C |
| <b>BAGUIO</b>       |  |            | <b>ILOILO/BACOLOD</b>  |  |            | <b>ZAMBOANGA</b>      |  |            |
| 17 - 25 °C          |  | 17 - 24 °C | 26 - 32 °C             |  | 26 - 33 °C | 24 - 32 °C            |  | 24 - 31 °C |
| <b>SBMA/CLARK</b>   |  |            | <b>METRO CEBU</b>      |  |            |                       |  |            |
| 26 - 35 °C          |  | 26 - 34 °C | 25 - 32 °C             |  | 25 - 32 °C |                       |  |            |

**DZRH NEWS** MONDAY - FRIDAY  
11 AM & 5 PM

**PILIPINAS HD**

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

28 June 2017

Manila  
Standard

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# TERROR LEADER MAY HAVE FLED MARAWI'

**M**ARAWI—One of America's most wanted terrorists may have escaped a five-week battle with Islamist militants in this city, which began with a raid to capture him, the military said Saturday.

Isnilon Hapilon, a veteran Filipino militant, said to be the leader of the Islamic State group in Southeast Asia, has not been seen in the battle zone in Marawi City, said Lt. Gen. Carlito Galvez, head of the military's Western Mindanao Command.

An attempt by government troops to arrest Hapilon in Marawi on May 23 triggered a rampage by Islamist militants flying black IS flags who seized parts of the mainly Muslim city.

President Rodrigo Duterte declared martial law in Marawi and the entire southern region of Mindanao, unleashing an offensive to crush what he said was an attempt by the jihadist group to establish a strong-

hold in the area.

"He [Hapilon] has not been seen in the area. We have some reports that he was already able to slip somewhere but as of now we are still confirming the reports," Galvez said in a radio interview.

Asked if Hapilon was on the run, he said: "Yes, yes because reportedly he suffered a lot of casualties. Majority of his group, more than half, were casualties."

Hapilon was indicted in Washington for his involvement in the 2001 kidnapping of three Americans in the Philippines, and has a \$5-million bounty on his head from the US government, which has his name on its "most wanted" terror list.

He leads a faction of the bandit group Abu Sayyaf that has pledged allegiance to IS.

Security analysts said he has been recognized by IS as its "emir" or leader in Southeast Asia, a region where the group wants to establish a caliphate.

The military said Hapilon's group had joined forces with another armed militancy, the Maute group, to launch the Marawi siege, now on its second month.

On Saturday, security forces continued intense air raids and artillery fire on pockets of Marawi still occupied by the militants, while troops fought house-to-house gunbattles on the ground.

"The operation is going on, the firefights are intense. We have gained substantial ground," said Galvez.

Nearly 300 militants and 67 government troops have been killed in the fighting, according to official figures.



**ISNILON HAPILON**

Galvez said there are "strong indications" that two or three of the Maute brothers—among the key players in the siege—had been killed, including Omarkhayam Maute, believed to be the group's top leader.

Only one brother, Abdullah, has been visible in the fighting, Galvez added. **AFP**

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 **MANILA BULLETIN**  
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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# Hapilon slips out of Marawi?

## Malaysian financier of Maute Group still alive – cop official

By AFP and ARGYLL CYRUS B. GEDUCUS

One of America's most wanted terrorists may have escaped a five-week battle with Islamist militants in Marawi City, which began with a raid to capture him, the military said Saturday.

Isnilon Hapilon, a veteran Filipino militant said to be the leader of the

Islamic State (IS) group in Southeast Asia, has not been seen in the battle zone in Marawi City, said Lt. Gen. Carlito Galvez, head of the military's Western Mindanao Command.

An attempt by government troops to arrest Hapilon in Marawi on May 23 triggered a rampage by Islamic State-linked Maute Group, backed by some foreign fighters, who seized parts of the

mainly Muslim city.

President Duterte immediately declared martial law in Marawi and the entire Mindanao, unleashing an offensive to crush what he said ► **13**

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## Hapilon slips out...



was an attempt by the jihadist group to establish a province in the area.

“He (Hapilon) has not been seen in the area. We have some reports that he was already able to slip somewhere but as of now we are still confirming the reports,” Galvez said in an interview with DZBB radio station.

Asked if Hapilon was on the run, he said: “Yes, yes because reportedly he suffered a lot of casualties. Majority of his group, more than half, were casualties.”

### \$5-million bounty

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The military says Hapilon’s group had joined forces with the Maute Group to launch the Marawi siege, now on its second month.

On Saturday, security forces continued intense air raids and artillery fire on pockets of Marawi still occupied by the militants, while troops fought house-to-house gunbattles on the ground.

“The operation is going on, the firefights are intense. We have gained substantial ground,” said Galvez, the military commander.

Nearly 300 militants and 67 government troops have been killed in the fighting, according to official figures.

Galvez said there are “strong indications” that two or three of the

Maute brothers – among the key players in the siege – had been killed, including Omarkhayam Maute, believed to be the group’s top leader.

Only one brother, Abdullah, has been visible in the fighting, Galvez added.

### Foreign fighters

Presidential spokesman Ernesto Abella said in Manila the military is “validating an intelligence report” that Malaysian Mahmud bin Ahmad, who helped lead and finance the Marawi siege, died from wounds he had sustained in the early days of the fighting.

Abella said he would not officially confirm the death unless government troops recovered the remains.

“We have been told that the military has information of the spot where he was buried and government troops are now trying to locate it and recover the remains. Once done, only then can we make an official confirmation,” he said.

Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) chief Gen. Eduardo Año told The Associated Press (AP) on Friday that Mahmud was wounded in the fighting in Marawi last month and reportedly died on June 7 of his wounds.

When asked about Mahmud’s reported death, Malaysia’s Inspector General of Police Khalid Abu Bakar told AFP in a text message in Kuala Lumpur: “Not true. He is still alive.”

Abella said authorities were also verifying another intelligence report that 89 foreign fighters are in Mindanao, entering the region through the Philippines’ porous maritime borders with Malaysia and Indonesia.

“This is the purpose why we are making a collective effort against terrorism and violent extremism through a trilateral cooperation with Indone-

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sia and Malaysia,” Abella said.

The Philippines, Indonesia, and Malaysia have agreed to jointly develop and implement counter-terrorism measures and strategies to prevent future terrorist attacks in the region.

Indonesian President Joko Widodo, during a phone conversation with President Duterte, has reaffirmed Indonesia's commitment to help the Philippines fight terrorism in Mindanao.

According to Abella, both leaders felt the need to step up cooperation to address threats posed by terrorism and violent extremism.

“Both noted the importance of the

trilateral meeting between Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines to strengthen cooperation on countering terrorism among regional neighboring states,” he said.

The Palace official also said that Widodo also vowed to help the Philippines in restoring peace in Mindanao, particularly in the war-torn Marawi City.

According to the Palace official, Duterte welcomed Widodo's remarks and assured the Indonesian President that the Philippines will stay true to its commitment in working together to address terrorism.

On Friday, Galvez said troops

recovered two decomposing corpses that bore features of people from the Middle East.

Eight other militants, including those from Chechnya, Indonesia and Malaysia, had been killed earlier in the fighting, defense chief Delfin Lorenzana has said.

Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines on June 19 launched joint patrols on their maritime borders to block the movement of the militants.

Australia said Friday it will send two high-tech spy planes to help Filipino troops fight the militants, joining the US which has also provided similar help.

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# Military to observe humanitarian pause

## *8-hour ceasefire for Eid'l Fitr*

By JAIME LAUDE and JOHN UNSON

The military will observe an eight-hour pause today in combat operations against Maute extremists in Marawi City in observance of the Islamic religious feast of Eid'l Fitr.

Lt. Col. Jo-Ar Herrera, spokesman of Joint Task Force Marawi, said the "humanitarian ceasefire" will start at 6 a.m. today and will run for eight hours, until 2 p.m.

Eid'l Fitr is the culmination of the holy month of Ramadan observed by Muslims worldwide that requires a 30-day, dawn-to-dusk fasting and prayers.

Earlier, Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) spokesman Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla, reacting to calls by Muslim leaders for a halt to military actions today in deference to Eid'l Fitr, said any ceasefire or pause in military actions in Marawi would depend on the recommendation of the ground commanders.

Padilla stressed, however, that in the absence of such recommendation to halt

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# Military From Page 1

combat operations in the city tomorrow, clearing operations would continue without let up to expedite Marawi's liberation.

Fighting initially broke out in Marawi on May 23, when teams of soldiers and policemen tried to serve an arrest warrant against Basilan-based Abu Sayyaf commander Isnilon Hapilon, said to be designated Emir of the Islamic State (IS) in Southeast Asia, in Barangay Basak Malutlot.

What was expected to be just a short-lived conflict turned into a full-blown war after the Maute-IS terrorists attacked and occupied key parts of Marawi City.

To date, despite the preponderance of military troops, the terrorists are still holding up in at least four of the 96 barangays in the city known as the center of Islamic faith in the country.

And after more than a month of fighting, 290 Maute terrorists, 26 civilians and 69 soldiers have been killed in the continuing conflict.

Meanwhile, the military has yet to establish the identities of foreign-looking individuals whose remains were found among the slain Maute members within the zone of conflict. "We don't have the exact information yet on this particular report," Padilla said, in reference to foreign-looking terrorists who were reportedly killed along with their local Maute counterparts.

Western Mindanao Command (Westmincom) commander Lt. Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr. was quoted in a radio interview yesterday as saying that the bodies of these foreign-looking terrorists have been found in the battle area.

He added the bodies would be recovered as soon as possible for proper burial and DNA testing.

Galvez was also quoted as saying that around 10 foreign-looking men were seen by the Maute member captured by soldiers last Friday and they reportedly have direct involvement in the fighting as snipers and in bomb demolition operations.

The Indonesian defense ministry earlier claimed around 1,200 foreign jihadists are operating in the Philippines.

A senior anti-terrorism official, citing their own records, bared that the Indonesian figure of foreign terrorists operating in the country is somewhat bloated.

"Based on our monitoring there are around 300 and not 1,200 of them who are already in the country," he said.

He added these foreign jihadists are mostly based in various areas of Mindanao, with a handful of them posing as religious preachers, if not legitimate businessmen, in key cities in the country, including Metro Manila.

And after more than a month of fighting, 290 Maute terrorists, 26 civilians and 69 soldiers have been killed in the continuing conflict.

## Eid'1 Fitr

In Cotabato City, thousands of moderate Muslims cannot perform Eid'1 Fitr rites at the capitol of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) due to a possible attack by outcast Islamic militants.

Neutral Muslims in the city and nearby towns have performed peacefully for decades the yearly Eid'1 Fitr *sambaiyang* or congregational prayer at the ARMM parade grounds.

ARMM Gov. Mujiv Hataman had cancelled the Eid'1 Fitr activity in the 32-hectare regional government center in Cotabato City due to mounting threats of sabotage.

Hataman, presiding chair-

man of ARMM's inter-agency regional peace and order council, said they cannot put at risk the lives of thousands of worshippers.

"Terrorists have absolute disregard for Islamic teachings on respect for life. They attack people, Muslims and non-Muslims alike, to show capability to harm the hapless and most vulnerable," Hata-

man said. Officials in Lanao del Sur and its provincial capital Marawi are emotional about not having had a solemn Ramadan due to the trouble the Dawlah Islamia instigated.

The siege of Marawi dislocated more than 200,000 villagers.

The spokesman of the Lanao del Sur provincial crisis management committee, Assemblyman Zia Alonto Adiong of ARMM's Regional Assembly, said terrorists have robbed them of the chance to observe Ramadan undisturbed as they did in decades past.

"The conflict also stole from us the chance to go out and do Eid'1 Fitr outdoor prayer and celebration in our homes. These are very strong centuries-old Maranao traditions," Adiong said.

Adiong said fasting at daytime in evacuation sites is difficult.

"I heard so many evacuees have no way but forego with an obligation that they have peacefully complied with in years prior. The conviction to abstain from food and drinks during the day is there, so overwhelming, but the condition in evacuation sites are dire and uncooperative," Adiong lamented.

Even the mayor of Cotabato City, Cynthia Guiani-Sayadi, was forced to ban the evening tours on vehicles of moderate worshippers to chant "allahu akbar" using public address facilities right after the local Darul Iftah (House of Opin-

ions) announces the closure of the Ramadan fasting month.

The restriction is meant to prevent exposing local Muslim folk to dangers when they go out for their so-called nighttime "mobile takbir," also a decades-old tradition.

Guiani-Sayadi assured residents that her administration, the local police and the anti-terrorism Army-led Joint Task Force Kutawato are in full control, contrary to circulating text messages warning of imminent danger and alleged sightings of terrorists in some barangays.

"As moderate and peace-loving Muslims, we believe that sometimes we need to get hurt for us to rise and bounce back as better Muslims," Hataman said.

In Iligan City, which is some 35 kilometers from Marawi, residents are bracing themselves as messages warning that "something will happen" tomorrow is spreading via Facebook and text messages.

But they try to go on with their lives and continue to perform their religious obligations.

One resident identified only as Rachel said she and her co-workers had to report for work early because of the kilometer-long queue to pass through the checkpoint in Barangay Suarez where everybody has to present a valid identification card.

"We have become accustomed to it because we commute everyday," she said. "When will this end?"

Meanwhile, former Marantao, Lanao del Sur mayor Mohammadali Abinal and Maguing mayor Mamauian Abinal, who were identified by President Duterte as among the narco-politicians, asked for a thorough investigation into their respective cases after illegal drugs were found in their residences during a clearing operation by the military, followed by the police.

- With Lino dela Cruz

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# INQUIRER

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## ARMY TO FIGHT MAUTE IN CYBERWAR

By Jeannette I. Andrade  
@jiandradeINQ

The Army said Saturday has fielded online combatants to thwart attempts by the Maute group to spread online propaganda.

Task Force Marawi commander Brig. Gen. Rolly Bautista said a social media monitoring team was formed to specifically foil the Maute group's attempts to "sow fear and terror" and recruit more members through cyber space.

Bautista said that when the crisis in Marawi City started last month, the Philippine Army's 1st infantry (Tabak) division, which he commands, was incidentally conducting a series of trainings on digital media capability enhancement.

He pointed out that training participants from various units in the army division eventually became the core group of Task Force Marawi's social media monitoring team.

"This is part of the Division's

digital media initiatives to equip our personnel not only for actual combat operations but also enhance our digital capability in facing another kind of battle using internet technologies for disseminating information online and bring the Division to the community it serves," Bautista said.

"The enemy and their supporters are actively utilizing online digital media to spread false information about the situation in Marawi City," he said.

"But our team is on the lookout to engage and provide counter measures and prevent the enemy of sowing fear and terror."

An October 2016 report by regional security expert Sidney Jones, of the Indonesia-based Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict, described the Maute group as the "most social media savvy" among terrorists claiming allegiance to the Islamic State.

The Maute group amplified its message and recruit more members through social media. INQ

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## Army: No terror threat in Visayas

ORMOC CITY, Leyte - The commander of the Philippine Army's 802nd Brigade based here stressed that despite presence of armed men in the Visayas, there is no direct threat of terror attacks.

The whole of Visayas is still at Level 1 for terror alert which means it is not facing threat for any terror attack, said Brig. Gen. Francisco F. Mendoza, Jr. in a telephone interview on Friday.

"There are armed men, yes. NPAs (New People's Army) are armed. But no threat for terrorism," he pointed out.

Following the declaration of martial law in Mindanao a month ago, various reports reached their office concerning presence of armed men in different areas pictured as similar to "terror attackers" in Marawi City.

"All information reaching our of-

fice that may pose imminent danger to peace and security are right away verified. So far, these are just hearsay," Mendoza said.

"As we receive the information, we verify it. But up to now, no first-hand informant has ever drawn details. All of them could not give light to the information spreading around and cannot pinpoint who really met what they referred to as 'armed' men," he added.

On the recent information spreading in social media saying armed men were sighted in Albuera, "it is now being verified," Mendoza said.

Aside from watching over insurgency issues, the Army is currently working closely with the police, particularly for the nightly events at the city to celebrate its fiesta on June 29th. (PNA)

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## Army: No terror threat in Visayas

ORMOC CITY, Leyte – The army commander of the 802nd Brigade based in the city stressed that despite presence of armed men in the Visayas, there was no director threat of terror attacks.

The whole of Visayas is still at Level 1 for terror alert which means it is not facing threat for any terror attack, said Brig. Gen. Francisco Mendoza Jr. in a telephone interview the other day.

There are armed men, yes. NPA (New People's Army) are armed. But no threat for terrorism," he pointed out.

Following the declaration of martial Law in Mindanao a month ago, various reports reached their office concerning presence of armed men in different areas pictured as similar to "terror attackers" in Marawi. Mendoza refuted these, saying all were hearsay.

All information reaching our office that may pose imminent danger to peace and security are right away verified. So far, these

are just hearsay," Mendoza said.

"As we receive the information, we verify it. But up to now, no first-hand informant has ever drawn details. All of them could not give light to the information spreading around and cannot pinpoint who really met what they referred to as 'armed' men," he added.

On the recent information spreading in social media saying armed men were sighted in Albura, "it is now being verified," Mendoza said.

Aside from watching over insurgency issues, the army is currently working closely with the police, particularly for the nightly events at the city to celebrate its fiesta on June 29th.

City police director Senior Supt. Ramil Ramirez, in an talk with the media also on Friday, said he was personally supervising his men to conduct close watch at the city plaza where huge crowd would be joining the evening merriment.

Police cars are constantly

roaming around even at the outskirts to check any suspicious personalities around and to respond immediately to emergency calls.

Ramirez assured the public for maximum security provided especially during the Bb. Ormoc

coronation night.

"Remember, you are not viewers, you are here to keep watch for everyone's safety," he reminded to the more or less 30 police force to be assigned to the venue.

PNA

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INQUIRER

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## IS HAPILON STILL IN MARAWI CITY?

By **Leila B. Salaverria**  
@LeilasINQ

One of America's most wanted terrorists may have escaped a five-week battle with Islamic State (IS)-inspired terrorists in Marawi City, which began with a raid to capture him last month, the military said on Saturday.

Abu Sayyaf leader Isnilon Hapilon, a veteran Filipino fighter said to be the leader of the IS group in Southeast Asia, has not been seen in the battle zone in Marawi City, said Lt. Gen. Carlito Galvez, head of the military's Western Mindanao Command.

An attempt by government troops to arrest Hapilon on May 23 triggered a rampage by Islamist fighters flying black IS flags and backed by Asian and Middle Eastern fighters who seized parts of the mainly Muslim city of Marawi.

President Duterte declared martial law in the entire region of Mindanao, unleashing an offensive to crush what he said was an attempt by the terrorist group to establish an Islamic province in the area.

"He (Hapilon) has not been seen in the area. We have some reports that he was already able to slip somewhere but as of now we are still confirming the reports," Galvez said in an interview with dzBB radio station.

Asked if Hapilon was on the run, he said: "Yes, yes because reportedly he suffered a lot of casualties. Majority of his group, more than half, were casualties."

Galvez's statement appeared to contradict earlier military reports, which said Hapilon was still in the area.

The military on Friday also said top Malaysian IS leader,



Hapilon: \$5-million bounty

Mahmud bin Ahmad, was reported killed in the fighting, as well as Omarkhayam Maute. But their deaths could not be independently confirmed, with Malaysian security officials casting doubt on the reports.

### US bounty

Hapilon was indicted in Washington for his involvement in the 2001 kidnapping of three Americans in the Philippines, and has a \$5-million bounty on his head from the US government, which has his name on its "most wanted" terror list.

He leads a faction of the militant group Abu Sayyaf that has pledged allegiance to IS. On top of the US bounty, Manila has also offered P10 million for his capture as well as half a million pesos each for the arrest of brothers Omarkhayam and Abdullah Maute.

Security analysts say Hapilon has been recognized by IS as its "emir," or leader, in Southeast Asia, a region where the group wants to establish a caliphate.

The military says Hapilon's group had joined forces with the Maute Group, to launch the Marawi siege, now on

its second month.

Galvez said there are "strong indications" that two or three of the Maute brothers among the key players in the siege had been killed, including Omarkhayam, believed to be the group's top leader.

Only Abdullah has been visible in the fighting, Galvez added.

### Foreign fighters

Presidential spokesperson Ernesto Abella in Manila said the military is "validating an intelligence report" that Mahmud, who helped lead and finance the Marawi siege, died from wounds he had sustained in the early days of the fighting.

When asked about Mahmud's reported death, Malaysia's Inspector General of Police Khalid Abu Bakar told Agence France-Presse (AFP) in a text message in Kuala Lumpur: "Not true. He is still alive."

Abella said authorities were also verifying another intelligence report that 89 foreign fighters are in Mindanao, entering the region through the Philippines' porous maritime borders with Malaysia and Indonesia.

"They might have entered the Philippines via the backdoor where the point of entry is Mindanao via Indonesia or Malaysia," Abella said. "This is the purpose why we are making a collective effort against terrorism and violent extremism through a trilateral cooperation with Indonesia and Malaysia," he added.

Foreign ministers of the three countries held a meeting in Manila on Thursday and agreed to coordinate more closely to combat cross-border flows of weapons, fighters and finances supporting terrorism. —WITH REPORTS FROM JOVIC YEE AND AFP INQ

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## Terror leader Hapilon may have fled Marawi

One of the world's most wanted terrorists may have escaped a five-week battle with the Islamist Maute group militants in Marawi City, which began with a raid to capture him, the military said yesterday.

Abu Sayyaf leader Isnilon Hapilon, a veteran Filipino militant said to be the leader of the Islamic State (IS) group in Southeast Asia, has not been seen in the battle zone in Marawi City, according to Lt. Gen. Carlito Galvez, head of the military's Western Mindanao Command.

An attempt by government troops to arrest Hapilon in Marawi on May 23 triggered a rampage by Islamist militants flying black IS flags and backed by some foreign fighters who seized parts of the mainly Muslim city.

President Duterte declared martial law in Marawi and the entire southern region of Mindanao, unleashing an offensive to crush what he said was an attempt by the jihadist group to establish a caliphate in the region.

"He (Hapilon) has not been seen in the area. We have some reports that he was already

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able to slip somewhere but as of now we are still confirming the reports," Galvez said in an interview with dzBB radio.

Asked if Hapilon was on the run, Galvez said: "Yes, yes, because reportedly he suffered a lot of casualties. Majority of his group, more than half, were casualties."

Hapilon is wanted for the 2001 kidnapping of three Americans,

among other foreigners, in the Philippines. The US government has put up a \$5-million bounty for his capture with his name on its "most wanted" terror list.

Hapilon leads a faction of the Abu Sayyaf that has pledged allegiance to IS.

Security analysts say he has been recognized by IS as its "amir," or leader, in Southeast Asia, a region where the group wants to establish a caliphate.

The military said Hapilon's group joined forces with the Maute group to launch the Marawi siege, now on its second month.

Yesterday, security forces continued intense air raids and artillery fire on pockets of Marawi still occupied by the militants, while troops fought house-to-house gunbattles on the ground.

"The operation is going on, the firefights are intense. We have gained substantial ground," Galvez said.

Nearly 300 militants and 67 government troops have been killed in the fighting, according to official figures.

Galvez said there are "strong indications" that two or three of the Maute brothers – among the key players in the siege – had been killed, including Omarkhayam Maute, believed to be the group's top leader.

Only one brother, Abdullah, has been visible in the fighting, Galvez added.

– AFP

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# MAUTE SNIPERS DAYUHAN!

**Nina Aries Cano, JG Tumbado at Al Jacinto**

Pinaniniwalaang mga dayuhang terorista ang nagsisilbing snipers ng Maute Group sa pakikipagbambakan sa mga tropa ng gobyerno sa Marawi City.

Sinabi ni Lt. Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr., commander ng Western Mindanao Command ng Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), na ito ang kanilang nabatid batay na rin sa pahayag ng mga teroristang nagtangkang tumakas mula sa Marawi subalit naaresto ng mga awtoridad.

“May possibility po based dun sa nahuli natin two days ago, may nahuli kaming tumatakas.

Based on his personal account, may nakita siya na sampu na foreign looking guys. Then he said most of them are snipers and bomb experts,” ayon kay Galvez.

Nauna na rin umanong nakarekober ang mga awtoridad ng tinatayang 13 armas kabilang ang sniper rifle.

Ang paniwalang may mga kasamang dayuhang terorista ang Maute Group ay lalo pang pinalakas ng pagkakatagpo sa clearing operations ng mga tropa ng pamahalaan sa Marawi ng dalawang bangkay na pinaniniwalaang mga taga-Gitnang Silangan.

Ayon kay Galvez, nasa decomposing state na ang mga nadiskubrenang bangkay na walang nakitang pagkakakilanlan.

“Build ng katawan at tangkad nila at complexion nila maputi ng konti, also hugis ng ilong at makita ‘yung mukha there’s a possibility na Middle Eastern,” sabi ni Galvez.

Dahil dito, umaabot na aniya sa 10 ang mga dayuhang terorista na napatay ng mga tropa ng gobyerno sa sagupaan laban sa Maute Group simula nang sumalakay ang mga ito sa Marawi City noong Mayo 23.

Kabilang umano sa mga naunang napatay na dayuhan ay dalawang Ma-

laysian, dalawang Saudi Arabia national, dalawang Indonesian, isang Yemeni at isang galing sa Chechnya.

## **89 DAYUHANG TERORISTA NAKAPASOK SA MINDANAO?**

Bineberipika naman ngayon ng AFP ang katotohanan hinggil sa ulat na may 89 na hinihinalang mga dayuhang terorista ang nakapasok na sa Mindanao.

“They might have entered the Philippines via the backdoor where the point of entry is Mindanao

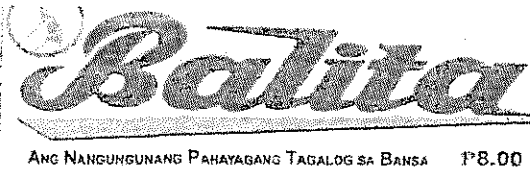
via Indonesia or Malaysia,” ayon kay Presidential Spokesperson Ernesto Abella.

“This is the purpose why we are making a collective effort against terrorism and violent extremism through a trilateral cooperation with Indonesia and Malaysia,” dagdag ni Abella.

Nagkasundo na aniya ang tatlong bansa na magtutungan at magpatupad ng counter-terrorism measures at strategies upang maiwasan ang posibleng pag-atake ng mga terorista sa rehiyon.

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## Mga Pinoy, malaki ang tiwala sa militar, pulisya

Malaki ang tiwala ng mga Pilipino sa Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) at Philippine National Police (PNP), na nagtamo ng pinakamataas na markang "very good" net ratings sa resulta ng survey ng Social Weather Stations (SWS) na inilabas nitong Biyernes ng gabi.

Lumabas sa nationwide survey na isinagawa noong Marso 30 hanggang Abril 2, 2016 sa 1,500 respondent na 75 porsiyento ng mga Pinoy ang may malaking tiwala at 9% ang hindi gaanong nagtiwala sa AFP, at 69% ang may malaking tiwala at 14% ang hindi gaanong nagtiwala sa PNP.

Binanggit ng SWS na ang mga markang ito ay katumbas ng "very good" net trust ratings (percentage much trust minus percentage little trust) na +66 para sa AFP at +55

para sa PNP.

Ito rin ang pinakamataas na markang nakuha ng AFP at PNP.

Ang net public trust ng AFP ay good +48 sa unang survey ng SWS noong Setyembre 1988.

Umakyat ito sa very good +53 noong Disyembre 2000 at bumaba sa moderate at good levels mula Setyembre 2003 hanggang Marso 2006, naglaro sa +12 hanggang +32.

Umakyat ito sa very good +57 noong Pebrero 2010, at bahayang bumaba sa good +49 noong Mayo 2012.

Mulitong umakyat sa very good +64 noong Marso 2014 at sa +66 sa kasalukuyan.

Samantala, ang unang SWS survey para sa public trust sa PNP noong Disyembre 2000, ay nagtala ng good net trust rating na +42.

Bumaba ito sa moderate levels

mula Setyembre 2001 hanggang Marso 2005, naglalaro mula +12 hanggang +20.

Umakyat ito sa very good +52 noong Pebrero 2010 at sa good +45 noong Marso 2014 bago natamo ang record-high very good +55 noong 2016.

Lumabas sa April 2016 survey na pinakamalaki ang tiwala sa militar at pulisya ng mga mamamayan sa labas ng Metro Manila.

Pinakamataas ang net trust rating ng AFP sa Visayas sa +70, sinusundan ng Mindanao at iba pang bahagi ng Luzon, sa +69, at Metro Manila sa +47.

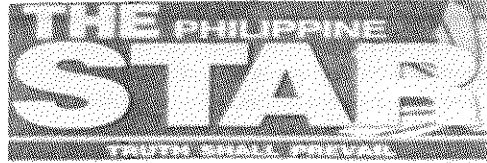
Pinakamataas naman ang net trust rating ng PNP sa Mindanao sa +62, sinusundan ng iba pang bahagi ng Luzon sa +59, Visayas sa +58, at Metro Manila sa +29.

**Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz**

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# Poll shows record-high trust for AFP, PNP

By JANVIC MATEO

A record-high number of Filipinos trust the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Philippine National Police (PNP), a survey conducted by Social Weather Stations (SWS) shows.

Conducted from March 30 to April 2, the first quarter survey released yesterday showed that 75 percent of the 1,500 adult respondents have much trust in the AFP. Nine percent said they had little trust, while 16 percent were undecided.

The AFP obtained a “very good” +66 net trust rating, surpassing the previous record-high and most recent rating of +64 in March 2014.

Meanwhile, 69 percent of the respondents said they have much trust in the PNP, while 14 percent had little trust. The remaining 16 percent were undecided.

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## Poll From Page 1

The PNP obtained a “very good” +55 net trust rating, surpassing its previous record-high +52 obtained in February 2010.

The police obtained +45 in the most recent survey conducted in March 2014.

The net trust rating is obtained by subtracting the number of those with little trust to those who have much trust.

SWS classifies net trust ratings as follows: +70 and above, excellent; +50 to +69, very good; +30 to +49, good; +10 to +29, moderate; +9 to -9, neutral; -10 to -29, poor; -30 to -49, bad; -50 to -69, very bad; -70 and below, execrable.

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# Military, police get high ratings amid Rody's ML

After President Duterte issued Proclamation 216 imposing martial law and suspending the writ of habeas corpus in the Mindanao region, public confidence on the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Philippine National Police (PNP) reached all-time highs, the latest Social Weather Stations survey showed.

The SWS said that trust rating for the AFP was at net 66 from a much trust of 75 percent and little trust of nine percent.

The PNP received a rating of a net 55 as a result of 69 percent much trust and 14 percent little trust based on the survey conducted last March 30 to April 2.

SWS data showed respondents

with "much trust" to the AFP was at the highest level of 75 percent in the recent survey equalling the previous record in the survey of March 2014.

Little trust given by respondents to the AFP was, however, at its lowest at nine percent, the survey showed.

For the PNP, the latest survey

gave it the highest much trust rating at 69 percent and the lowest little trust rating of 14 percent.

The SWS said it derives its net grades from deducting little trust from the much trust percentages. Its terminology for the ratings are 70 and above, "excellent"; 50 to 69, "very good"; 30 to 49, "good"; 10 to 29,

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# Military, police get high ratings amid Rody's ML

From page 1

"moderate," 9 to negative 9, "neutral"; negative 10 to negative 29, "poor"; negative 30 to negative 49, "bad"; negative 50 to negative 69, "very bad"; and negative 70 and below, "execrable".

Net public trust in the AFP was a good 48 in the first survey conducted by SWS in September 1988. It rose to a very good 53 in December 2000 and went to moderate to good levels from September 2003 to March 2006, ranging from 12 to 32, according to SWS.

It rose to a very good 57 in February 2010, and fell slightly to a good 49 in May 2012 and was at a very good 64 in March 2014 and to a record-high very good 66 in March 2016.

### Trust highest outside capital

SWS said its first surveyed public trust in the PNP in December 2000, and found a good net trust rating of 42. It went to moderate levels from September 2001 to March 2005, ranging from 12 to 20, it added.

It rose to very good 52 in February 2010 and a good 45 in March 2014 before reaching a record-high very good 55 in March 2016.

The SWS said the survey showed higher net public trust in AFP and PNP outside Metro Manila as the recent survey showed net trust rating of the AFP was highest in the Visayas at an excellent 70, followed by Mindanao and Balance Luzon, both at a very good 69, and Metro Manila at a good 47.

The net trust rating of the PNP was highest in Mindanao at a very good 62, followed by Balance Luzon at a very good 59, Visayas at a very good 58, and Metro Manila at a moderate 29.

Net public trust in both the AFP and PNP was also higher in rural areas compared to urban areas, according to the survey.

SWS data showed the net trust rating of the AFP was at an excellent 70 in rural areas, 10 points above the very good 60 in urban areas.

For the PNP, net public trust

was a very good 65 in rural areas, 23 points above the good 42 in urban areas.

The survey also showed higher net public trust among the lower classes in the society as the net trust rating of the AFP was highest among class E at an excellent 70, followed by class D at a very good 66, and class ABC at a good 43.

The net trust rating of the PNP was highest among class E at a very good 64, followed by class D at a very good 54, and class ABC at a good 45.

Net trust in the AFP was also found to be at an excellent grade among religious denominations reaching a very good rating among Catholics and Iglesia ni Cristo (INC) members, good among Muslims while the net trust on the PNP was very good among Catholics and good among Muslims and INCs.

The net trust rating of the AFP was highest among those in religions other than Catholicism, Islam, and INC, at an excellent 70, followed by Roman Catholics at a very good 68, INCs at a very good

51, and Muslims at a good 35, the survey showed.

On the other hand, net public trust in the PNP was highest among Roman Catholics, at a very good 57, followed by others at a very good 54, Muslims at a good 49, and INCs at a good 47.

The SWS said the survey was through personal interviews of 1,500 adults (18 years old and above) nationwide, 300 each in Metro Manila, North Luzon, South Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao (sampling error margins of positive and negative three percent for national percentages, and positive and negative six percent each for Metro Manila, North Luzon, South Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao).

The area estimates were weighted by Philippine Statistics Authority medium-population projections for 2016 to obtain the national estimates, it added.

SWS said it employed its own staff for questionnaire design, sampling, fieldwork, data processing, and analysis, and does not outsource any of its survey operations.

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# AFP fights fake news with new social media group

BY AARON B. REQUENO

From the rough jungle to cyberspace. This is where the military is taking their fight against terrorism in defense of truth.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) has created a social media monitoring team to fight fake news being spread by

sympathizers of the Maute Group on social media about what is happening in Marawi City.

Brig. Gen. Rolly Bautista, commander of the 1st Infantry Division and concurrent head of the Joint Task Force Marawi said they saw the need to wage another battle, this time on social media after they ► 11

## AFP fights fake news...

monitored wrong information being spread by a number of netizens about the real situation in Marawi City.

"The enemy and their supporters are actively utilizing online digital media to spread false information about the situation in Marawi City," said Bautista.

Social media earlier aired alleged abuses of soldiers in Marawi City and projecting the militant Maute Group as a tough group that has already taken over most of Marawi City.

"Our team is on the lookout to engage and provide countermeasures and prevent the enemy from sowing fear and terror," Bautista added.

### Cyber-soldiers

The social media monitoring team of the military is composed of soldiers who underwent training on digital media capability enhancement long before the Marawi attack happened on May 23.

All those who completed the training from various units of the 1st Infantry Division became the core group of the social media monitoring team.

Lt. Col. Jo-ar Herrera, spokesperson of the Joint Task Force Marawi, says the digital media training has been very useful in combating fake news about the Marawi attack in the social media.

"While our troops are engaged in a battle with the Maute Group on the ground, some of our soldiers are also fighting another battle over the Internet," said Herrera. And the most effective way of defeating the Maute digital allies is to bombard social media with the truth about the real picture on the ground, Herrera added.

And the social media team has been very successful in countering fake news about the Marawi incident, according to military officials.

Proof is the growing positive sentiment of the public towards the military, Bautista said.

Local and foreign experts also see the need to intensify the government's campaign against recruitment and

radicalization using the Internet.

### 5% Senate limit

Meanwhile, Senate President Aquilino Pimentel III has issued a special order exempting the assistance to displaced Marawi City residents from the five percent limit set by Senate rules.

Under Section III, item 17.1 of Memorandum Circular 2016-002, the Senate president is authorized to grant exemption to the five percent limit for welfare assistance expenses from the budget of each senator's office.

Pimentel issued the special order, saying "the war against terrorism is not just won with bullets and bombs. It is won by the unity of the people, and

through this measure."

"I hope to show our displaced brothers and sisters that they are not forgotten," he added.

The month-long Marawi conflict has displaced almost all of its estimated 200,000 population.

With Ramadan about to end, Pimentel said the food needs of Marawi residents in evacuation centers are projected to increase, as the government must provide three meals a day.

Muslims traditionally celebrate the end of Ramadan with feasts.

"Let's join our Muslim brethren in celebrating Eid al-Fitr with prayers for peace and giving them help in their hour of need," said the Senate president. (With a report from Elena L. Aben)

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## AFP battles fake news

The Armed Forces of the Philippines has formed a social media monitoring team to fight fake news being spread by sympathizers of the Maute Group and its netizen allies on the Marawi City siege.

Brig. Gen. Rolly Bautista, commander of the 1st Infantry Division and concurrent head of the Joint Task Force Marawi, said that they saw the need to wage another battle, this time on social media, after they monitored wrong information being spread by a number of netizens regarding the real situation in Marawi.

"The enemy and their supporters are actively utilizing online digital media to spread false information about the situation in Marawi City," said Bautista.

The military dealt with reports of alleged abuses of soldiers in Marawi and reports projecting Maute Group as a tough group that has already taken over most of downtown Marawi.

"Our team is on the lookout

to engage and provide countermeasures and prevent the enemy from sowing fear and terror," said Bautista.

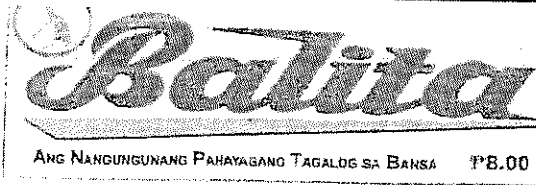
The local social media monitoring team of the military is composed of soldiers who underwent trainings on digital media capability enhancement long before the Marawi attack on May 23.

All those who completed the training from various units of the 1st Infantry Division became the core group of the social media monitoring team.

Lt. Col. Jo-ar Herrera, spokesman of the Joint Task Force Marawi, said the conduct of digital media enhancement training has been very useful in combating fake news about the Marawi attack on social media.

"While our troops are engaged in a battle with the Maute Group on the ground, some of our soldiers are also fighting another battle over the Internet," said Herrera. **(Aaron B. Recuenco)**

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# Militar may hiwalay na giyera sa social media

**Ni AARON RECUENCO**

Bumuo ang Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) ng isang social media monitoring team sa layuning masugpo ang fake news na ipinakalat ng mga kaalyadong netizens ng Maute Group kaugnay ng bakbakan sa Marawi City, Lanao del Sur.

Sinabi ni Brig. Gen. Rolly Bautista, commander ng 1st Infantry Division ng Philippine

Army at concurrent head ng Joint Task Force Marawi, na isa pang laban ang kailangang itunsa ng militar – sa pagkakataong ito ay sa social media – matapos nilang ma-monitor ang mga maling impormasyon na ipinakalat ng ilang netizens tungkol sa tunay na sitwasyon sa Marawi City.

“The enemy and their supporters are actively utilizing online digital media to spread false information about the situation in Marawi City,” ani Bautista

Una nang kinailangang harapin ng militar ang mga ulat ng umano’y pang-aabuso ng mga sundalo sa Marawi at ang mga report na naglalarawan sa Maute Group bilang isang napakalakas na grupo na nakukob na ang malaking bahagi ng siyudad.

“Our team is on the lookout to engage and provide countermeasures and prevent the enemy from sowing fear and terror,” sabi ni Bautista.

Ang lokal na social media monitoring team ng militar ay binubuo ng mga sundalong sumailalim sa pagsasanay sa digital media capability enhancement bago pa man sinalakay ng Maute ang Marawi nitong Mayo 23.

Lahat ng nakakumpleto sa pagsasanay mula sa iba’t ibang unit ng 1st Infantry Division ang bumuo sa core group ng social media monitoring team.

Sinabi ni Lt. Col. Jo-an Herrera, tagapagsalita ng Joint Task Force Marawi, na naging kapakinabang ang pagsasagawa ng digital media enhancement training sa laban kontra sa fake news sa social media tungkol sa krisis sa Marawi.

“While our troops are engaged in a battle with the Maute Group on the ground, some of our soldiers are also fighting another battle over the internet,” ani Herrera.

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The Manila Times

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# Wounded soldiers recall ordeal in war zone

## 'We're willing to go back to Marawi'

BY **KIMBERLY LIBRERO**

At least 69 soldiers and policemen have so far died while hundreds have been injured in the month-long siege of Marawi City by the Islamic State (IS)-linked Maute group. Wounded troops said the terror group seemed to be familiar with the terrain and had "planned" where they would be positioned in the city.

Cpl. Jordan Osillo, 32, of the 1st Infantry Battalion's 2nd Division, was transferred to the AFP Health Service

Command at the V. Luna Medical Center from Camp Edilberto Evangelista Station Hospital in Cagayan de Oro on Wednesday after sustaining injuries from an explosion while securing a village in Marawi City on Tuesday. He was the only one injured among the nine soldiers assigned to block the area.

"Sobrang sakit, hindi ko na alam ang gagawin ko. Parang gusto ko nang tumalon ng ilog [It was too painful. I did not know what to do. I felt like I wanted to

► **Soldiers A8**

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## SOLDIERS FROM A1

# Wounded soldiers recall ordeal in war zone

jump into a river into the river]," Osillo said, describing what he felt after the blast.

Osillo witnessed the month-long conflict in the war-ravaged city. He was among the first group of soldiers assigned to perform clearing operations in Marawi City.

"Hindi na namin alam kung saan nanggaling ang putok... bomba. Kabisado nila ang lugar [We do not know where the gunshots and bombs were coming from. They were familiar with the city]," he said.

As the military advanced, he recounted, terrorists belonging to the Maute group holed-up in mosques.

"Ang advantage nila nasa mosque sila nakapwesto, hindi pwc deng pasabugin [Their advantage is that they position themselves in mosques, which cannot be bombed]," Osillo said.

Meanwhile, 1st Lt. Niño Paad, 28, of the 51st Infantry Battalion's 1st Infantry Division, who served as an operation officer, was also recovering at the V. Luna Medical Center. He is suffering from a leg injury after a bomb was lobbed towards his troops while he was deploying them.

Paad had fought the IS-linked Maute group before. He said his troops encountered the terrorist group several times last year as they tried to occupy Butig town in Lanao del Sur, their "bailiwick."

In Marawi City, Paad said the

Maute Group had the "advantage positions" as they placed themselves in "high-rise and fortified" structures.

"Iba kasi ang terrain. Kinonsider din namin ang civilians. Bundok lang dati ang giyera, ngayon bahay-bahayan, urban area [The terrain is different. We also consider civilians. The sites of the encounters before were in the mountains, now it is around residences in an urban area]," he explained.

Paad also said militants used civilians as human shields, hampering military operations.

## Running for cover

Pfc. Romeo Esperida Jr., 28, of the 63rd company of the Marine Special Operations Group, meanwhile, suffered severe injuries in a 14-hour "intense fight" in Marawi City with Maute Group militants on June 9 where 13 marines were killed.

Esperida, the most injured among the 40 troops wounded in the clash, suffered injuries from a mortar shrapnel which tore through his leg, arm, groin, and eye.

He recounted that as government troopers advanced to clear a barangay, a dog barked, which served as a signal to the Maute group to fire upon the soldiers. They then retreated towards one of the buildings in the area and exchanged fire with militants

who were already positioned in a building across them.

"Ang ingay ingay nila. Tumatawag ng reinforcement. Nu'ng sobrang dami na nila, ang sabi sa command bobombahin na lang yung area, umalis na kami duon [They were loud. They were calling for reinforcements. When the number of militants swelled, we were instructed by command that the area would just be bombed and that we should leave]," Esperida related.

The soldier and his companions left the building. On their way to their vehicle, a bomb flew toward them.

"Malapit na kami nun. Tatawid na lang kami. Tapos biglang may sumabog. Kinaladkad na lang ako ng mga kasama ko para makaalis [We were close to our transport. We just needed to cross a bridge. A bomb suddenly exploded. I was just dragged by my companions in order to vacate the area]," Esperida said.

Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla Jr., spokesman of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, earlier said the military would no longer impose a deadline to what he called a "complicated engagement" after failing to meet the June 12 ultimatum to end clashes in Marawi City.

"People are very impatient but they don't know the sacrifices of their soldiers. It's easy to say, 'Why are we not finished yet, why are we not done with this yet,'"

Padilla said.

## Mum on injuries

Osillo and Esperida initially chose not to inform their families that they were injured in the fighting in Marawi City.

Osillo's wife, Marjeth, only got to know that he was wounded after a fellow soldier called her.

Meanwhile, Esperida's aunt, Fedelita, received a call from his Marine officer.

"Ganyan. Di pa niya sasabihin. Ayaw daw niya akong mag-alala. Yung panganay namin, gustong sumama nang makita akong nag-eempake. Kahit hindi ko sinasabi sa kanya, alam kong alam niya, umiiyak siya [He had no intention to inform me. He said he did not want me to worry. Our eldest child wanted to go with me when she saw me packing. Even though I did not inform her that her father was injured, she knew it, she was crying]," a tearful Marjeth said.

Osillo also did not inform his parents that he was fighting in Marawi City due to their advanced aged and medical conditions. He said his 6- and 2-year old children served as his strength in the warzone. Esperida's family, meanwhile, said they are still grateful that he made it through the incident.

The marine hopes to go back to military service. If not assigned to battlegrounds, he is willing to



■ Marjeth attends to her husband, Cpl. Jordan Osillo. PHOTO BY KIMBERLY LIBRERO

serve as an instructor.

### **“Overwhelming” support**

The three military men, Osillo, Paad, and Esperida, said they are overwhelmed by the support of the government and the Filipinos.

The recovering troopers each received a wounded soldier medal, smartphones, guns, and P100,000 in cash assistance.

They said the simple letters that they have been receiving meant a lot to them.

“Nu’ng Father’s Day, naka-tanggap ako ng letter. Naiyak ako talaga. Nagkakaroon kami ng high morale. [On Father’s Day, I received a letter. I really cried. It boosted our morale],” Osillo said.

They all said they were willing to go back to fight in Marawi City, as it is their sworn duty.

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# AFP prods SBMA on Subic military base expansion

By Allan Macatuno  
@amacatunoINQ

SUBIC BAY FREEPORT—A ranking official of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) has asked the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority (SBMA) to allow a planned expansion of a military base in this former US naval station to proceed as planned.

Philippine Navy commander Vice Admiral Joseph Mercado made the appeal after SBMA Administrator Wilma Eisma notified Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana in March about the freeport's intention to rescind the 2015 memorandum of agreement (MOA) between the AFP and SBMA.

The MOA, drawn up during the administration of former SBMA Chair and Administrator Roberto Garcia, allowed the AFP to make Subic the military's forward operating base due to its strategic location.

Air Force fighter jets and Navy frigates could respond faster to any emergency in the West Philippine Sea from a base here.

In a June 21 letter to SBMA Chair Martin Diño, Mercado appealed to both Diño and Eisma to reconsider the agency's position.

Under the MOA, the Air Force was obligated to rehabilitate a 13-hectare portion of the Subic Bay International Airport where shipping giant Federal Express (FedEx) used to operate. The AFP was to use part of the military modernization fund to fi-

nance the rehabilitation.

Eisma cited the AFP's failure to fulfill its obligation of restoring the airport and seaports as one of the reasons for revoking the agreement.

Eisma also argued that the government would gain more economic benefits from the commercial use of the airport.

"While your Navy fully supports the economic agenda of SBMA, the [expansion] area is of vital interest to national security which public and economic gain cannot be readily quantified," Mercado said in his letter.

The Rivera Wharf and Alava Pier at Subic were the only ports outside Metro Manila that could shelter and safely accommodate three Del Pilar Class frigates and the two newly acquired Strategic Sealift Vessels of the AFP, he said.

The two ports would also house the two brand new frigates that the government planned to acquire from South Korea, Mercado added.

"Aside from the readily available wharf and pier, the location of SBMA has strategic importance for the Navy since it is the nearest and safest port fronting the West Philippine Sea," Mercado said.

The disputed Scarborough Shoal or Bajo de Masinloc is located in the West Philippine Sea off the coast of Zambales.

The shoal is about 260 kilometers west of Subic Bay. It was the site of the tense standoff between the Philippines and China in 2012. INQ

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## Presence of 89 foreign terrorists in Mindanao being verified

By ALEXIS ROMERO

Security forces are verifying information about the alleged presence of 89 suspected foreign terrorists in Mindanao, Malacañang said yesterday.

Presidential spokesman Ernesto Abella said it is possible that the foreigners entered the Philippines through the southern backdoor, where the point of entry is Mindanao via Indonesia or Malaysia.

"Authorities are still validating the report that 89 suspected foreign fighters are in Mindanao," Abella said.

"This is the purpose why we are making a collective effort against terrorism and violent extremism through a trilateral cooperation with Indonesia and Malaysia," he added.

The Philippines, Indonesia and Malaysia have agreed to work to jointly develop and implement counter-terrorism measures and strategies to prevent future terrorist attacks in the region.

A police intelligence report obtained by *Kyodo News* said at least 89 "suspected foreign fighters" are in various parts of Mindanao, including Marawi City where the Islamic State-inspired Maute group attacked last May 23.

According to the report, 28 of them are Indonesians, 26 Pakistanis, 21 Malaysians, four Arabs, three Bangladeshis, a Singaporean and

one is an Indian-Singaporean. The nationalities of the other five foreigners were not identified.

*Kyodo News* said Philippine officials relayed the information during a meeting with Indonesian and Malaysian counterparts in Manila last Thursday.

Abella said the military is also validating the report that Mahmud bin Ahmad, a Malaysian who helped finance the attacks in Marawi, died from wounds he sustained during the early days of the crisis.

"We have been told that the military has information of the spot where he was buried and government troops are now trying to locate it and recover the remains. Once done, only then can we make an official confirmation," he said.

When asked about Mahmud's reported death, Malaysia's Inspector General of Police Khalid Abu Bakar said in a text message in Kuala Lumpur: "Not true. He is still alive."

### Illegal aliens

At least eight of the terrorists killed during encounters in Marawi were identified to be foreigners.

Of the slain foreign militants, two were Saudis, two Malaysians, two Indonesians, one Yemeni and one Chechen, according to Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana.

On Thursday, Armed Forces Eastern Mindanao Command deputy chief Brig. Gen. Gilbert Gapay re-

vealed there are at least 40 foreign terrorists in the Philippines. He said security forces already know the names of the jihadists that included Malaysians, Indonesians, Arabs and Pakistanis.

A total of 280 militants and 69 government troopers have died since clashes in Marawi erupted last May 23.

Western Mindanao Command chief Lt. Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr. added the troops retrieved the bodies of two suspected foreign fighters at the battle scene.

Galvez said the two fighters were believed to be the snipers pinning down the advancing troops from two separate buildings.

Galvez revealed a captured Maute group suspect had admitted having 10 foreigners among them. The foreign fighters were said to be expert marksmen and in creating improvised explosive devices (IEDs).

"Based on the accounts of the captured suspect, about 10 foreign fighters were with them who are snipers and bomb experts," he said.

Philippine National Police (PNP) chief Director General Ronald dela Rosa, however, said it would be too early to tell if the foreigners are all terrorists.

"We are closely monitoring these foreigners who are currently in Mindanao," Dela Rosa said.

Dela Rosa did not give a specific figure on the number of foreigners

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who are being monitored by their intelligence operatives. He also did not confirm the contents of the alleged intelligence report.

He added that it does not automatically mean all the visitors are in the country to sow terror.

Last January, Dela Rosa claimed up to 10 foreigners were said to be training with local terrorist groups in Mindanao before they joined the IS in Syria.

"I think there are about five to 10 foreigners who we are monitoring. They have different nationalities," he said.

A senior security official claimed the troops in Marawi are now fighting a mixture of mercenaries and criminals lured by the huge financial resources of the Maute group.

"That explains why the fighting has dragged on this long. If the Maute-IS groups were the ones involved in the fighting, the conflict could have been over in just a matter of days, the longest could be two weeks," the official said.

He added reports of gunmen belonging to the extremist Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters and Abu Sayyaf are now fighting alongside the Maute militants in Marawi.

"For as long as key entry and exit points by foot to and from Marawi remain unsecured, fighting is far from over," the official said. – **With Roel Pareño, Edith Regalado, Emmanuel Tupas, Jaime Laude, AFP**

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## 'Link between Marawi siege, drugs confirmed'

By ALEXIS ROMERO

The recovery of P10 million worth of shabu in the house of former Marawi mayor Omar Solitario Ali confirmed the link between the ongoing crisis in the city and illegal drugs, Malacañang said yesterday.

"This development will hopefully bring to bear the realities existing in the area about the close relation between the illegal drug trade and this ongoing rebellion," presidential spokesman Ernesto Abella said.

Security forces seized two kilos of shabu worth P10 million from a house of Ali while conducting clearing operations in battle ravaged Marawi City last Friday. Authorities are convinced Ali's house was used by the Maute terrorists as a safe house.

Ali was included in the arrest order issued by the Department of National Defense as implementer of martial law. He was also earlier named by President Duterte as among the "narco politicians" involved in illegal drugs.

His younger brother Fahad Salic, also a former mayor of the city, was included in the list and was charged with rebellion for supporting the Islamic State-linked Maute group that has laid siege on Marawi City for almost a month.

Meanwhile, troops and agents of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) led by Chief Insp. William Santos seized five kilos of shabu from the abandoned houses of Salic and his brother Vice Mayor Arafat.

Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla, military

spokesman, said the seizure of the illegal drugs was a major breakthrough in the campaign to liberate Marawi.

President Duterte has repeatedly claimed that money from illegal drugs is funding the terrorist activity in Mindanao.

"Drugs fueled martial law...and it's because of the drug money, they were funding the terrorism. It's part of rebellion," he said in a speech in Tacurong City last June 7.

In a report on martial law that he submitted to Congress, Duterte said the Maute militants have ties to armed groups abroad and are benefitting from illegal drug money.

"Reports abound that foreign-based terrorist groups, the ISIS (Islamic State) in particular, as well as illegal drug money, provide financial and logistical support to the Maute group," Duterte said in the report.

"Considering the network and alliance-building activities among terrorist groups, local criminals and lawless armed men, the siege of Marawi City is a vital cog in attaining their longstanding goal: absolute control over the entirety of Mindanao," he added.

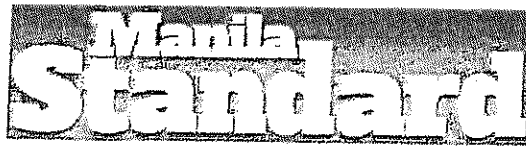
In a speech before military troops in Sulu last May 29, Duterte said Mindanao has been a "hotbed" of shabu as some politicians have made a fortune out of the illegal drug.

"(It) actually started with drugs. And they were producing drugs half-way, not really for business but to fund the terrorism," he said.

– With Jaime Laude

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# PALACE PROBES ABUSES

By John Paolo Bencito

MALACANANG on Saturday announced plans to investigate allegations of abuse of the military and the police in light of President Rodrigo Duterte's imposition of martial law in Mindanao.

Presidential Spokesperson Ernesto Abella said the President, Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana, the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police "do not encourage or tolerate abuses by the military or the police in Mindanao or elsewhere."

"We will investigate and if evidence warrants, prosecute and punish all those who committed abuses, especially sexual violence against women," Abella said.

The Integrated Bar of the Philippines chapter in Lanao del Sur previously raised "serious concerns" after receiving "first-hand data and information" of rights violations by the military and police in Marawi City, which has been under siege by the terrorist Maute group for over a month now.

The group called on Lorenzana, the martial law administrator, to stop the alleged abuses, including warrantless searches in houses and

**Turn to A2**

life," Abella said.

The Islamic State-linked Maute and Abu Sayyaf groups, supported by foreign terrorists, besieged Marawi after government troops attempted to arrest senior Abu Sayyaf leader Isnilon Hapilon, known as the Islamic State's emir in Southeast Asia. The terror groups had planned the attacks days ahead, authorities said.

Continuing firefights have prompted more than 230,000 residents to flee, while hundreds are still trapped in the conflict zone.

Recognizing the efforts "to put this crisis to a close," the CHR urged the government "to equally intensify initiatives that would address the plight of the IDPs—especially those vulnerable and marginalized, such

businesses, "ransacking" of residential and commercial establishments, and "total disregard of plain-view doctrine in searches and seizure activities."

Abella said the Commission on Human Rights has not received any complaints of rights abuses in Mindanao since Duterte placed the entire region under martial law last May 23.

He said individuals who experienced violations arising from military rule should go to the proper authorities.

"In the meantime, unless based on fact and evidence, we ask critics and advocates to be more considerate in their judgment of the efforts and context of our soldiers' challenges and be more supportive of their efforts to protect the Filipino way of

as children, women, persons with disabilities, and the elderly."

"Attention should be given to providing a more systematic, organized, and gender-responsive approach to delivering services, as well as better facilities for the evacuees, including those that address the specific needs of women, such as private spaces for breastfeeding mothers," the CHR said.

Apart from lawyers under IBP-Lanao del Sur, party-list group Gabriela expressed fears of military abuses amid reports that government troops allegedly threatened women with rape if they did not leave Marawi.

"I have personally heard the stories of women who sought refuge in evacuation

centers in Lanao del Norte and Lanao del Sur after government troops threatened to rape them, as encouraged by no less than President Duterte in his public remarks," Gabriela Rep. Arlene Brosas said after visiting the evacuation centers.

"These are alarming accounts, which prove that the martial law and President's rape remarks have actually emboldened the military to dangle rape threats against women in Marawi City. We fear that there are actual victims of rape and we encourage them to speak out and seek justice," Brosas added.

Abella added the government is providing enough support to its forces in Marawi after the AFP launched its "Support our Troops" campaign.

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## INQUIRER

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# Bombs continue to rain on city on eve of Eid

By Richel Umel  
and Allan Nawal  
@Team\_Inquirer

MARAWI CITY—The military on Saturday continued its airstrikes against Maute gunmen who had entrenched themselves in some parts of the city, as the fighting entered its fifth week with no immediate end in sight.

At least two OV-10 Bronco planes were seen taking turns in dropping bombs on the eastern side of the city until shortly before noon. The sound of machine gun fires and automatic rifles also reverberated, while soldiers on military vehicles were seen rushing into the city center.

On Friday, Lt. Col. Jo-arr Herrera, Army 1st Division spokesperson, said the military continued to seize more areas but was unsure of how large the remaining area being held by the Maute group was.

He said the gunmen, now numbering between 90 to 100, were scattered in the areas of Bangolo, Marinaut, Raya Madaya and Lilod—the same villages the military has been trying to recapture since day one.

A Malaysian fighter who financed the siege, Mahmud bin Ahmad, as well as Omarkhayam Maute, are believed to have also suffered the same fate, even as officials admit that this could not be independently verified.

### Temporary halt

Provincial spokesperson Zia Alonto Adiong said a temporary eight-hour ceasefire would be observed on Sunday by the troops to mark Eid al-Fitr, or the end of the Islamic holy month of Ramadan.

"You could say it's a ceasefire on the part of the Armed Forces of the Philippines," Adiong said, adding that the unilateral ceasefire would start at 6 a.m. until 2 p.m.

"(The) military will not take any offensive against (the) Maute terrorist group in deference (to) the Eid al-Fitr occasion or celebration," he said.

Many Muslims end the monthlong fasting today, following the Eid celebrations in Turkey and other Muslim countries. But others have also opted to celebrate Eid al-Fitr on Monday.

At the Ma. Cristina evacuation center in Iligan City, Samira, 22, said they had nothing special for this year's Eid. Instead, her family would be sharing food consisting of rice, sardines, noodles and chicken meat that they bought from a nearby market.

### Simple celebration

"What is important is that we have food to share, go to the mosque, and pray and thank Allah for the continued blessing," Samira said. "It is already a blessing that we continue to live even if we are in a difficult situation."

For those in Marawi still, Adiong said they would also have a simple celebration with officials sharing native food with the 1,000 people sheltered at the capitol compound.

"This local militant group robbed us (of) the chance to observe Ramadan peacefully, and stole from us the opportunity to celebrate Eid al-Fitr and be with our loved ones in this religious occasion," Adiong said.

In Linamon, Lanao del Norte, Mayor Randy Macapil

told the Inquirer that the uncertainty has prompted them to adjust the curfew hours, which had been in effect in the town since the fighting here started. Linamon is only about an hour by car from here.

Macapil said nobody will now be allowed to roam in Linamon from 8 p.m. to 4 a.m. starting Saturday.

"All business establishments were advised to close at 5:30 p.m.," he said, adding that they also tapped volunteers and Army reservists—along with the local anticrime group—as force multipliers.

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### **Human rights abuses**

In Malacañang, presidential spokesperson Ernesto Abella on Saturday said proper complaints should be filed if there are human rights abuses committed under martial law, vowing that authorities would investigate and prosecute those involved immediately.

“The President, the Armed Forces of the Philippines, the Philippine National Police and the Department of National Defense secretary, who is the Mindanao administrator for martial law, do not encourage or tolerate abuses by the military or the police in Mindanao or elsewhere,” Abella said.

He made the statement in the wake of recent reports that the Integrated Bar of the Philippines in Lanao had found human rights violations under martial law, particularly warrantless searches of houses and business establishments.

Absent any specific reports of abuses, he asked critics to temper their judgment of the soldiers who are battling extremists in Marawi.

President Duterte placed the whole of Mindanao under martial law last month after members of the Maute and Abu Sayyaf groups, who had pledged allegiance to the Islamic State, attacked Marawi.

The extremist groups launched the attacks after a failed attempt from government forces to arrest Hapilon. Authorities said the groups wanted to establish a caliphate in Marawi. —WITH REPORTS FROM

**LEILA B. SALAVERRIA AND DJ YAP IN MANILA INQ**

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**Standard**

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## GOVT SETS TRUCE ON EVE OF EID'L FITR

AS THE Muslim world observes the religious feast of Eid'l Fitr that marks the end of dawn-to-dusk fasting and prayers during the month-long Ramadan today (June 26), the military said it would suspend offensive against Maute jihadists still holed up inside a few establishments in Marawi City.

Western Mindanao Command chief Lt. Gen. Carlito Galvez said the "humanitarian pause" will take effect from 6 a.m. to 2 p.m. today.

"To give reverence to the supposed peaceful, joyous and festive spiritual celebration, the Armed Forces of the Philippines, upon

the approval of the Chief of Staff, intends to declare a stop in our current operations in the city on June 25 to serve as a gesture of our strong commitment and respect to the Muslim world, particularly to the local Muslims of Marawi City," Galvez said in a statement.

"The 'humanitarian pause' will be lifted immediately if any of the following conditions ensue: (1) our troops' security is jeopardized; (2) safety of civilians is threatened; and (3) if the enemy starts firing and at which point anyone can exercise their right to self-defense," Galvez added.

AFP spokesman Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla said at least four of the city's 96 barangays still need to be cleared of Maute members and other terrorist groups.

Government forces and the Maute terrorists have been fighting for more than a month since May 23.

Crisis management committee spokesman Zia Alonto Adiong said the clashes have destroyed at least 30 to 40 percent of the city and displaced some 246,000 people.

At least 69 government troops, 280 Maute members and 26 civilians have been killed in the long-drawn war.

"That (280 Maute killed) is actually a modest estimate because sometimes we cannot recover the body," Adiong said.

"However, those bodies which have yet be confirmed by way of body count, were actually confirmed by witnesses. We don't include those for validation, which means the body count could be higher," he added.

Meanwhile, Padilla said that the military establishment it was mindful of the public clamor to end the fight against the jihadists soon, but said they cannot rush it to prevent more casualties in the long run. *Turn to A2*

Padilla said fighting in an urban terrain, such as Marawi City, is one of the most difficult situation for troops because they are dealing with enemy snipers, improvised bombs, mines, and use civilians as hostages.

"[Urban fighting] is complex. It is not that easy. People are very impatient but they don't know he sacrifices of their soldiers," he said.

Padilla cited the experience of one Marine unit last week as they were clearing a building in Marawi City.

"The Marines found an IED so they tried to deal with it by trying to explode it remotely. When it exploded, there were 10 huge explosions, like a 'Judas Belt' firecracker. It turns out that the IED was part of a (booby trap consisting of a series of IEDs laid together), which if triggered, would likely kill or injure troops unwittingly," he said.

Padilla said neutralizing the remaining terrorists is complicated due to the urban terrain and with the enemy well aware of their positional advantage.

He cited the case of military units in the Middle East, who, despite their firepower and numerical superiority, encountered extreme difficulty in combating ISIS terrorists in an urban setting.

"The Battle of Mosul (in Iraq) is still ongoing. [Having] started in October 2016, it is not yet finished. [It has] been going on for eight months. In Libya (which conducted operations against) ISIS/Daesh (terrorists) the battle started May 12 (last year) and ended only last Nov. 6, so it lasted over six months," Padilla said. **PNA**

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# MALAYSIAN TERRORIST KILLED IN MARAWI?

By John Paolo Bencito

THE military is still validating reports that a Malaysian terrorist who helped lead and finance the siege of Marawi City in Mindanao has been killed as the Maute terror group becomes increasingly constricted after a month of fighting, Malacañang said Saturday.

"The military is validating the intelligence report that Mahmud bin Ahmad, a Malaysian national who helped finance the rebellion in Marawi, died from wounds he sustained during the early days of the Marawi rebellion," Presidential Spokesperson Ernesto Abella said.

"We have been told that the military has information of the spot where he was buried and government troops are now trying to locate it and recover the remains. Once done, only then can we make an official confirmation," he added.

Armed Forces of the Philippines chief of staff General Eduardo Año on Friday said that Mahmud was wounded in the fighting in Marawi last month and reportedly died on June 7 from his wounds.

Año, citing intelligence shared by foreign counterparts, said Mahmud was suspected of channeling more than P30 million (\$600,000) from the Islamic State group to acquire firearms, food and other supplies for the attack.

A former Malaysian university professor who later turned into a jihadi and received training in Afghanistan, Mahmud appeared in a video showing terrorist leaders planning the Marawi siege in a hideout, a sign of his key role in the uprising.

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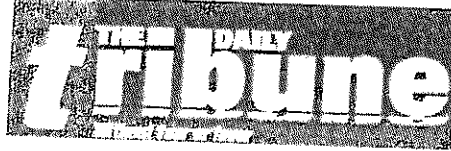
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SM FOUNDATION GETS PLAQUE OF APPRECIATION FROM AFP -- SM Foundation Executive Director for Health and Medical Programs Connie Angeles is congratulated by BGen Joseph M. Acosta, AFP Surgeon-General after receiving a plaque of appreciation on behalf of SM Foundation from AFP chief of Staff Gen. Eduardo M. Año during the 119th AFP Medical Service Founding anniversary at the AFP Officers' Hall, Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City. SM Foundation is recognized for its efforts in alleviating the plight of the men in uniform through renovating 22 military health facilities that dispense medical services to the Philippine Army, Navy and Air Force in 16 areas nationwide. Looking on is AFP Chief Nurse Col. Nilda Nesperos.

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## Abella: Gov't can't stand communists' doublespeak

By Ted Tuvera

Communists don't do what they say, Malacanang said yesterday.

Presidential spokesman Ernesto Abella said while their Holland-based leaders want to minimize offensives against state-security forces, guerrilla fighters in the hinterlands have launched attacks, particularly in Iloilo and parts of Mindanao.

He was referring to the actions of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), New People's Army (NPA) and National Democratic Front (NDF)

leaders and their forces on the ground.

In an interview with state-run dzKB, Abella said the government has become impatient the communists' doublespeak.

He said NPA attacks in Mindanao have "further fueled the public's doubts on whether it is still worthwhile to continue the peace negotiations with them."

Abella said the Palace is disturbed by the attacks "considering that their leaders in Europe issued a statement condemning the incident in Marawi, even offering to refrain from undertaking

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offensive operations in Mindanao to enable our government forces to deal with focus on the rebellion still happening.”

“These NPA attacks disrupt the conducive and enabling environment indispensable in peace-making and peace-building,” he added.

In a statement, the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP) said the NPA offensives are not merely an attack against the police or the military, the rebels are now up against noncombatants.

“Targets of the intensified offensive were not only government forces, but the civilian populace and private property,” the OPAPP said.

“This is a blatant violation of the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHR-IHL), which the CPP-NPA-NDF committed to uphold and respect,” it added.

The rebels’ attacks, however, appeared to be a failure in their end as they have resulted in a significant number of deaths from among their ranks.

Troops from the 701st Brigade of the Philippine Army based in Mati City, Davao del Norte, figured in series of encounter last June 17 that resulted in the death of an NPA front secretary and four others and the recovery of seven high-powered firearms and two improvised explosive device.

The army commander of the 802nd Brigade based in Ormoc City, Leyte stressed that despite presence of armed men in the Visayas, there was no director threat of terror attacks.

The whole of Visayas is still at Level 1 for terror alert which means it is not facing threat for any terror attack, said Brig. Gen. Francisco F. Mendoza, Jr. in a telephone interview on Friday.

“NPAs are armed. But no threat to terrorism,” he pointed out.

Following the declaration of martial Law in Mindanao a month ago, various reports reached their office on the presence of armed men in different areas pictured as similar to “terror attackers” in Marawi. But Mendoza refuted these.

“All information reaching our office that may pose imminent danger to peace and security are right away verified. So far, these are just hearsay,” he said.

“As we receive the information, we verify it. But up to now, no first-hand informant has ever drawn details. All of them could not give light to the information spreading around and cannot pinpoint who really met what they referred to as ‘armed’ men,” he added.

He said the recent information spreading in social media saying armed men were sighted in Albuera is being verified.

Aside from watching over insurgency issues, the army is working closely with the police, particularly for the nightly events at the city to celebrate its fiesta on June 29.

City police director Senior Supt. Ramil L. Ramirez, in a talk with the media also on Friday, said he was supervising his men to conduct close watch at the city plaza where huge crowd would be joining the evening merriment.

Police cars are constantly roaming around even at the outskirts to check any suspicious personalities around and to respond immediately to emergency calls.

Ramirez assured the public of maximum security, especially during the Bb. Ormoc coronation night.

“Remember, you are not viewers, you are here to keep watch for everyone’s safety,” he reminded to the more or less 30 police force to be assigned at the venue.

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## Gov't, MILF to strengthen partnership

DAVAO CITY – The government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) have vowed to continue to strengthen their partnership on the ground beyond the Peace Corridor by helping to rebuild Marawi City.

Assistant Secretary Dickson Hermoso, the government's focal person for the Peace Corridors, said the partnership would continue. Outside of the Marawi crisis, Hermoso said the MILF already showed it is continuously working with government.

He cited the incident two days ago in Pigcawayan, North Cotabato where the government and MILF ceasefire mechanisms worked together in helping the military contain the situation.

Hermoso said the MILF blocked Malagakit and Simsiman areas from the incursion of the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF). These two barangays are known MILF communities.

"That is why, if you noticed, the BIFF started attacking Barangay Malagakit at 5:30 in the morning and it ended at 5:30 in the afternoon because of the help of the MILF," Hermoso said.

"The MILF now is really a partner for peace and development in Mindanao," Hermoso told reporters during the Mindanao Hour on Friday at Lispher Inn, Davao City. He even vouched for the sincerity of the MILF and their volunteerism, their spirit to help government in the peace corridor.

The peace corridor was established following the Marawi siege. It is manned by a composite government and MILF teams providing a safe passage of humanitarian aid and civilian protection activities straddling

from Malabang, Lanao del Sur to Marawi City. This includes the areas around Lake Lanao.

Hermoso said there are 50 members of the MILF, all from Maranao tribe. They were organized into five teams, who bravely go inside the ground zero in Marawi to retrieve trapped civilians. "And, they did good," he added.

Knowing the risk is high, Hermoso said the MILF team still took the challenge and volunteered to go into ground zero.

"The only thing is they're also Maranaos. They know what is happening inside the ground zero. They equally share the burden of those people being trapped and still continuing up to this moment."

So far, the government and MILF peacekeepers were able to retrieve and recover 277 trapped civilians, wounded persons, children, women, elderly and those that are really in need of this humanitarian effort.

"We coordinated this with the emissaries to connect us to the Maute and we bridged this to the government leadership in Marawi City for us to be given a respite of taking out or retrieving the trapped civilians," Hermoso stressed.

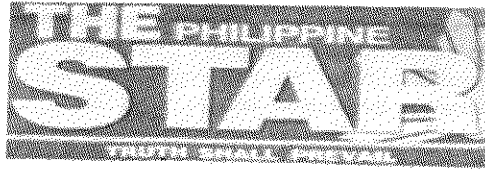
Hermoso said they are all aware that there are more civilians need to be retrieved especially the wounded, children and elderly.

He also underscored the significance of opening the peace corridor for trapped civilians in the lake.

"For all we know, we thought that the IDPs of Marawi City are just in Iligan but there are so many that evacuated to the Lake, to the towns along the Lake Lanao. There are so many," he said. **PNA**

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## Navy to deploy warship near Marawi

By ROEL PAREÑO

ZAMBOANGA CITY – The Philippine Navy will deploy its second landing dock vessel *BRP Davao del Sur-LD602* to Cotabato to serve as another landing platform of the military's ongoing operations to flush out Maute militants in Marawi City.

The 404 feet long supply and operations vessel built by an Indonesian defense contractor will also deliver military supplies and relief goods for displaced civilians.

Rear Admiral Rene Medina, Naval Force Western Mindanao commander, said the ship would help secure the coastal waters of Cotabato while serving as a staging pad of attack helicopters.

"Its presence will boost

security in the area," said Medina.

Capt. Richard Gonzaga, commanding officer of *BRP Davao del Sur*, said the ship has its own medical facility where wounded soldiers can be treated.

The ship arrived in this city on Thursday for a two-day port call and "open house."

Gonzaga said the deployment of the ship aims to promote peace, develop friendly relations and bring the Navy and the entire Armed Forces closer to the hearts of the people.

The 11,000-ton *BRP Davao del Sur*, which was commissioned on May 31, can accommodate 500 troops. It is the second landing dock after *BRP Tarlac*, which was delivered and commissioned in May last year.

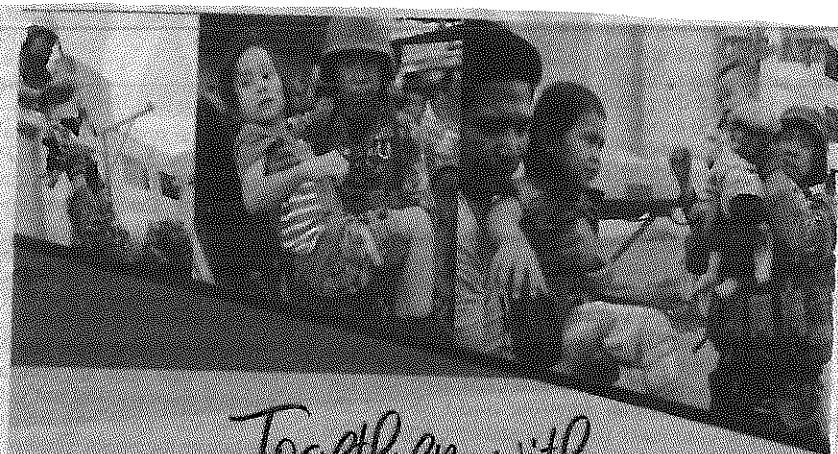
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## Together with **MARAWI**

In response to the chorus of voices of people expressing their intense desire to help Internally Displaced Persons (evacuees) and the families of our troops Killed-in-Action during the Rebellion in Marawi City, Special Accounts were opened at the **LAND BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES** for those purposes.

### HOW TO DONATE

• For the families of our Soldiers Killed-in-Action:

Account Name: Marawi AFP Casualty

Account Number: 0000 0552 1071 28

• For the evacuees from Marawi City:

Account Name: Marawi IDP

Account Number: 0000 0552 1071 36

For purposes of transparency, the AFP will be posting the amount of donations and the disbursements. For verification of donation, please contact this number: **0917-502-3012 (Globe) / 0928-264-3337 (Smart)**

**THANK YOU** for your care and compassion

25 June 2017



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## AFPSLAI taps UCPB for members' loans

By **LAWRENCE AGCAOILI**

UCPB has been tapped by the Armed Forces and Police Savings and Loan Association Inc. (AFPSLAI) to help facilitate the pay out of the loans it issues to its members.

UCPB president and CEO Higinio Macadaeg Jr. and AFPSLAI president and CEO Lt. Gen. Virgilio Domingo led the signing of the memorandum of agreement.

Through the UCPB's U-Remit service, AFPSLAI members could opt to receive their loan proceeds either via over the counter at any UCPB branch nationwide or have it credited to their UCPB or other bank accounts.

Given the nationwide deployment of its members, such as soldiers and police officers, AFPSLAI recognized the need of extending the reach of its services.

"Thank you to our partners in the AFPSLAI. I'm glad they found the bank capable of handling their requirement," Macadaeg said.

"UCPB has shown its commitment to provide excellent service over the years.

We're delighted that we have brought this long-standing partnership to a new venture to serve our members better through convenient pay outs," Domingo added.

With the partnership, AFPSLAI members need only to go to any of their 21 branches and 50 extension offices nationwide to file their loan application.

Once the application is processed and approved, members may opt to have their loan proceeds released at the UCPB branch near them, or have it credited to their UCPB account or another bank account.

AFPSLAI's head of Cash and Investment Management Division Girlie Dario said the partnership with UCPB will make it easier and more convenient for their members to avail loans.

"When we sought the help of our partner banks to provide a facility to make it easy for our members to claim their loan proceeds, UCPB was the first to respond by tailor-fitting their system and processes to comply with our requirements," Dario said.

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# Balita

ANG NANGUNGUNANG PAHAYAGANG TAGALOG SA BANSA P8.00

Page. 7



**PAGTANAW  
AT  
PANANAW**  
**Bert de Guzman**

**M**AY sapantaha ang military na tumitira rin ng shabu ang mga tauhan ng tulisang Maute Group (MG) upang manatiling matapang, matatag at hindi umuurong sa pakikipagbambakan sa mga tropa ng gobyerno. Sinabi ni Lt. Col. Jo-Ar Herrera, spokesperson ng Army's 1st Infantry Division, na ganito ang naging paniniwala ng military matapos maka-recover ang mga sundalo ng 11 kilo ng shabu o crystal meth sa isang bahay ng mga terorista bilang kanlungan.

Ang shabu na natagpuan ng mga tropa ng 4th Infantry Battalion ay tinatayang nagkakahalagang P110 milyon hanggang P250 milyon. Dahil dito, ayon kay Herrera, na obserbahan ng mga kawal na ang MG fighters ay suicidal o hindi natatakot sa pakikipaglaban sapagkat sila ay nasa ilalim ng impluwensiya ng ilegal na droga.

Bukod sa 11 kilong shabu, natagpuan din ng mga sundalo sa bahay ang drug paraphernalia, apat na rifle, at isang itin na bandila ng Islamic (IS) jihadist group. Sinabi naman ni Capt. Eric Estrevillo, civil-military officer ng 49th Infantry Battalion, na ginamit ng MG terrorists ang bahay sa loob ng isang linggo at mahigpit na nakipagbambakan bago ito nakubkob ng mga sundalo noong nakaraang Linggo.

Pahayag ni Estrevillo: "Mukhang energetic at high on drugs ang mga terorista." Tinataya ng military na may 120 terorista pa ang nagtatago sa mga gusali, bahay at mosque sa commercial district ng Marawi City. Inamin ni Col. Herrera na bunsod ng determinasyon at tapang ng mga terorista dahil sila'y naka-shabu at ang paggamit nila ng matataas na kalibreng armas, tulad ng anti-tank weapons at fuel bombs, nagpapaantala ito sa pagsulong ng mga kawal upang ganap na mapalaya ang siyudad.

Siyanga pala, sa kabilang sakripisyo,

kamatayan, gutoin at pagkawasak ng mga ari-arian sa Marawi City, likas sa mga Pilipino, kabilang ang mga Maranao, ang pagbibiro pa rin sa kanilang kalagayan. Sa KALABAW caricature ng isang broadsheet, ganito ang kanyang pahayag: "Matatawa kaya ang magkapatid?" Ang tinutukoy dito ay ang magkapatid na Maute, sina Omarkhayam at Abdullah.

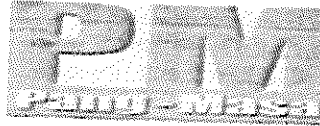
Sa gitna ng mainit na sagupaan sa Marawi City, ang mga residente ay nagpapalitan pa ng mga biro sa social media, text messages at maging sa lansangan. Sinasabi nilang sila ay mga Maute. Naririto ang ilang biro: 1. "Ako Maute glaba (Ako ang naglalaba)"; 2. "Ako Mautegtukod (Ako ang kumakayod); 3. "Maute te ((Siya ay pangit)". Maging ang mga bakwit na nasa mga tent ay nagagawa ring magbiro gaya ng: "Maute man mi, Sir. Mautegbakwit (Kami ay Maute, Sir. Kami ang tumatakas at bakwit)". Ginagawa raw nila ang mga pagbibiro

upang labanan ang tensiyon at hirap na dinaranas, ayon kay Kamar Suminod, tumakas sa Marawi City at ngayon ay nasa evacuation center.

Tanggap na ni President Rodrigo Roa Duterte ang pagtulong ng mga Amerikano upang sugpuin ang MG-IS jihadists. Ang ipinagkakaloob ay tulong-teknikal (technical assistance) at walang isa mang sundalong Amerikano na nakikipaglaban kasama ang mga kawal-Pilipino sa larangan. Bawal ito a'insunod sa Konstitusyon.

Tinatanong na naman ako ng kaibigang palabiro pero sarkastiko: "Ngayon, alam na ni PDU30 na talagang ang mga Kano ay handang tumulong kahit gusto niyang humiwalay sa US at palayasin ang small contingent nito sa Mindanao. Eh, nasaan naman ang tulong ng kinakaibigan niyang China at Russia?" Naisip ko, parang tama siya, pero paano makatutulong ang kaibigang China at Russia ni Mano Digong eh, wala naman tayong kasunduan sa kanila?

25 June 2017



Pahina. 3

Editorial

## Terorista na addict pa

**S**ABOG sa shabu ang Maute fighters kaya walong kapaguran sa pakikipaglaban, ayon sa Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP). Sabi pa ng AFP, matibay sa puyat ang mga terorista at kahit maraming beses nang binagsakan ng bomba ay nakikipagbambakan pa rin na parang hindi natutulog. Suicidal na umano ang Maute group at wala na sa sarili na palatandaang lasing sa droga.

Ang konklusyon na nagsa-shabu ang mga terorista ay lalong tumibay nang matagpuan ng mga sundalo sa isang bahay na inokupa ng mga Maute ang 11 kilos ng shabu na mayroon pang drug paraphernalias. Ayon sa military, nagkakahalaga ang shabu ng P110 million hanggang P250 million. High grade shabu umano ang natagpuan na naka-pack ng tig-iisang kilo. Kasamang nakuha ang



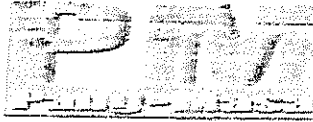
isang itim na bandila ng Islamic State (IS) at apat na automatic rifles. Isang linggo umano ang inokupa ng Maute ang bahay bago nakubkob ng military. Inamin ng military na nahirapan silang pasukin ang bahay sapagkat lumaban nang husto ang mga terorista. Nang masusukol na, iniwan na ang shabu at mga baril.

Maaaring tama ang teoriya ng AFP na nagsa-shabu muna ang mga terorista bago makipagbambakan. Kapag sabog na sa shabu, wala na silang pakialam sa nangyayari sa paligid at baril na lang nang baril. Wala na silang nakikilala na maski ang kapwa nila Muslim ay tinatarget. Maski ang nagdadasal sa mosque ay kanilang binabaril katulad ng isang bata na tinamaan sa ulo. Umano'y nasa mosque ang bata kasama ang ama at nagdarasal nang bigla na lamang natumba ang bata na may tama na pala ng bala sa ulo. Ganyan kalupit ang mga terorista na hindi na kumilala at wala nang paggalang sa mga nananampalataya.

Dapat pang paigtingin ng pamahalaan ang pagdurog sa Maute. Delikado ang mga teroristang ito na addict pa pala sa shabu. Hindi dapat tumigil ang AFP sa pagdurog sa mga ito. Wala nang atrasan sa pagkakataong ito.


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Pahina. 3

**Kuwentong Palasyo**  
**LARGABISTO**



**N ELY SALUDAR**

## Todo-puwersa na sa Marawi

ANG usapin ng terorismo ay pandaigdigang isyu kung saan ang magkakaalyadong bansa ay nagtutulungan upang ito ay labanan.

Dahil dito, marapat lang na hingin at tanggapin ang anumang tulong ng mga kaalyadong bansa upang agad na matuldukan ang terorismo.

Dahil kumpirmado naman na ang Maute Group ay kaalyado ng ISIS kailangan na ang tulong nang malalaking bansa para labanan ang mga terorista.

Hindi maaring solihin ng Pilipinas ang problema sa Marawi dahil pandaigdigan ang problema sa terorismo.

Sa ngayon, tumutulong na ang US sa tactical operation sa Marawi at magbibigay na rin ng ayuda ang Australia para sa inga spy drone.

Kung may kaalyado pang bansa na mag-aalok ng tulong, makakabuting agad itong tanggapin.

Hindi na kailangang patagalin ang problema sa Marawi City dahil ilang barangay (10 to 20 percent) na lamang ang kontrolado ng Maute.

Durugin sa lalong madaling panahon ang Maute para hindi na makapaghasik pa ng karahasan sa ibang lugar.

Hindi maaring maliitin ang pag-atake ng Maute dahil lumilitaw na matagal itong pinagplanuhan ng terorista. Sa katunayan, may mga dayuhang terorista na napatay sa sagupaan.

Kung may dayuhan na kasama ang Maute sa Marawi, hindi malayong nakakakuha rin ito ng suportang pinansiyal sa international terrorists.

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**NGAYON**

Pahina. 5



## Lumiliit na ang mundo ng mga terorista

MAGANDANG balita para sa ating lahat lalong-lalo na sa mga taga-Marawi. Ayon sa tagapagsalita ng Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), malapit na nilang mabawi ang Marawi City sa mga terorista. Pilay na ang mga teroristang sumugod sa Marawi. Marami na silang nalagas na mga miyembro at iba rito ay lider at tagasuporta nilang pinansyal. Kahit gaano kalakas ang puwersa ng ISIS hindi nila kayang mang-agaw ng isang lugar para pagharian dahil kahit saang bansa nila ito gawin hindi sila magtatagumpay dahil hindi papayag ang gobyerno. Sumasang-ayon ako sa agarang pagdeklara ni Presi-

dent Digong ng martial law sa Mindanao para pigilan ang ISIS na magtayo ng isang maliit na gobyerno at gawin itong sentro ng terorismo. Kung ang mga mamamayan sana ng Marawi ay naging tapat sa gobyerno, hindi sana nila dinaranas ang hirap na kanilang nararanasan ngayon. Maraming netizens ang nag-post sa social media nasaan daw ang mga padre de pamilya ng ibang bakwit?

Bakit karamihan daw sa mga lumilikas ay mga babae kasama ang kanilang mga anak. Masamang mag-akusa sa kapwa pero nakakapagtaka nga naman dahil kapansin-pansin sa mga lumilikas ay pawang mga kababaihan. Ang nakakatakot dito ay baka miyembro ng Maute ISIS ang karamihan sa mga ito. Ibig sabihin laganap na ang terorismo sa Marawi.

Hindi lang terorista ang marami ryan sa Marawi kundi droga, kaya pala para lang silang pumapatay ng hayop sa mga tao dahil ang mga ito pala ay nasa impluwensiya ng droga. Kaya hindi mo rin masisisi si Digong na sabihin sa kanyang mga tropa na kapag nakakita ng ISIS ay barilin na ito.

Tayo'y magpasalamat sa mga bansang tumutulong sa atin para matunton ang kinalalagyan ng mga  
*(Sundan sa pahina 5)*

### KUNSABAGAY... Mula pahina 4

terorista. Tinutulu- mga karagatan upang ngan nila ang mga pigilan ang mga tero- tropa ng gobyerno ristang gustong pu- para magpatrol sa masok sa Marawi.

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# INQUIRER

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## The new 'bakwit'

**T**he deadly eruptions of Mount Pinatubo in 1991 resulted in, among others, "tent cities" materializing in Pampanga and other provinces in Luzon, serving as temporary shelter for the thousands of families driven to evacuate their homes yet enduring for months, years, until the families could be resettled and helped to pick up the pieces.

Now, with the fighting in Marawi still raging a month and two days after it began, up to 230,000 people have fled the city. Of the number, nearly 40,000 languish in evacuation centers put up in gyms, community halls and Islamic schools in certain towns in the Lanao provinces.

As can be expected, the new "bakwit" are prey to illness and death—the result of thousands of families forced to live in extremely close quarters. At least 24 evacuees have died since arriving at the centers, Health Secretary Paulyn Ubial announced early last week. They were felled by dehydration, pneumonia and diarrhea—the usual suspects in such desperate situations. In a report, Inquirer Mindanao's Allan Nawal quoted Alinader Minalang, the health director for Lanao del Sur, as saying that 300 cases of diarrhea had been monitored among the evacuees. Minalang attributed the spike to "sanitation issues and a lack of sources of potable water."

Then as now, the centers simply aren't equipped to handle big numbers of bakwit. In some cases, more than 100 people are forced to share one filthy toilet.

And malnutrition is a creeping menace to the children, warned Nella Sarap, nutrition specialist of the Lanao del Sur Integrated Provincial Health Office. The fact is that what has been available so far for the displaced families simply isn't enough. "The relief goods consisting of sardines, noodles and rice will not provide them the needed nutrition," Sarap pointed out. She said the situation would get worse when more evacuees contract diarrhea: "When this happens, we will see more weak bodies, more diseases, and possibly deaths." According to Dr. Kadil Sino-linding, health secretary of the Autonomous Region in

Muslim Mindanao, all it would take is one case of cholera for the disease to burn through the bakwit and "cause an outbreak in no time."

The rest of us can only imagine the misery: Residents of Marawi snatched violently from their everyday lives, forced to flee bullets and bombs, and, reaching safe ground, struggling to survive in the direst conditions. If the fighting goes on, things will deteriorate even more.

Yet the fighting continues and more and more of Marawi is reduced to ruins. What this means is that the bakwit will not be able to leave their temporary camps anytime soon, even with rehab plans for Marawi being touted. And even with Social Welfare Secretary Judy Taguiwalo's announcement that individual tents are being procured for each displaced family. "It's temporary, but it's necessary," she told reporters. It's a chance to do something right now to help improve the situation at the evacuation centers, to make things better before they get worse.

There's a risk that the evacuation centers may become more permanent structures, as the Pinatubo experience has shown. And as the Pinatubo experience has also shown, an evacuation center is no place for children to grow up in, let alone thrive. The young children of Marawi that will be brought up in these centers will live a life of deprivation and limitation. They will wake and sleep to a brutish rhythm and a fragile future.

How to help the bakwit apart from donating cash and sending the usual relief (temporary, palliative) goods to this shattered city in the South? The continuing education of children whose lives were disrupted by this war is imperative, as is the protection of girls and women forced to live in such sordid settings (the conditions in the evacuation camps put up in the aftermath of the Zamboanga siege of 2013 are hugely instructive). And more than ever, earnest efforts to bring about a just and enduring peace in the South, based on a clear understanding of the roots of the conflict, cannot stop now.

THE REST OF US CAN ONLY IMAGINE THE MISERY: RESIDENTS OF MARAWI SNATCHED VIOLENTLY FROM THEIR EVERYDAY LIVES, FORCED TO FLEE BULLETS AND BOMBS, AND, REACHING SAFE GROUND, STRUGGLING TO SURVIVE IN THE DIREST CONDITIONS

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# The Maute Group and the Islamic State

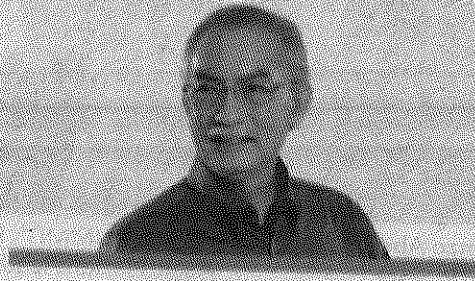
One of the key issues the Supreme Court will be deliberating on in the coming days is whether there was rebellion or invasion in Marawi or any other part of Mindanao prior to the May 23 proclamation of martial law in the whole region. As the only valid grounds for martial law recognized by the 1987 Constitution, rebellion and invasion have specific legal meanings.

The use of public violence to sow fear in pursuit of political goals—or what has come to be called “terrorism”—does not, by itself, constitute rebellion or invasion. Indeed, not even the existence of armed groups aiming to seize state power, and engaging government forces in intermittent encounters, is seen as a sufficient ground for declaring martial law. Armed separatist rebels and communist insurgents have fought the established government in this country for a long time. Obviously their mere existence is not a sufficient justification for martial law.

Indeed, martial law is considered a tool of last resort, which the state is compelled to use, usually in the context of civil war or foreign invasion, in order to ensure its own survival. The implication is that a state of lawlessness exists, which has reached such a level that the usual organs of government are no longer able to function to ensure public order or safety. Our Constitution does not permit the use of martial law to reform society, or to prevent rebellion by extirpating its roots, as Ferdinand Marcos professed to do in 1972. Such reasons pave the way to a dictatorship.

But, having said that, the questions raised by the fighting in Marawi could be more complex than the discussion of the legal issues at the Supreme Court might permit. Foremost of these is the actual relationship and involvement of the Maute Group with Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi’s Islamic State.

The waving of the IS black banner by the Maute militants might signal their identification with the vision of an Islamic caliphate promoted by al-Baghdadi—“a state where the Arab and non-Arab, the white man and black man, the easterner and westerner are all brothers ... Syria is not for the Syrians, and Iraq is not for the Iraqis. The Earth is Allah’s.” But, is it



## PUBLIC LIVES

RANDY DAVID

enough basis to conclude that the IS has found a new army in Marawi that is committed to establish a caliphate governed by the strict enforcement of Sharia law?

Does the presence of a handful of Indonesians and Malaysians among the Maute militants signify the same kind of internationalization that the IS has seemed to project in Iraq and Syria since June 2014? How easy is it for foreign jihadis to enter Marawi and join the Maute band that is now battling government forces? And perhaps, most important of all, how much support does the vision of an Islamic caliphate have among the people of Marawi and Lanao del Sur?

It is important to find the answers to these questions in order to gain a fuller understanding of the events that led to the protracted war in Marawi that has caused the deaths of hundreds of people and the displacement of almost all of the city’s more than 200,000 residents. Notwithstanding its formal designation as an Islamic City, Marawi seems the most unlikely place in which to found an IS front.

Among all the ethnic groups of Mindanao, it is probably the Moros of Lanao—the business-minded Maranao—who have had the most extensive connection with modernity. Maranao traders dominate the retail business in cell phones and electronic gadgets, pearl jewelry and imitation branded clothes, at Metro Manila’s shopping malls. They may be found in almost every big town of the country plying their made-in-China wares at weekend and night markets.

The Maute family itself is known to be prosperous and influential, with properties in Mindanao and Manila. It is common for big clans like the Mautes who live and do business in Mindanao to maintain a private army, just as it is customary for Moro men to own guns. Seven Maute sons are known to lead the family’s private army. An interesting Reuters report appearing in the June 24 Inquirer quotes from an interview with Joseph Franco, a research fellow at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies in Singapore. Franco asserts that the Maute family began to claim links to the IS after it got embroiled in a conflict with Mayor Dimanatang Pansar of the nearby town of Butig over public works contracts. This dispute led to a full-blown *rido* or clan war. Franco says that the Mautes used the IS connection mainly to “spook and coerce the Pansars.”

This is a fascinating angle. It offers an insight into the complex mix of motives that fuel political violence and link local family feuds to the global circuits of terrorism. “That tactical use of terrorist imagery took on a life of its own. Now we have this Maute Group, who call themselves IS Ranao,” Franco tells Reuters.

I doubt if the people of Marawi were aware of the IS in their midst before May 23. And, quite possibly, neither was the military. Yet today, the IS is on everyone’s lips. Its capacity to wage a sustained urban guerrilla war and to inflict huge casualties on government forces has made the Mautes the most dreaded extremist group in Mindanao. The unintended consequence of unleashing the power of martial law to defeat them is to give this ragtag army a stage on which they can prove their fighting prowess and to which they can draw jihadis in quest of meaning, a cause, or a place in paradise.

It brings no gratification to say this. But, one can imagine how the opening of war fronts everywhere pleases those who recoil against the anaesthetization of politics through peace, and dream of the establishment of a just and better order through permanent strife.

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## No quick fix to battle vs Maute: AFP

The military, while mindful of the public clamor to end the fight against the terrorist Maute Group at the soonest possible time, cannot rush it to prevent more casualties in the long run, an official has said.

An urban terrain, such as Marawi City, is one of the most difficult combat environment there is as troops are dealing with enemy snipers, improvised bombs, mines, and the presence of civilian hostages, said Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) spokesperson, Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla.

"(Urban fighting) is complex. It is not that easy. People are very impatient but they don't know the sacrifices of their soldiers," he said.

Padilla cited the experience of one Marine unit last week as they were clearing a building in Marawi City.

"The Marines found an IED so they tried to deal with it by trying to explode it remotely. When it exploded, there were 10 huge explosions, like a 'Judas Belt' firecracker. It turns out that the IED was part of a (booby trap consisting of a series of IEDs laid together), which if triggered, would likely kill or injure troops unwittingly," he said.

Padilla said neutralizing the remaining terrorists is complicated due to the urban terrain and with the enemy well aware of their positional advantage.

He cited the case of military units in the Middle East, who, despite their firepower and numerical superiority, encountered extreme difficulty in combating ISIS terrorists in an urban setting.

"The Battle of Mosul (in Iraq) is still ongoing. (Having) started in October 2016, it is not yet finished. (It has) been going on for eight months. In Libya (which conducted operations against) ISIS/Daesh (terrorists), the battle started May 12 (last year) and ended only last Nov. 6, so it lasted over six months," Padilla said.

He further noted that in the Battle of Ramadi where American and Iraqi forces combined to fight the ISIS terrorists, the operation began in April 2006 and ended only in November that year and during the Second Battle of Fallujah where the Iraqi, American and British forces combined against Al-Qaeda terrorists, operations lasted Nov. 7 to Dec. 23, 2004.

"So if you will compare it to the ongoing engagement (in Marawi), the terrain is very much the same, and we are doing this very carefully. We have complex issues -- presence of hostages, residents in their homes refusing to leave, and continued discovery of improvised explosive devices, (necessitating) the door-to-door clearing operations our soldiers must practice," Padilla said. (Priam F. Nepomuceno/PNA)

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## ONLINE NEWS 25 JUNE 2017

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

### Palace welcomes developments on Marawi ops

Presidential spokesperson Ernesto Abella said among these developments is the recovery of PHP10-million worth of shabu found inside the house of former Marawi City mayor, Omar Solitario Ali. In a statement, Abella said this "will hopefully bring to bear the realities existing in the area about the close relation between the illegal drug trade and this ongoing rebellion". Ali was among the local government officials allegedly involved in the illegal drug trade who were named by President Rodrigo Duterte. "His name is likewise included in the arrest order of the Department of National Defense (DND) in connection with the Marawi rebellion," Abella said.

He further said that the military is validating reports that Malaysian national Mahmud bin Ahmad, who helped finance the rebellion in Marawi, died from wounds he sustained during the early days of the Marawi conflict. "We have been told that the military has information of the spot where he was buried and government troops are now trying to locate it and recover the remains. Once done, only then can we make an official confirmation," Abella said.

Meanwhile, he said Malacañang, the Armed Forces of the Philippines, the Philippine National Police, and the DND do not encourage or tolerate abuses by the military or the police in Mindanao or elsewhere. "We will investigate and if evidence warrants, prosecute and punish all those who committed abuses, especially sexual violence against women," he said.

Abella cited a recent report by the Commission on Human Rights, stating that there was no evidence of abuse of martial law in Mindanao. "Should there be, proper complaints must be properly filed. In the meantime, unless based on fact and evidence, we ask critics and advocates to be more considerate in their judgment of the efforts and context of our soldiers' challenges and be more supportive of their efforts to protect the Filipino way of life," he said.

Abella also said reports that 89 foreign terrorists have entered the country is still being validated. Foreign terrorists, he said, may have entered Mindanao via Indonesia or Malaysia. "This is why we are making a collective effort against terrorism and violent extremism through a trilateral cooperation with Indonesia and Malaysia," he pointed out.

The Philippines, Indonesia and Malaysia have recently beefed up their trilateral cooperation to fight terrorism and violent extremism in Southeast Asia. As to the reported NPA attacks in Mindanao, Abella said these serious offensives "further fueled the public's doubts on whether it is still worthwhile to continue the peace negotiations with them". "We are disturbed by the recent NPA attacks considering that their leaders in Europe issued a statement condemning the incident in Marawi, even offering to refrain from undertaking offensive operations in Mindanao to enable our government forces to deal with focus on the rebellion still happening," he said. "These NPA attacks disrupt the conducive and enabling environment indispensable in peace making and peace building." Abella said that once validated, the government will "undertake corresponding and appropriate steps to deal decisively with the situation". (PND/PNA)

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

## **2 BIFF collared at a checkpoint in Maguindanao**

The Armed Forces of the Philippines-Western Mindanao Command (AFP-WestMinCom) said that two members of the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) were arrested by government soldiers in a checkpoint in Maguindanao on Wednesday morning.



*Filipino soldiers onboard a truck in Pigcawayan, North Cotabato.  
(EPA/MARK NAVALES / MANILA BULLETIN)*

The two BIFF members were identified as Jahren Mantukay, 23, and Bardurin Limba, 28.

The two were held by members of the 22nd Mechanized Company, 2nd Mechanized Battalion, Mechanized Division, Philippine Army at a checkpoint in Butilin, Datu Salibo, Maguindanao at 9:20 a.m. Wednesday.

Seized from Mantukay and Limba, both residents of Shariff Saydona Mustapha, Maguindanao, were two sachets of suspected shabu.

The two are reportedly members of the BIFF's Special Operation Group under a certain Palos and were often seen operating the motorized boat utilized by the BIFF.

They were brought to Datu Piang Police Station for investigation.

Major General Arnel Dela Vega, commander of the Army's 6th Infantry Division, said that coordination was made with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front and the ceasefire committee as part of the area of engagement is occupied by the 105th Base Command of the MILF.

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## **CAFGU man killed despite BIFF member's pleading**

PIGCAWAYAN, North Cotabato – Thirty three-year old farmer Abraham Cutay hid his family for safety inside a rice mill upon learning that hundreds of Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) were already in the periphery of Barangay Malagakit last Wednesday.

Early morning that day, Cutay and several other villagers were preparing to evacuate to safer grounds when the armed men started to close in.

Cutay led her wife Gloryjane and three other children to a nearby rice mill believing that the armedmen would not find them.

Unfortunately, his youngest son two-year old Daniel cried when five men armed with high-powered rifle passed by the rice mill.

The armed men caught them and pointed their guns to the Cutay family but the rebels were just after Abraham.

"One of the armed men knew him so he literally shielded my husband and begged not to kill him." Gloryjane recounted in Ilonggo dialect.

"If you don't kill him now, he would kill you in the future." she quoted one of the armed telling his fellow rebel.

Then one of the five armed men, who was wearing a ski mask and acted as the leader of the group, shot him multiple times in the body and in the knee in front of his wife and children.

Gloryjane added that the person who shot her husband further said that they have been relaying message to him not to join the Cafgu but he did not listen.

Abraham is supposed to graduate from a Civilian Armed Forces Geographical Unit (Cafgu) on June 26.

When the armed men left, Gloryjane and her children evacuated to the town proper along with hundreds of others.

The body of her husband was recovered the following day when the military recaptured the village as the rebels withdrew to the nearby Liguasan Marsh.