

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



TEAM ARMY

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OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

NEWS CLIPPINGS

28 June 2017

Wednesday

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

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS + FEARLESS VIEWS

TODAY'S WEATHER FORECAST | JUNE 28, 2017 | WEDNESDAY

MONSOON TROUGH AFFECTING SOUTHERN LUZON (As of 5:00 PM - June 27, 2017)

LAOAG CITY 26 - 33 °C
TUGUEGARAO CITY 25 - 33 °C
BAGUIO CITY 17 - 24 °C
SBMA/CLARK 25 - 34 °C
TAGAYTAY CITY 22 - 31 °C
METRO-MANILA 25 - 33 °C
LEGAZPI CITY 26 - 33 °C
ILOILO/BACOLOD CITY 26 - 32 °C
TACLOBAN CITY 25 - 31 °C
PUERTO PRINCESA 25 - 33 °C
METRO CEBU 25 - 32 °C
CAGAYAN DE ORO 24 - 32 °C
ZAMBOANGA CITY 24 - 32 °C
METRO DAVAO 25 - 33 °C

SUNRISE 5:30 AM
SUNSET 6:29 PM

MOONRISE 9:30 AM
MOONSET 10:18 PM

NEW MOON JUN 24 10:31 AM
FIRST QUARTER JUL 1 8:51 AM

LOW TIDE 8:50 PM
HIGH TIDE 12:22 PM
MANILA SOUTH HARBOR
-0.06 Meter 1.32 Meter

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

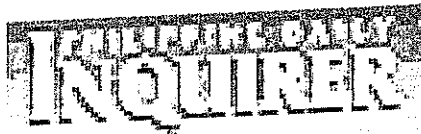
Cloudy skies with rainshowers and/or thunderstorms

	JUNE 29	JUNE 30	JUNE 29	JUNE 30	JUNE 29	JUNE 30		
METRO MANILA	25 - 33 °C	25 - 33 °C	TAGAYTAY	21 - 30 °C	21 - 30 °C	TACLOBAN	25 - 31 °C	25 - 31 °C
TUGUEGARAO	24 - 33 °C	25 - 34 °C	LEGAZPI	26 - 33 °C	26 - 32 °C	CAGAYAN DE ORO	24 - 33 °C	24 - 32 °C
LAOAG	25 - 33 °C	25 - 32 °C	PUERTO PRINCESA	25 - 33 °C	25 - 33 °C	METRO DAVAO	25 - 33 °C	25 - 33 °C
BAGUIO	17 - 24 °C	17 - 24 °C	ILOILO/BACOLOD	26 - 32 °C	26 - 32 °C	ZAMBOANGA	24 - 32 °C	24 - 32 °C
SBMA/CLARK	25 - 34 °C	26 - 34 °C	METRO CEBU	25 - 32 °C	25 - 32 °C	 SABOT KO, PADALA MO!		

DZRH NEWS
MONDAY - FRIDAY
11AM & 5PM

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

28 June 2017



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NO DEAL, GOV'T TELLS MAUTE TERRORISTS

By Jeffrey Maitem,
Richef Umel, Karios Manlupig
and Philip C. Tubeza
@Team_Inquirer

MARAWI CITY—The government on Tuesday rejected an exchange of captives with Islamic State-inspired gunmen holed up in Marawi, as the battle

Abella reiterated the government's policy of not dealing with terrorists.

"[The] government's policy not to negotiate with terrorists remains," Abella told reporters in Malacañang.

He said the talks on Sunday between Muslim emissaries, including religious leaders, and the Maute terrorists were not sanctioned by the govern-

ment and the military.

"Any demands made inside therefore hold no basis. Let us remind the public, the gravity of the terrorists and their supporters' offenses is immense and they must be held accountable for all of their actions," Abella said.

A source who went into the conflict zone in Marawi with the emissaries to

for control of the city entered its sixth week with intense bombing raids by military planes on a shrinking terrorist-held zone.

"It's not possible. We do not negotiate with terrorists," Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process Jesus Dureza told the Inquirer by phone.
Presidential spokesperson Ernesto

talk with the terrorists told the Inquirer on Monday that Abdullah Maute, one of the leaders of the gunmen holed up in the city, informed the group that Ft. Teresito "Chito" Suganob, the vicar general of Marawi whom they seized as they stormed the city on May 23 was alive and that he was willing to release the priest if the govern- **A2**

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FROM A1

ment would free his parents and relatives who had been captured by the authorities.

Dureza said the Mautes' parents had "to undergo judicial process."

"If we will give in to their demands, it seems they are also terrorizing us. So negotiations are not possible," he said.

On June 9, Ominta "Farhana" Maute, the mother of Abdullah and his brother Omarkhayam, was arrested by police in Masiu, Lanao del Sur province.

Two days earlier, the Mautes' father, Cayamora, and his second wife were arrested at a police-military checkpoint in Davao City.

On June 18, Farida and Al Jaidid Romato, cousins of the Mautes, and Abdul Rahman Dimacula, boyfriend of Farida, were arrested in Iloilo City.

The Mautes and the Romatos were covered by Arrest Order No. 1 issued by Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana shortly after President Duterte clamped martial law on all of

The family of Suganob was also leaving his fate to the government and the military.

"We are not in a position to suggest what should be done. We leave it to [the military] and the government what to do," said Rufino Larroza, Suganob's uncle.

Lt. Col. Jo-Ar Herrera,

Mindanao to quell the attempt of the Mautes and their allies from the Abu Sayyaf bandit group to establish an enclave for the Islamic State (IS) jihadist group in the southern Philippines.

17 charged

The government has brought charges against 17 people, including the Maute brothers and their parents and former Marawi Mayor Fahad Salic, whose name appeared on checks found by soldiers in a house in the city used as a sniper's nest by the terrorists, and an alleged bomb maker, Mohammad Noaim Maute.

Among the 17 is 50-year-old nurse Jadzrie Harad Saabdula, who allegedly provided medical help to the terrorists, according to Justice Undersecretary Erickson Balmes.

Bishop Edwin de la Peña of Marawi said the Catholic Church was leaving Suganob's fate to the government.

"It's up to the government. It's the government's call whether to enter negotiations or not," De la Peña said on Church-run radio on Tuesday.

spokesperson for the military's 1st Infantry Division, said on Monday that the priest was seen alive on Sunday in a part of the city still in the hands of the terrorists.

"We don't have details of his health. We were just told that he was sighted alive," Herrera told reporters.

The authorities believe Suganob and about 200 other Christians are being held by the Maute and Abu Sayyaf fighters as human shields.

IS allies

The Mautes and Abu Sayyaf leader Isnilon Hapilon have pledged allegiance to the Middle East-based IS, and they have support from foreigners fighting for the jihadist group in their assault on Marawi.

Eight foreign fighters, including those from Chechnya, Indonesia and Malaysia, were killed in the early days of the crisis, according to the military.

More than 360 people—including 270 terrorists, 70 soldiers and policemen, and 27 civilians—have been killed since the fighting began on May 23 when the Mautes and their Abu Sayyaf allies stormed the city.

Regional gov'ts worried

Heavy fighting broke out on Tuesday, with the military launching airstrikes on terrorists' positions in an area of the city center that had been re-

duced from 8.7 square kilometers a week ago to just a square kilometer, according to Herrera.

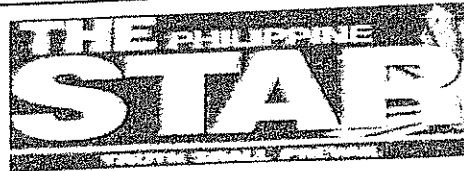
The protracted seizure of the city by the terrorists has worried Southeast Asian governments about the extent of the IS group's agenda may have gained traction in the southern Philippines, which is used to banditry, piracy and separatism than radical Islamist ideology.

The terrorists' organization, combat capability and use of heavy weapons has raised fears in the mainly Roman Catholic country that the Marawi fighting could just be the start of a wider campaign, and be portrayed by the Maute group as a triumph that could boost its recruitment.

Fighting has raged in Marawi since May 23 after a failed military attempt to capture Hapilon.

The force of the terrorists' response surprised the military, leading the government to lose not just Hapilon, but also control of the city. —WITH REPORTS FROM DONA Z. PAZZIBUGAN, JULIE M. AURELIO, NESTOR P. BURGOS JR., AFP AND REUTERS INQ

28 June 2017



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Rody: Marawi will be prosperous again

DND chief eyes end to siege by next month

By CHRISTINA MENDEZ
and EDITH REGALADO

From the rubble of war, a prosperous Marawi will rise.

President Duterte made this vow as he joined Muslims in celebrating Eid'1 Fitr yesterday.

"One thing I will promise you, my brother Moro, I will see to it that Marawi will rise as a prosperous city again," he said in an extemporaneous speech during the celebration of Eid'1 Fitr at Malacañang last night.

"I just want this thing over and the radicals, extremists out of the Muslim world here," said Duterte, the country's first president from Mindanao. "We are not brutal and we respect life. At no time will bigotry be tolerated."

At the start of the event that was attended by key figures from

Turn to Page 10

the Muslim community and some lawmakers, he read from a prepared speech, vowing to end the violence and conflict in Mindanao that he placed under martial law in May.

"To our brothers and sisters who have been affected by the violence and conflict in Mindanao, I assure you that the government is committed to securing just and lasting peace in the island. The military and the police remain hard at work to ending the crisis with dispatch, especially in Marawi," Duterte said.

He said he ordered the release of P20 billion to reconstruct the city from the ashes, brought about by intense fighting for five weeks now coupled with military air strikes and surgical operations.

The conflict has displaced thousands of residents who fled to nearby Iligan and Cagayan de Oro cities for safety.

"We have also laid concrete plans on the rehabilitation and reconstruction of your lives and communities. The Task Force Bangon Marawi, composed of various agencies of the government, is being created to hasten recovery efforts in Marawi City. More funds will be added, if necessary. Meaningful and long-term support will also be made

available, with the help of our partners in the private sector and the international community," Duterte promised.

A lawyer by profession, he explained anew that he had to declare martial law in Mindanao to protect its citizens, taking note of a report that said terrorists were able to stockpile firearms and that their leaders were influenced by those in the Middle East.

"I was forced into it," he said. "When I declared martial law in Moscow, I already know everything... how long it will last. I know the deployment of the snipers and where they kept their firearms. I already have the complete picture and I knew that it will be a long fight."

"I am also bleeding like you," Duterte lamented the number of innocent people that were hurt, killed and beheaded by the enemy.

Duterte claimed that some of the fighters in Marawi could be his cousins. He also has relatives who allied with the Maute and he had discouraged them from joining the group which lacked ideology.

"We are all human beings, whether we like it or not, we will die.... What will we leave to our children? We now have a limited time to correct the aber-

ration. If we allow this thing to drag on, what happens to our children?" he said.

He added that there is no mercy for the members of the ISIS-backed terror group for destroying Marawi, inflicting cruelty on the general populace and destroying properties wantonly.

"With the destruction brought about by Maute, there will be no quarters given, and no quarters asked," Duterte said.

"Just let me be. I am very sorry that this has to happen. I am not happy that many Maranaos are killed. I am not happy about your sufferings... I see no satisfaction even in winning this war," he said in Filipino and English.

By SONA

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana hopes the Marawi City conflict would end before Duterte delivers his second State of the Nation Address (SONA) before the joint session of Congress on the fourth week of July.

"Perhaps, before the SONA this will be over," Lorenzana told *dzRH* yesterday.

Fighting in the predominantly Muslim city has entered its sixth week, with government troopers inching their way to drive out the remaining Maute terrorists from four of the city's 96 barangays.

"What we are seeing here is that these Mautes, they are

going to fight to the death," Lorenzana said, noting that Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) chief Gen. Eduardo Año told him in a meeting last week that the conflict could end in a week's time.

The military called on the remaining terrorists to surrender as they don't stand a chance against government forces. But, instead of heeding the call, the group continues to fight it out with security troops.

"They appeared to be still strong so we are pushing with our operations. But this is likely to end on or before the SONA of July 27," Lorenzana said.

Once the fighting ends and the security situation normalizes, the military would maintain its presence to help rebuild the devastated city. At least P20 billion has been earmarked from the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. (Pagcor) for the rehabilitation.

Data released by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) showed the number of individuals displaced by the ongoing crisis has reached 403,052 as of Monday afternoon.

Almost 16,000 are staying in 75 evacuation centers in nearby areas, while the rest are with friends or relatives.

Some P118 million worth of food and non-food items have been provided to the displaced

residents, while another P105 million was sent in to augment DSWD field offices.

The repacking of goods is also underway at its Visayas Disaster Response Center in Cebu City. Volunteers - including students - continue to arrive and assist in the operations. At least 11,900 food packs were scheduled to be transported to Iligan City last night.

Stressing the importance of working together to address the needs of those affected by the conflict, Social Welfare Secretary Judy Taguiwalo earlier urged the public to inform DSWD of its shortcomings in addressing the ongoing crisis in Marawi City.

Taguiwalo said the DSWD is focused on camp management, distribution of food or non-food items and recovery while other government agencies like the Department of Health (DOH) focus on other concerns of the internally displaced people.

As of June 26, the DOH reported the death of three more evacuees, bringing the total to 27. The latest were attributed to pneumonia and dehydration.

Health Secretary Paulyn Ubial said the DOH office in Region 10 reported that 2,013 individuals were admitted in health facilities for various conditions, of which at least 1,891 were already discharged.

The report identified the top leading cause of consultations at the 70 evacuation centers as upper respiratory tract infection, skin disease, hypertension, acute respiratory infection and acute watery diarrhea.

At least P13.6 million worth of medicine and vaccines, hygiene kits, jerry cans, hyposol, ready-to-use therapeutic food, therapeutic milk, cadaver bags, folding beds, tents and kits were provided by the DOH.

China also donated P15 million for the relief operations and rehabilitation of Marawi with Malacañang saying Chinese Ambassador Zhao Jinhua gave the check donation to Duterte in a bid to "significantly augment the resources" of the DOH and DSWD.


Australia is also helping out the government as it recently discussed ways to assist in the fight.

Minister for Defense and Senator Marise Payne said the Australian government is working with the Philippines to support the fight against terrorism in the region.

She added that the Philippine government accepted the offer of two Australian Defense Force AP-3C Orion aircraft to provide the AFP the surveillance support it needs.

- With Jaime Laude, Janvic Mateo, Sheila Crisostomo, Pia Lee-Brago

June 2017


MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

Page: _____

Militants want out of Marawi

Freedom for kidnapped priest, 100 hostages offered

By **ALI G. MACABALANG**

Dawla Islamiyah (DI) militants, amid reports about their shrinking forces and depleting ammunitions, have offered to release 100 hostages, including Roman Catholic priest Fr. Teresito

“Chito” Soganub, in exchange for their safe exit and simultaneous withdrawal of transient security forces from war-torn Marawi City.

“They (DI leaders) want a (government) guarantee for their safe retreat to the jungle simultaneously with the pullout of transient secu- ▶4

Militants want out...

◀1

rity forces before Fr. Chito and other captives will be freed," well-informed sources revealed in the Maranao vernacular.

Citing revelations by hostages who had earlier escaped, the military on Monday said at least 150 members of the Dawla Islamiyah, more popularly known as the Maute Group, remain holed up in Marawi. Some 100 hostages remain at the hands of the militants, while Fr. Suganob has been spotted alive.

Fr. Suganob was taken hostage, along with some parishioners at the Dansalan College complex in Marawi City in the early stages of the siege.

But the government has not sanctioned any negotiations with terrorists in Marawi City and instead vowed to hold them accountable for their offenses, while looking forward to ending the conflict before President Duterte's second State-of-the-Nation Address on July 24, 2017.

Presidential spokesman Ernesto Abella said this, dismissing the Maute terror leader's reported demand for the release of parents and relatives of the group in exchange for the freedom of hostages.

"Government policy not to negotiate with terrorists remains," Abella said in a Palace news conference.

"Hence, the local religious leader-led talks with the terrorists is one of that was not sanctioned by the government, the military, and our political leaders. Any demands made inside therefore hold no basis," he said.

Why they want safe exit

One of the militants still holed up in Marawi confided to the sources, who requested anonymity, that four factors compelled the DI fighters to resort to "retreat" option. These are: The depletion of war materials; the intercession of moderate elder ulama (religious leaders); their sudden abandonment by Islamic State-anointed "emir" for Southeast Asia Isnilon Hapilon; and the death of an elder brother of Omar and Abdullah Maute in a clash on June 9 that also left 13 Marine troops dead.

OF

"The slain Maute (identified by other sources as Mohammad

Khayyam) was not a Dawla member, but he took up arms and fought the Marine contingent because he was profusely desperate about the earlier arrest of their mother and father. He was blaming Omar and Abdullah before committing the suicidal fight," the sources said.

The sources also gave credence to the military's claims that there was infighting among Dawla leaders "internal issues" as exemplified by cases of hard-core militants allegedly gunning down followers who try to flee.

Those who are attempting to flee, the source said, are among more than 50 young residents forcibly taken and armed by the militants to join them in the siege that began on May 23.

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana likewise revealed that as far as the military is concerned, the militants are already desperate and are ready to fight to the death despite repeated calls or appeals from the government for them to lay down their firearms, released their hostages, and surrender.

"Ito kasing Maute parang ang nakikita namin dito, eh they are going to fight to the death na, eh (The way we look at it, the Maute Group is going to fight to the death)," Lorenzana said.

The Dawlah Islamiyah, according to the source, evolved from a group named "Ghuraba" that militant brothers Omar and Abdullah Maute originally formed after mustering about 30 members indoctrinated under the Kilaffah Islamic Movement (KIM). KIM is a radical group operating covertly in the country before the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) came to existence, the sources privy to religious extremism in Lanao region said.

Water route

As the militants try to move out of Marawi, they are using water route to bring in ammunition and evacuate wounded fighters to help them withstand a five-week military offensive, the military said Tuesday.

The extremists fighting under

the black banner of the Islamic State (IS) group have remained holed up in pockets of Marawi, weathering daily air and artillery bombardment and deadly urban street battles.

Military spokesman Lieutenant Colonel Jo-an Herrera said the route was discovered following the arrest of a man who used a boat to smuggle ammunition into the battle zone and ferry wounded militants out.

The military was able to cut off the "logistical and medical highway" across Lake Lanao, he said, adding that boat patrols on the lake have been bolstered.

"We found out that this man... is the one facilitating the entry of ammunition. He is also the person bringing wounded fighters from the main battle area toward the south of Lanao Lake," Herrera told reporters.

"This is good news because we have now blocked this highway."

Nearly 400 people have been killed, including 290 militants and 70 troops, according to official figures. Most of Marawi's 200,000 residents have fled and much of the city is in ruins.

Bullets in relief goods

Meanwhile, the Eastern Police District (EPD) is now tracking down the suspect who allegedly smuggled 159 rounds of 9mm bullets through relief packages intended for victims affected by the ongoing fighting in Marawi City.

Chief Supt. Romeo Sapitula, EPD director, identified the suspected ammunition smuggler as a certain "AJ." He was tagged by Mohaimen Mutalib, a resident of Reliance St., Barangay Highway Hills, Mandaluyong, as the person who tried to place the above-mentioned ammunition into the relief packages which the former organized to help Marawi City residents. Mutalib is a native of Marawi City, hence his decision to organize his own relief drive.

Sapitula said Mutalib found the 9mm bullets inside a plastic box containing some clothes while checking the donations, prompting the latter to report the matter to the police.

Aside from the bullets, also found were a holster and some ammunition clips. (With reports from Genalyn D. Kabilang, Francis T. Wakefield, and AFP)

26 June 2017

The Manila Times

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NPA owns killing of Negros planter

BACOLOD CITY: The New People's Army (NPA) has admitted to the killing of sugarcane planter Norberto Lumayno, but his relatives doubt the murder was the rebels' handiwork.

In a statement to local media the NPA's Roselyn Pelle Command-Northern Guerrilla Front confirmed that they assassinated Lumayno, 67, and his driver Danilo Braga, 45, last June 22.

However, Raul Baterna, Lumayno's brother-in-law told Bombo Radyo Bacolod that it was a "diversionary tactic" of those responsible to leave food stuffs, backpacks and an NPA flag near the site of the ambush.

"The claim made by the NPA that it was them is merely propaganda. I will only believe them if the claim is made in the form of an affidavit admissible in court," Baterna said.

Baterna added that when the property of Lumayno was raided a few years back, it were also the rebels named as suspects but was later found out that the goons of a village official were the culprits.

In a statement signed by spokesman Cecil Estrella dated June 25, the Roselyn Pelle Command claimed that the execution of Lumayno was carried out because of his alleged "threatening acts, killing and land-grabbing activities in the areas of Calatrava, Toboso and Don Salvador Benedicto."

The NPA claimed that Lumayno was "a notorious land grabber who used goons to force innocent people away from the land they cultivated."

They also accused the sugarcane planter and his goons of killing farmers.

Major Gen. Jon Aying, commander of the 3rd Infantry Division, slammed the rebels after claiming victory over the killing of the sugarcane planter.

"Yes, it is a victory from the perspective of a criminal, a bandit and a terrorist," Aying said.

Aying pointed out, "This is an unnecessary and unacceptable atrocity and violence under our moral and spiritual values as well as our democratic principles and systems."

The recent and barbaric act is no different from the killings of hundreds of innocent civilians in the past 10 years by the CPP/NPA in Negros Island, Aying stressed.

"We cannot forget the Puso Massacre in La Castellana on January 28, 2013. They are clearly murderers and cold-blooded killers," he added.

EUGENE Y. ADIONG

24 June 2017



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Forging peace with Moro rebs, communists gets complicated



By Nikko Dizon
@NikkoDizonINQ

In trying to find peace for the country, President Duterte has likely discovered over the past 12 months that there is a world of difference between being head of state and being city mayor.

Dennis Quilala, a University of the Philippines professor, said Mr. Duterte must have realized that dealing with communist rebels and Moro separatist groups was more complex on the national stage than at the local level.

"I think the President has learned that the way he handled these groups in Davao City is quite different from handling them at the national level," Quilala, who specializes in peace and conflict studies, told the Inquirer.

Peace talks are where conflict is resolved—not with bullets but with words and nuances.

Moreover, peace negotiations are well-thought-out processes, with peace panels mapping out strategies with their respective principals—the President in the case of the government and the heads of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP), the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in the case of rebel groups.

The NDFP is the political arm of the Communist Party of the Philippines, which has waged an armed rebellion for about five decades.

The government, under several administrations, and the Moro secessionist groups have made substantial gains toward peace, albeit through a painstakingly long process.

Establishing lasting peace was among Mr. Duterte's campaign promises. He formalized it into policy in his first State of the Nation Address (Sona) and in his administration's National Security Policy.

Guns aren't silent

As President-elect, Mr. Duterte wasted no time in dispatching his men to the Netherlands to meet with their counterparts in the NDFP, including its chief political consultant, Jose Maria Sison, and its then-chief negotiator, Luis Jalandoni.

The first round of talks in Oslo, Norway, in August last year started on a high note. Communist leaders Benito and Wilma Tiamzon were released on bail and joined the negotiations.

Both panels were upbeat discussing the Comprehensive Agreement on Social and Economic Reforms (Caser), which is expected to bring, among other things, social justice that has been argued as the root cause of the communist insurgency.

But the two sides again reached an impasse. Angered by the alleged attacks on the military by the communist-led New People's Army, Mr. Duterte ordered the suspension of the fifth round of talks in May.

He had done the same in

February—for the fourth round of talks for the same reason.

Back-channel efforts

Sison last week said back-channel efforts were trying to resolve the impasse.

"I can say with full confidence that both parties want to continue talking," he said in a forum organized by Kapayapaan Campaign for a Just and Lasting Peace that was aired on Facebook Live on June 21.

But the President's declaration of martial law in Mindanao and his threat to expand it nationwide if Islamic State (IS)-inspired terrorists spill over to Luzon and the Visayas "could harm the peace negotiations," Sison said.

"The [government] must recognize that ... until there is a real cessation of its all-out war offensive in any guise or unless there is an actual, effective and principled reciprocal or bilateral ceasefire in place, armed encounters will continue," said the NDFP legal adviser, Edre Olalia.

Amid the battles between IS-inspired groups and the military in Marawi City, the Bangsamoro Transition Commission (BTC) signed on June 16 the new proposed Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL), the required legislation for the creation of a Bangsamoro autonomous region in Mindanao.

The Bangsamoro autonomous region is the compromise reached by the government, then under President Benigno Aquino III, and the MILF to end the secessionist war.

Mamasapano

But the encounters in Mamasapano, Maguindanao province, in January 2015, in which 44 police commandos were killed while on a mission to get a Malaysian terrorist, derailed efforts to pass this legislation.

In his Sona, Mr. Duterte acknowledged the historical injustices suffered by the Moro people.

The BTC chair, Ghazali Jaafar, also the MILF first vice

chair, expressed hope that the new draft BBL would be included by Mr. Duterte in his second Sona on July 24 and endorse it as a priority measure.

"Without this law, we cannot implement the negotiated political settlement agreed upon by both government and the MILF," Jaafar said in an interview.

Mohagher Iqbal, MILF chief negotiator and BTC commissioner, said the new BBL proposal retained 70 percent of the previous draft.

"We discussed only about 30 percent of [the old draft] ... which we strengthened," he told the Inquirer.

MNLF factions

Iqbal also said that the 1996 Final Peace Agreement between the government and the MNLF was "clear" in the new BBL draft, with two provisions from the MNLF peace agreement figuring prominently in the draft.

The MNLF faction under Muslimin Sema is represented by

his son, lawyer Omar Sema, while another faction is represented by Yusoph Jikiri in the BTC.

But there is another BBL draft being awaited: that from the faction of MNLF founding chair Nur Misuari.

Miriam Coronel-Ferrer, the Aquino administration's chief negotiator in the talks with the MILF, said she was hopeful that the BBL would be passed, especially with Mr. Duterte's solid support in Congress. (See "Commentary" on Page A21.)

Bangsamoro, federalism

Ferrer noted, however, the confusion in the direction that the government wanted to take when it came to resolving the Moro problem because of how it dealt with the different factions.

"The discussions with Misuari have yet to be clearly defined. There is a different (peace) table for him. But he (Misuari) changes positions and his demands are becoming more impossible," she said.

The administration's national security policy talks about peace processes with the MILF and MNLF, and federalism to achieve internal security and development. But which of the two gets priority?

Ferrer said it would depend on what the President would say in his second Sona.

Iqbal said the MILF was not against federalism, but it wanted the BBL to be passed by Congress first.

But weeks after the new draft of the BBL was signed by the BTC, the draft has yet to be submitted to Mr. Duterte because of glitches in schedules.

The submission scheduled for today (June 28) in Malacañang was postponed because of the supposed unavailability of Senate President Aquilino Pimentel III and Speaker Pantaleon Alvarez III.

More patience

The patient Iqbal is trying to be more patient.

"We are concerned about the delay in the submission because of the impression it might create with the civilians. Because this was said to be a priority of the President," Iqbal said.

He warned that frustration might grow if the government failed to pass the BBL. He said the longer it would take to approve the measure, the more difficult it would be for peace advocates and negotiators like himself to make themselves and the peace process relevant.

The normalization component of the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro (CAB) has stalled because of the nonpassage of the BBL. The CAB provides for a give-and-take mechanism, so to speak.

Decommissioning rites

The MILF undertook a ceremonial decommissioning of a percentage of its firearms and combatants in June 2015, in response to the passage of the CAB.

The group will decommission 30 percent of its forces and firearms upon the ratification of the BBL; another 35 percent when the Bangsamoro police is operationalized; and the last phase takes place two months before the exit agreement is signed.

As the administration deals with the fragile peace processes, it also now has to deal with a new and likely more lethal threat to national security—IS-inspired groups.

Mr. Duterte now finds himself on the spot, Sison said at the Kapayapaan forum.

Flip-flopping

Sison said Mr. Duterte had to prove that he was the socialist, antioligarch and anti-US imperialist President that he portrayed himself to the people.

Both Sison and Iqbal pointed out the President's tendency to flip-flop on his statements.

"The peace talks could benefit from a more consistent President and a more predictable security environment," Quilala said.

He said it "would be easier for everyone if [the [President's] statements are tempered by the peace strategy rather than influenced by the issue of the day." INQ

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CIVILIAN ACCOUNTS

**MAUTE GUNMEN
TURNING CAPTIVES
TO SEX SLAVES,
SAYS MILITARY**

MARAWI CITY—Civilians held hostage by Islamic State-linked gunmen occupying Marawi City have been forced by their captors to loot homes, take up arms against government troops and serve as sex slaves for the terrorists, the military said on Tuesday.

Citing accounts of seven residents of Marawi who either escaped or were rescued, the military said some hostages were forced to convert to Islam, carry wounded fighters to mosques, and marry gunmen of the Maute group loyal to the Middle East-based Islamic State (IS) jihadist group.

"So they are being forced to be sex slaves, forced to destroy the dignity of these women," Lt. Col. Jo-Ar Herrera, spokesperson for the Army's 1st Infantry Division, told a news conference.

"So this is what is happening inside, this is very evident ... these are evil [people]," he added.

The escapees' accounts, which could not be immediately verified, are the latest harrowing stories to come out of a conflict zone that the military has been unable to penetrate for five weeks, as well-armed and organized terrorists fight off soldiers with sniper rifles and rocket-propelled grenades.

Some escapees say bodies of residents have been left in the streets, some for weeks, and civilians are distressed by government airstrikes and artillery bombardments that have reduced parts of Marawi to rubble. —REUTERS

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WAR ON TERROR

DUTERTE TO RESTORE MARAWI GLORY

By Leila B. Salaverria
@LeilasINQ

President Duterte on Tuesday promised to rebuild Marawi and see to it that the city become prosperous again even as he acknowledged that the fight against the terrorists holed up there would be a long one.

Emerging from a six-day absence from the public eye to lead Eid al-Fitr celebrations in Malacañang, Mr. Duterte said he took no pleasure in winning the war and that he was hurting from the destruction and the deaths in Marawi.

"I am not happy that the Maranaos are dying. I am not happy with the hardships you are facing. I see no satisfaction even in winning the war. I just want this thing over, and these

radicals and extremists out of the Muslim world," Mr. Duterte said.

He also said he knew there would be a long battle in Marawi when he declared martial law in Mindanao from Moscow last month.

Long fight

"I knew how long it would take for us and I knew the deployment of the snipers and where they kept their arms. I already had the complete picture and I knew that would be a long fight," Mr. Duterte said.

"But if you ask if I am happy, son of a... I am also bleeding like you," he added.

Mr. Duterte said he had cousins who joined the Maute, one of the groups that rampaged through Marawi whose leaders had pledged allegiance

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

He vowed to end the conflict and promised to restore Marawi's glory.

"But one thing I will promise you, my brother Moro, I will see to it that Marawi will rise as a prosperous city again," he said.

Mr. Duterte has set aside P20 billion to rebuild the city, and said he will allocate more if necessary.

"I will rebuild Marawi because if not, I will remain forever the villain," he said.

Mr. Duterte stressed that his administration was committed to the pursuit of peace.

"[I]t is by dedicating our lives to the betterment of humanity that we can best demonstrate our obedience and devotion to Allah," he added. INQ

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PHILIPPINE NAVY

COA STOPS UNAUTHORIZED PAY DEDUCTIONS

By **Vince F. Nonato**
@VinceNonatoINQ

The Commission on Audit (COA) has called out the Philippine Navy Financial Center (PNFC) for making unauthorized deductions from the salaries of military personnel and effectively acting as a collecting agent of private lending firms.

In its recently released 2016 audit report, the COA recommended that the PNFC stop the salary deductions for unaccredited private lending associations and adjust the salary deductions so as not to eat up too much of the employees' take-home pay.

The COA flagged the effort spent by the PNFC to deduct personnel's obligations to unaccredited financial institutions.

"In effect, the PNFC is undertaking the collection function, resulting in loss of government time and resources," the report read.

Some employees' net take-home pay has fallen below the P3,500 minimum set by the General Appropriations Act of 2016.

A review of the civilian payroll for the first three months of 2016 showed that 112, 119 and 105 employees received net take-home pay ranging from P2,316 to P3,488.77.

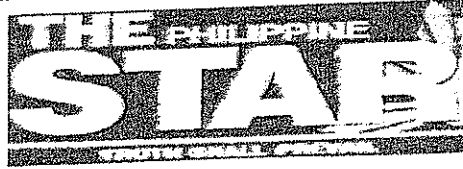
Out of the 68 lending enti-

ties listed on the Authorized Payroll Deduction System, the COA said only seven were accredited by the Armed Forces of the Philippines-Financial Institution Accreditation Board (AFP-FIAB) while the others were somehow included "by accommodation."

The COA noted that Section 52 of the 2016 budget law only allowed salary deductions for taxes and social insurance, savings and loans associations managed by government employees, government financial institutions, licensed insurance companies, and accredited thrift banks and rural banks.

INQ

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No negotiation, no swap in Marawi crisis – AFP

By **EDITH REGALADO**

DAVAO CITY – There will be no negotiations or swapping of prisoners with the extremist Maute group, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) said yesterday.

“In the first place, the sending of the emissaries to the Maute was not in any way sanctioned by the AFP. There would be no negotiation and no swap of anyone from both the side of the government and the Maute,” AFP spokesman Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla said.

The military echoed the government’s no-ransom, no-negotiation policy with terrorists even after emissaries were said to have talked with the Maute gunmen over the weekend regarding the possible release of hostages.

Malacañang also rejected the reported offer of the Maute group to swap hostages with the arrested key leaders of the terror group.

“Government’s policy not to negotiate with terrorists remains,” presidential

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No negotiation From Page 1

spokesman Ernesto Abella said.

Abella said the government has not sanctioned the effort of local religious leaders in talking to the Maute group to release Fr. Chito Suganob and other hostages.

Abdullah Maute, one of the leaders of the extremist group, had supposedly offered a prisoner or hostage swap.

“Like I said, like I read, government’s policy is not to negotiate with terrorists... so if there are any developments, let’s wait upon it. Hence, the local religious leader-led talks with the terrorists last Sunday is one not sanctioned by government, the military and our political leaders. Any demands made inside, therefore, hold no basis,” Abella said.

Padilla, on the other hand, said the government is not entering into any negotiation with the Maute in spite of reports that the militants have offered to release Suganob and other hostages in exchange for the Maute parents Cayamora and Farhana Romato.

The Maute couple had been charged with rebellion under the martial law proclamation of President Duterte on May 23, which covered all of Mindanao to contain the uprising in Marawi City.

Justice Secretary Vitaliano Aguirre II said the offer of the Maute terrorists should be rejected outright.

“The government never negotiates with terrorists,” he said.

President Duterte earlier refused to talk to Romato who attempted to start a dialogue last month in the midst of the crisis in Marawi.

Duterte said the government has already lost many men in fighting the Maute terrorists.

Suganob, the priest who was taken hostage along with other parishioners early in the siege of Marawi City, has been seen alive.

Task Force Marawi spokesman Lt. Col. Jo-Ar Herrera said seven civilian hostages who were rescued the other day had confirmed seeing the captive priest.

“We don’t have details of his health. We were just told that he was sighted alive,” he said.

Marawi Bishop Edwin dela Peña said they are leaving it up to the government to decide on whether it should negotiate for the release of Suganob.

While pleased to hear reports that Suganob was still alive, Dela Peña said he would not meddle with the efforts to negotiate the release of the priest.

Aside from Suganob, there were other people who were also taken hostage from St. Mary’s Cathedral, he said.

“That is good news for us... But we should not forget that there were other people taken as hostages and we know these people because they lived with us,” Dela Peña said.

Herrera added about 100 civilians were still in the hands

of the gunmen and being used as human shields, ammunition carriers and stretcher-bearers.

Emissaries comprised of local Muslim religious teachers met a key leader of the militants in Marawi during the truce on Sunday.

While their main aim was to negotiate the release of hostages, the eight religious teachers who entered the battle zone also asked if the jihadists wanted to surrender, but they refused.

The emissaries, however, managed to negotiate the release of five civilians.

The former hostages revealed the militants had forced them to loot abandoned houses and buildings for cash and valuables.

Most of Marawi’s 200,000 residents have fled.

Fighting resumed with renewed fury on Monday, with government fighter jets and other aircraft carrying out bombing attacks amid sustained bursts of gunfire.

“Our offensive operations have resumed and will continue so we can liberate Marawi at the soonest time possible,” Herrera added.

No mercy

AFP Eastern Mindanao Command deputy chief Brig. Gen. Gilbert Gapay vowed to pursue the battle for Marawi to its end, leaving no quarters for the Maute gunmen.

“It would be no mercy for the last Maute member. We have to kill all of the remnants of the Maute militants who are holed up in Marawi at this time. We cannot allow any

Maute to survive the lockdown in the remaining areas where they are now,” Gapay said.

He said government forces are careful in their operation to rescue at least 300 civilians still trapped in the city.

He said there are an estimated 100 Maute militants holed up in certain parts of Marawi City.

“It would be easy for the remnants of the Maute to resurge again in Marawi and other areas if they get to live,” Gapay said.

He said the troops are under orders to hunt down the terrorists in Marawi and pursue the remaining gunmen and supporters who might have escaped.

Security officials appealed to the public to refrain from spreading misinformation regarding the troops.

Soldiers have been accused of rampant looting of abandoned houses in the guise of illegal searches.

Government troops were also reported to have threatened to rape the women who refused to leave the city.

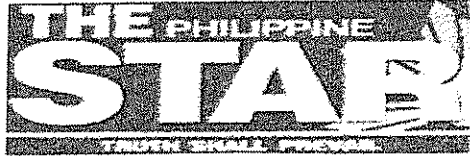
“I appeal to our constituents, please stop your assumptions. Please stop spreading misinformation,” Herrera said.

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said some quarters are making matters worse by spreading misinformation about the troops in Marawi.

Abella also echoed the statements of Lorenzana over the reports of alleged abuses committed by troops against Marawi women.

– With Christina Mendez, Roel Pareño, Edu Punay, Evelyn Macairan, John Unson, Jaime Laude

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IS threat, martial law worry Moody's

By MARY GRACE PADIN

Moody's Investors Service expressed concern over the "worsening" Islamist insurgency in the country, which could lead to the expansion of martial law, but it affirmed the Philippines' credit rating and maintained the stable outlook.

In a statement, Moody's said yesterday that it has affirmed the country's Baa2 long-term issuer and senior unsecured debt rating and maintained its outlook for the Philippines at stable.

A stable outlook balances positive and negative developments in the credit profile, while Baa2 is the lowest investment grade.

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IS threat From Page 1

Moody's said the downside risks include the Islamist threat and martial law expansion that could undermine domestic business confidence and disrupt economic activity.

However, the credit watcher said political developments could potentially undermine institutional strength and economic performance.

"The affirmation of the Baa2 rating and the assignment of a stable outlook balance positive and negative factors," Moody's said.

"On the positive side, Moody's expects that the Philippines' economic performance will remain strong while debt consolidation will continue and foster further convergence of key fiscal metrics versus corresponding peer medians," it added.

According to Moody's, it expects the Philippine economy to sustain its growth at above six percent annually over the next two years, driven mainly by the private sector.

"In particular, we forecast that household consumption will continue to be supported by the stability of remittances from overseas Filipino workers," it said.

Moreover, foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows, which saw a record high in 2016 of \$7.9 billion, will provide ongoing diversification of the economy, Moody's said.

"Furthermore, the improvement in the external environment is positive for goods exports and

business process outsourcing (BPO) receipts, which comprise the bulk of services exports," it added.

In the long run, the credit watcher said the Philippines also stands to benefit from a young and growing population. It added that the government's move to improve spending growth, particularly in infrastructure development, could raise GDP growth toward its target range of seven percent to eight percent.

Moody's also noted the government's fiscal strength, which is reflected in low government debt, low debt affordability and an elevated vulnerability to exchange rate depreciation.

"The health of the banking system and the external payments position dampen the Philippines' susceptibility to event risks," it added.

Moody's said any further shocks in the Gulf countries could potentially reduce remittance inflows, while US policies that encourage onshoring of jobs could negatively impact the BPO sector.

"While broad macroeconomic stability has been maintained so far, a number of metrics indicate material capacity constraints that signal a risk of overheating," Moody's said.

These constraints are represented by rising inflation and the reemergence of a current account deficit.

"High credit growth in excess

of GDP growth since 2014 also exposes the banking system to unseasoned risk," Moody's added.

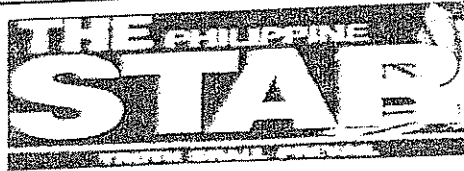
However, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' policy tightening, as well as other factors such as the considerable capital and liquidity buffers of banks and foreign exchange reserve, has been effective in mitigating these consequences, it noted.

"Looking ahead, the government's ability to continue to contain these rising pressures will depend in part on its efforts to raise investment in order to enhance infrastructure and address economic bottlenecks. The government's plans in this respect are ambitious and unlikely to be achieved in their entirety," Moody's said.

Aside from its credit rating and outlook, Moody's said it has also affirmed the government's local currency and foreign currency senior unsecured ratings at Baa2, foreign currency senior unsecured shelf rating at (P)Baa2 and the senior unsecured ratings for liabilities of the BSP at Baa2. The outlook on BSP has been removed.

"The Philippines' country ceilings remain unchanged. The long-term foreign currency bond ceiling remains at A3, and the short-term foreign currency bond ceiling at P-2. The long-term foreign currency deposit ceiling remains at Baa2, and the short-term foreign currency deposit ceiling at P-2. Furthermore, the long-term local currency bond and deposit ceilings remain unchanged at A2," Moody's said.

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Hapilon escaped Marawi – Palace

By CHRISTINA MENDEZ

Malacañang is regarding with caution reports that Abu Sayyaf leader Isnilon Hapilon has escaped the military cordon in Marawi City, where the military is continuing its air strikes and surgical operations against terrorists that attacked the city last May 23.

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Presidential spokesman Ernesto Abella said the government is still gathering proof on the whereabouts of Hapilon, who joined forces with the Maute group.

"For now, all of these (reports on Hapilon) remain raw information, requiring validation by the AFP (Armed Forces of the Philippines) and various security agencies of government. Hence, we cannot issue any categorical statement on the matter until we get proof," Abella added.

Abella said that Hapilon's reported abandonment of the Maute group is an act of cowardice.

"Granting that this is true, it would be a clear sign of cowardice because he abandoned his companions and has run away from the battle," he said.

"It may also be indicative of the infighting that may now be going on within the group. It may be a matter of time before they disintegrate or self-destruct," said Abella, citing a previous military statement.

According to accounts of rescued civilians, an official of the Ranao Rescue Team confirmed that the Maute terrorists have conducted several summary executions but no beheading of either Muslim or Christian hostages.

"We have been in the field where fighting was intense since day one and have rescued several civilian Maranaos and Christians and they told us there were captives who were executed but none of them remember any beheading," said Amira Cutoc-Tomawis, chair of Ranao Rescue Team that rescued several civilians trapped in the war zone in Marawi City. She said a human rights group would arrive in Marawi and validate reports of any beheading or human rights violations.

Escape route

The military intensified patrols in Lake Lanao to prevent the Maute and Abu Sayyaf terrorists from using the lake

as an escape route to slip out of Marawi City.

Lt Col. Jo-Ar Herrera, spokesman for Task Force Marawi, said the terrorists have used the lake to smuggle arms into the city.

"We have increased visibility, we increased patrol in the lake," Herrera said.

He said security was beefed up after a member of Maute transporting ammunition and extracting wounded members through the lake was captured.

Herrera did not discount the possibility that some terrorists have slipped out of Marawi to escape the intense military operations.

"The ground forces tightened the cordon and monitor those specially who slipped out of the battle area," Her-

raera said.

Military clearing operations continued as troops conducted house-to-house clearing measures to flush out the terrorists and detonate improvised bombs rigged by the enemy.

Herrera said troops had to conduct the clearing before the retrieval team comes in to gather the remains of civilians killed by the Maute group.

The recovered remains are being transported to Iligan City for forensic examination to identify the victims.

The Bangsamoro Women group through Jehan and Musanifah Dida-agun asked people from Iligan, Misamis Oriental, Cagayan de Oro City, Lanao del Sur and Lanao del Norte to have patience and un-

derstand the plight of evacuees from Marawi.

"We know, we (evacuees) are a burden to you, but please understand us," they said.

At the same time, they appealed to President Duterte to stop the air strikes destroying their houses.

Local businessman William Macala said the air strikes are not the solution to drive out the Maute terrorists but a dialogue should be started by forming a panel.

The Commission on Human Rights yesterday urged the government to come up with a mechanism that will ensure the protection of people against torture. – With Janvi Mateo, Roel Pareño, Lino d la Cruz

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EX-MILITARY, POLICE APPOINTEES

NO CREEPING MILITARIZATION IN GOV'T BUREAUCRACY, SAYS MALACAÑANG

By Philip C. Tubeza
@pctubezaINQ



Malacañang on Tuesday defended President Duterte's appointment of at least 59 former military and police officers to the Cabinet and government agencies.

Presidential spokesperson

giving them civilian posts in the government.

"I would say that these are the people that he has vetted. In a sense, it's not whether they're military or not," he said.

"It's just that these are the people within his scope of attention that, you know, that fulfill, that tick all the boxes that what he wants," he added.

The appointees "are people

Ernesto Abella dismissed concerns about creeping militarization in the government bureaucracy under the Duterte administration.

Abella said the President appointed people from the military and the police because he wanted a "more disciplined, more efficient and less corrupt" government.

"The President has never

who are efficient, people who are not corrupt, people who will do things according to what they have been commissioned to do," said the Palace official.

An Inquirer report showed that Mr. Duterte had appointed at least 59 former military and police officials, including generals, admirals and colonels to his Cabinet and other agencies.

They were either from Min-

made secret any of his intentions, which [include] a more industrious, more disciplined, more focused and less corrupt bureaucracy," he said.

Mr. Duterte was scheduled to attend public events on Tuesday, including the Eid al-Fitr celebration in Malacañang.

Abella said the President vetted the appointees before

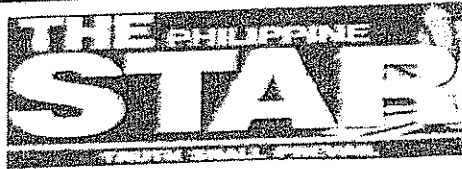
danao or were assigned to Davao City where he served as mayor for 22 years.

Political analyst Ramon Casiple said the President's appointment of retired military officials to his Cabinet was an astute move.

"He's expecting that he can still have a good relationship with the military," Casiple said.

INQ

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ECC to pay soldiers slain, hurt in Marawi

By MAYEN JAYMALIN

Soldiers and policemen who lost their lives or were wounded when the government fought to retake Marawi City from the hands of the terrorist Maute group are getting compensation from the Employees Compensation Commission (ECC).

In a resolution, ECC directed the Government Service Insurance System to draw the guidelines and release the Employees Compensation (EC) benefits to the killed or wounded members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Philippine National Police (PNP).

The sacrifice and bravery of soldiers and policemen who put their lives on the line should be recognized and appreciated, the ECC said.

"To honor the gallantry in the performance of their sworn duties, the Commission recognizes the need to effect a facilitative processing of the EC benefits for the uniformed personnel who are qualified beneficiaries," it added.

The ECC is an attached agency of the Department of Labor and Employment that extends compensation to workers, including uniformed personnel, who are killed or injured in work-related accidents.

It extended similar benefits to the families of the 44 PNP Special Action Force members who died in the Mamasapano operation in January 2015.

The ECC resolution also calls for the automatic processing of benefits "without the need of individual or personally filing

the application."

An employee, whether from the public or private sector, who died as a result of a work-related accident or illness will be granted a funeral benefit of P20,000 and death benefit in the form of monthly pension for his or her beneficiaries.

Meanwhile, detained Sen. Leila de Lima filed a resolution calling on the Senate to honor the fallen soldiers and policemen who fought the Maute group for their heroism and bravery.

"The Senate of the Philippines salutes the courage of the members of the AFP and the PNP and honors the valor and heroism of those who sacrificed their lives to ensure that the country is safe and secure from the threats of terrorism," the resolution read.

De Lima said the entire nation owes the highest respect to the government troops who have selflessly offered their lives in protecting the country's democracy from the terrorist group.

"This tragic loss of lives is greatly felt not only by the government, but is mourned by the entire Filipino nation, which lost gallant members of the uniformed service," she said.

Over 60 government forces have been killed since the Maute group launched an attack against various government and private facilities in Marawi City last May 23.

In response, President Duterte declared martial law in all of Mindanao.

– With Marvin Sy

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SC asked: Junk pleas on Congress' martial law review

By EDU PUNAY

The Office of the Solicitor General yesterday asked the Supreme Court (SC) to dismiss consolidated petitions seeking to compel the Senate and the House of Representatives to convene jointly to review President Duterte's martial law declaration in Mindanao.

In a 40-page comment, Solicitor General Jose Calida said the petitions filed by separate groups led by former senators Rene Saguisag and Wigberto Tañada lacked merit.

Calida argued that Congress is not required to convene in joint session to support a martial law declaration under Article VII, Section 18 of the 1987 Constitution.

Quoting the provision, he said, "Congress, voting jointly, by a vote of at least a majority of all its Members in regular or special session, may revoke such proclamation or suspension, which revocation shall not be set aside by the President."

The same provision states that "upon the initiative of the President, the Congress may, in the same manner, extend such proclamation or suspension for a period to be determined by the Congress, if the invasion or rebellion shall persist and public safety requires it."

He said "a plain reading of the Constitution will readily illustrate that it does not impose a duty upon Congress to convene in joint session to determine the validity of the declaration of martial law and suspension of the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus.

"It is only in cases of revocation or extension of the proclamation or suspension that Congress is required to vote jointly," he stressed.

"Verily, there is no need to vote jointly to approve or affirm something which is already in full force or effect. Joint voting is only mandatory when the action is revocation or extension," Calida pointed out.

Calida further explained that the Constitution does not require any action from Congress upon the proclamation of martial law or suspension of the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus.

He stressed that the move of the House of Representatives and Senate to issue Resolution 1050 and Resolution 388, respectively, to express support for the declaration of martial law in response to the report submitted by the President would suffice.

"While not mandatory, Congress neither procrastinated nor reneged on its sworn duties when it heard the basis of Proclamation No. 216 through a closed-door meeting with the country's top military officials, and thereafter collectively voiced its support through the issuances of their respective resolutions. Indeed, the Congress even went beyond its constitutional duty respecting the proclamation or suspension," he pointed out.

"Thus the act of Congress to vote jointly is not mandatory when the action taken is to affirm or express support for the proclamation or suspension," he said.

The solicitor general further argued that the SC has no power to issue the mandamus sought by petitioners, citing the separation of powers of the judiciary and the legislature as coequal branches.

"The matter of affirming, ratifying or not revoking the declaration of martial law and even the manner by which it is done is left and fully within the power, authority and discretion of Congress over which the Supreme Court has no power," he stressed.

"It is clear that under the separation of powers, courts may not intervene in the internal affair of the legislature; it is not within the province of courts to direct Congress how to do its work," Calida added.

Earlier, the SC heard in oral arguments three other consolidated petitions filed by opposition lawmakers led by Albay Rep. Edcel Lagman, local Mindanao leaders including lumad Eufemia Campos Cullamat and a group of women from Marawi led by Norkaya Mohamad seeking to strike down Proclamation No. 216.

The high court, which is required by the Constitution to resolve petitions against martial law declaration within 30 days from filing, is set to rule on these petitions on July 4.

Help from ex-rebels

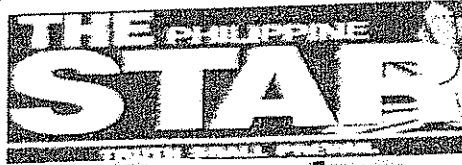
As fighting in Marawi entered its sixth week, security officials noted the presence of former members of the Moro National Liberation Front and Moro Islamic Liberation Front in the ranks of enemy combatants.

Earlier, the military said the Maute militants were getting help from the Abu Sayyaf and the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters.

- With Jaime Laude

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AFP warned vs anti-cyber terrorism campaign

By JANVIC MATEO

The military should come up with clear guidelines on the conduct of its anti-cyber terrorism strategy and ensure this will not violate the people's rights, a social media consultant said yesterday.

Information and communications technology expert Tonyo Cruz said the Department of National Defense (DND)

digital media to counter cyber-terrorism.

Bautista said participants in the training became the core members of Task Force Marawi, which was formed to look for and counter the propaganda and fake news being disseminated on social media by the terrorists and their supporters.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) has repeat-

edly warned the public against falling victim to sympathizers of the Maute terrorists currently holed up in Marawi.

should disclose the nature of the "digital media capability" training being conducted by the military.

"There is no problem if the military will promote its views, sanitize information for the benefit of the public and solicit support through social media," Cruz told The STAR in a phone interview.

"The problem begins if it starts to use its immense power

to adversely affect free speech and expression," he said.

Cruz was reacting to reports that the military is training some of its soldiers to counter the supposed dissemination of false information about the situation in Marawi City.

Earlier, Brig. Gen. Rolly Bautista, chief of the Army's 1st Tabak Division, said that after the Marawi siege erupted, his men underwent training on

group," Cruz said, noting an earlier announcement of the military that it would censure online contents deemed supportive of the terrorist group.

"For example, the Integrated Bar of the Philippines in Lanao is critical of martial law. Would its communications be tapped? Would that fall under its right to censure?" he said.

- With Lino de la Cruz

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Bullets, gun parts found in Marawi donations

By NON ALQUITRAN

Authorities have seized hundreds of bullets and gun parts from among donations intended for evacuees of Marawi City.

Eastern Police District (EPD) Chief Supt. Romulo Sapidula said 159 rounds of 9mm, a magazine, a gun holster, a pair of pistol handgrips and a

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gun cleaning kit were found stashed among the donations collected by Mohaimen Mutalib last Monday.

Mutalib, a software engineer, earlier appealed for donations for the evacuees of Marawi City who were displaced by the fighting between government troops and extremist Maute group.

While Mutalib was sorting the donations he received at his condominium unit in Mandaluyong City, he found the gun parts stashed in a black eco bag with "Lito Grey" markings on it.

Mutalib immediately reported his find to Mandaluyong City police chief Senior Supt. Joaquin Alva who immediately took custody of the items.

Police traced the donation to a certain AJ Salvani Cubarrubia who claimed the bag was only forwarded to him for

delivery.

Alva said Cubarrubia could no longer remember who forwarded the donation to him.

The Mandaluyong City police are now tracing Grey, who is said to be an employee of a shopping mall in the city.

The item would have been sent to Marawi City evacuees through the Edicute Inc., a non-government organization volunteering to help the evacuees displaced by the hostilities in Marawi City.

Sapidula though refused to comment on the possibility that the seized items were intended to supply the Maute gunmen in Marawi.

"We will get to the bottom of this case. We are tracing the source of the donations first for us to determine whether it was included in the shipment by accident or any other reason," Sapidula said.

This developed as a suspected Maute gunman was arrested by the military for bringing in ammunition supplies to Marawi the other day.

Task Force Marawi spokesman Lt. Col. Jo-Ar Herrera said the suspect was held for questioning after troops reportedly saw him trying to bring down several boxes of ammunition from his boat in the coastal area in Lake Lanao, bordering Marawi City.

"We found out that this captured Maute is the one facilitating the entry of ammunition and he is also the one evacuating the wounded from the main battle zone towards the southern side of Lanao Lake," Herrera said.

"This is good news, as we were able to block their (supply and medical) highway and it only showed that our defenses in Lanao Lake are tight because of his capture," Herrera said, without identifying the arrested terrorist.

Herrera also did not disclose the types of ammunition recovered, but said the terrorist's boat was seized.

Meanwhile, Vice President Leni Robredo continues to seek assistance from private organizations for the thousands of families displaced by the battle in Marawi.

Robredo's spokesperson, Georgina Hernandez, said the Vice President has been talking to several partners from the private sector to help in the relief and rehabilitation efforts in Marawi City.

She said the Office of the Vice President has already provided P3 million worth of food packs for the internally displaced persons.

"We're considering asking the DBM (Department of Budget and Management) for savings that we can use for the people in need," Hernandez said.

She said the OVP has deployed a team to focus on

the relief and rehabilitation efforts in Iligan, Balo-i, and Saguilaran.

Hernandez said the OVP has also provided P100,000 for the conduct of psychosocial intervention to children evacuees.

The United Arab Emirates, through its embassy in Manila, also distributed food baskets for the Marawi evacuees.

The food baskets came from the Dubai Charity Association as part of its Ramadan Iftar project in helping needy Muslims from war zones around the world.

As the government offensive against the Maute militants in Marawi intensifies, the number of refugees fleeing the war zone rises.

In a separate interview over *dzRH* yesterday, Robredo said the number of evacuees continues to increase, as not only those from the strife-torn Marawi City fled their homes but also people from nearby

towns.

"Evacuees increase and it is even higher than the entire population of Marawi. This means that the conflict also displaced people from nearby municipalities," she said.

Robredo, who visited the evacuees in Lanao del Norte last Monday, said some local officials were asking whether it is possible to allow some residents to return to parts of Marawi, which are no longer affected by the clashes so people could start rebuilding their lives.

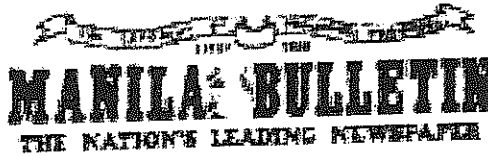
"Since the fighting is confined in four barangays only, they're asking if the military could conduct clearing operations in other areas so they could start a new life," she said.

More than 200,000 residents have been displaced by clashes between government forces and Maute terrorists that erupted on May 23.

– With Helen Flores, Pia Lee-Brago, Jaime Laude

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ASG 'medics' charged with rebellion

By JEFFREY G. DAMICOG

Two suspected Abu Sayyaf bandits believed to have acted as "medics" to wounded terrorists in Marawi City have been charged with rebellion yesterday before a Cagayan de Oro city regional trial court.

Justice Undersecretary Erickson Balmes identified the respondents as

Jadzrie Harad Saabdula, 50, and Jamal Kalib, 18. They were arrested after purchasing assorted medicines at a pharmacy in Pagadian City, Zamboanga del Sur. Marawi is 97 kilometers from Pagadian and is accessible by land – eight hours by bus and more than two hours on private car.

"Saabdula is a nurse from Jolo who went AWOL (absent without leave),"

noted Balmes.

"He (Saabdula) allegedly provided medical aid to the combatants," he added.

Saabdula, who works as a nurse at the Banguingui (former Tongkil town) municipal hospital has been identified as the brother of slain ASG leader Nadzmi Saabdula alias Commander Global.

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THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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Gun store with ASG links used as front to arm Maute - PNP

By **AARON B. REQUENCO**

The Philippine National Police (PNP) is investigating reports of a gun store in Mindanao reportedly being used as a front to arm the Maute Group

and its allies responsible for the attack in Marawi City.

The gun store reportedly has links with Isnilon Hapilon, allegedly the designated leader of the ISIS in Southeast Asia, and a notori- ▶4

ous Abu Sayyaf leader.

Senior Supt. Valeriano de Leon, acting chief of the Firearms and Explosives Office (FEO), said the gun store was given a permit a long time ago after it complied with all the requirements needed to run the business.

"Another information came in that he (Hapilon) is using another person," said De Leon.

Right now, De Leon said they are now establishing the identity of the gun storeowner and the extent of its alleged connection with Hapilon.

The official said all the details were provided by their men on the ground, especially those conducting intelligence-gathering activities in Marawi City and nearby areas.

All the reports, however, are still raw as ground troopers have not yet responded on verification and validation processes ordered by the national police leadership, according to de Leon.

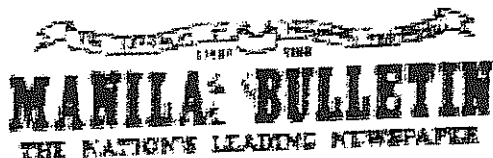
A day after the Marawi City attack, Maute gunmen were reported to have also ransacked a gun store in Marawi City.

Security officials earlier raised the issue on the support system that the Maute gunmen have been getting due to their large supply of guns and ammunition.

The gunfight between the government troops and the Maute gunmen is now more than a month, with the death toll on the gunmen, soldiers, cops and civilians now at nearly 400.

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Maute self-destruction imminent – Malacañang

GENALYN D. KABILING

It is only a matter of time before the Islamic militant group holed up in Marawi City would “disintegrate or self-destruct” following reports of its leader’s escape as well as infighting among the rebels, Malacañang said yesterday.

Presidential Spokesman Ernesto Abella projected the imminent end of the armed group even as the military was still verifying reports that the top terror leader Isnul Hapilon might have fled the battle zone.

“Granting this is true, it would be a clear sign of his cowardice because he abandoned his companions and has ran away from the battle,” Abella said in a Palace news conference.

“It may be also be indicative of the in-

fighting that may now be going on with the group. It may be a matter of time before they disintegrate or self-destruct,” he added.

The military recently reported that Hapilon, the alleged leader of the Abu Sayyaf group, has not been seen in Marawi’s battle zone, triggering speculations of his escape. The government troops earlier tried to arrest Hapilon in Marawi last May 23 but the attempt triggered a rampage by militants with black Islamic State flags.

The government however has no proof yet that Hapilon could have eluded the security cordon in conflict-torn city.

“For now, all of these remain raw information requiring validation by the AFP (Armed Forces of the Philippines) and various security agencies of government,” Abella said.

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The Manila Times

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MAUTE COLLECTING UNEXPLODED BOMBS

MARAWI CITY: Members of the Maute Group have been collecting bombs dropped by the military that did not explode, a reliable source said on Tuesday.

The source said the terrorists are collecting weapons and unexploded bombs. He did not say how many bombs have been

retrieved by the terror group but since fighting erupted on May 23, the military had used artillery and conducted air bombardments on a daily basis.

The source said the Maute group described their loot "ghanima," which means "spoils of war."

Some Maute Group members are known for their skills on bomb making.

Authorities have not disclosed how many bombs have been dropped on Marawi and how many of them exploded.

Lt. Col. Jo-Ar Herrera, spokesman of the Joint Task Force Marawi, said the military

is verifying if the terrorists are indeed retrieving unexploded bombs from the battle zone.

He said there were reports that civilian hostages were being ordered to collect bombs and weapons.

►CollectinaA2

"We have reports on the ground that hostages are being used as human shields. They are using the hostages even for collecting bombs," Herrera said.

He added that it is possible that a bomb will not go off.

"But the bomb will explode when triggered," Herrera said.

No prisoner swap

Negotiators who talked with the Maute Group on Sunday said a possible prisoner swap was not discussed, quashing reports that the leaders of the Islamic State-linked group sought the release of their parents in exchange for the freedom of a priest they are holding captive.

Two of the emissaries who entered the battle zone during a brief ceasefire on Sunday however said a prisoner exchange is possible and can be proposed to the Maute group.

There were reports that Abdullah Maute sought the release of Cayamora and Ominta Maute and other fighter. In exchange, the group will release Fr. Chito Suganob, who was taken hostage along with dozens of civilians when the terrorists attacked on May 23.

The negotiators said the Maute group reiterated that they will release their hostages if government troops are pulled out of the city.

Military spokesman Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla said they have no information about the demand.

Even if there is such a proposal, he said the government does not negotiate with terrorists.

"[T]he local religious leader led talks with the terrorists last Sunday but that was not sanctioned by the government, the military and our political leaders. Any demands made inside

therefore hold no basis," Padilla told reporters.

Malacañang also rejected any negotiation with the Maute Group.

"Let us continue to remind the public that the gravity of the terrorists and their supporters' offense is immense and they must all be held accountable for all their actions," Palace spokesman Ernesto Abella said. An estimated 200 civilians are believed trapped in Marawi.

The government has said that more than 300 people have been killed during the more than a month of fighting in Marawi.

A video uploaded on the Internet showed 10 civilians clad in orange shirts being executed by the Maute terrorists on May 23. Another group of five men were also executed on June 2.

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MOH SAADUDDIN AND AL JACINTO

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

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The Manila Times

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Terrorists' 'arm supplier' falls in Lanao lake

THE military on Tuesday announced the arrest of a Maute member who had been delivering firearms to the terrorists and squirreling out wounded fighters.

In a televised press briefing, Lt. Col. Jo-ar Herrera, spokesman for the military's Joint Task Force Marawi, said that the man, who was not identified to reporters, was arrested while riding a banca in Lanao lake.

Herrera said the man's arrest will cut off the supply of logistics to the Islamic State-linked group that has been battling government troops for more than a month.

"This is good news for our part because we blocked the (Maute) highway, which means that we have established a tighter defense in Lanao lake because of the capture of one Maute member who was bringing ammunitions to the main battle area and at the same time he was also bringing the wounded from the battle area going to Lanao lake," Herrera said.

He said soldiers also cleared 39 more buildings in the city and rescued seven hostages.

"These hostages are having a debriefing right now. Troops continue to discover shabu

► **Supplier A8**

and paraphernalia in the main battle areas," Herrera added.

"Enemy resistance continues to wane and enemy held areas continue to diminish as government forces press its advance. Troops continue to get deeper," he said.

The seven rescued hostages claimed to have seen Fr. Teresito Sukanob. They said that they were ordered by the Maute to loot houses and find ammunition and firearms.

"[They] have normal looting schedules. You see? They have sched-

ule from 7 a.m. to 11 a.m., they will return for lunch then back to looting at 1500 (3 p.m.). Hostages were issued firearms, [the Maute] is forcing the hostages to bring firearms and to fight government security forces," Herrera said.

The hostages were also forced to bring wounded terrorists to mosques.

Herrera said some women were also sexually abused by the terrorists.

DEMPSEY REYES

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Palace defends appointment of ex-military men to Cabinet

By Ted Tuvera

Malacañang yesterday defended the appointment of some 59 retired military officials by President Duterte to key posts in his administration.

Presidential spokesman Ernesto Abella, in a Palace presser, said that Duterte trusts the service capacity of former military leaders in running the government.

"The President has never made secret any of his intentions which is a more disciplined, more disciplined, more focused, and less corrupt, you know, bureaucracy," Abella told reporters.

"I would say that these are the people that he has vetted. In a sense, it's not whether they're military or not. It's just that these are the people within his scope of attention that, you know, fulfill, tick all the boxes that what he wants," he added.

Positioned in Duterte's Cabinet are former Armed Forces of the

Philippines (AFP) chiefs of staff: Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu, National Security Adviser Hermogenes Esperon and National Irrigation Administration (NIA) chief Ricardo Visaya.

Incumbent AFP chief of staff Gen. Eduardo Añio, who is set to retire by October, has been designated as the next Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) secretary.

President Duterte, in a May 10 press conference at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA), even quipped that his administration is now a "junta government."

"I might even appoint another military man in my Cabinet. Our junta is almost complete. They don't have to do a coup d'état because they are, here already," he said.

While his spokesman is confident about the retired men-in-uniforms' credibility, a left-leaning lawmaker yesterday said that such trend in the Duterte

Cabinet is worrisome.

"The increasing appointments of former military and police officials to supposed civilian posts is tantamount to surrendering civilian control, veering away from a democratic, inclusive and participatory governance, it will eventually erode public support to President Duterte," Anakpawis partylist Rep. Ariel Casilao said in a statement.

Casilao also pointed out that the military is an "institution that lacks integrity" as it was not immune of being involved in controversies such as the case of the 2011 "P50-million *pabaon*" scandal fronted by former AFP comptrollers Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia and Lt. Gen. Jacinto Ligot.

Current Environment Secretary Cimatu was involved in the said *cause célèbre*. It occurred during incumbent National Security Adviser Esperon's stint as chief of staff in 2008.

Meanwhile, at the same Palace briefing, Abella tried to sideline

speculations raised by some critics that the President is sick by claiming that he was doing a lot of work during his apparent retreat.

"First and foremost, he is alive and well, he's very well. He is just busy doing what he really needs to do," Abella told reporters.

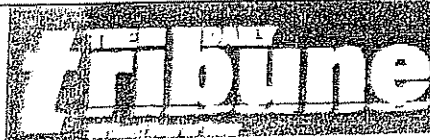
"The President, you know, as you've seen, he's been very much in the public eye but being out of the public eye that is when he is able to really do office work. He signs papers, he reads, he consults. He's actually very busy," he added.

Notably, Duterte's staggered two-week break came during critical periods of his martial law rule in home-island Mindanao.

Nonetheless, the Palace official stressed that the President "is on top of every situation."

"President Duterte is aware of what's happening. He's updated regularly. He's updated regularly, he reads, he views... He listens to press briefings and he is quite aware of anything," he said.

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SolGen: ML joint session pleas 'unwarranted'

By Julius N. Leonen

Solicitor General Jose Calida yesterday said the petitions seeking to compel both chambers of Congress to convene jointly to scrutinize President Duterte's declaration of martial law are "utterly baseless and unwarranted."

Calida, representing the government, yesterday filed a consolidated comment with the Supreme Court (SC) seeking to dismiss the mandamus petitions filed by a group of lawyers and members of the clergy for procedural defects and for lack of merit.

In his 40-page comment to the petitions, the Solicitor General said that petitioners are "highly mistaken" to insist that it is Congress' "clear legal duty or ministerial duty" to convene in a joint session.

"The present petitions to compel the Congress to convene jointly are utterly

baseless and unwarranted. As provided for in Rule 65 of the Rules of Court, mandamus will only issue when the act to be compelled is a ministerial act," Calida said.

Based on the Constitution, Calida said, Congress is not required to convene jointly to determine the validity of President Duterte's declaration of martial law and suspension of the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus.

"It is only in cases of revocation or extension of the proclamation or suspension that Congress is required to vote jointly," the Solicitor General stressed.

Calida noted that the Constitution is apparently "silent as to the duty of Congress to perform any act" upon the declaration of martial rule and the suspension of the writ.

"The act of Congress to vote jointly is not mandatory when the action taken is to

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affirm or express support to the proclamation or suspension," Calida said.

Since the declaration of martial law is already in full force or effect, Calida said "there is no need to vote jointly to approve or affirm it."

"Joint voting is only mandatory when the action is revocation or extension," Calida stressed.

"The matter of affirming, ratifying or not revoking the declaration of martial law and even the manner by which it is done is left and fully within the power, authority and discretion of Congress over which the Supreme Court has no power," he noted.

Earlier, lawyers led by former Solicitor General Florin Hilbay yesterday filed a petition for mandamus asking the High Tribunal to push Congress to perform what they deem to be its constitutionally mandated function to hold a joint session.

"The Senate and the House of Representatives have unlawfully neglected the performance of an act, which the 1987 Constitution specifically enjoins as a duty resulting from their office, and there is no other plain, speedy, and adequate remedy in the ordinary course of law," their 20-page petition read.

"Petitioners seek nothing more than compliance with a minimum procedural fidelity to the mechanisms enshrined in the Constitution meant to prevent abuse of power and to ensure popular mandate in the exercise of the Presidential martial law powers," it said.

Moreover, former Sen. Wigberto Tanada, together with members of the clergy led by Bishop Broderick Pabillo of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Manila, also filed a petition seeking to press Congress to convene jointly.

In their 26-page petition, it was prayed that the High Court "declare the refusal of Congress to convene a joint session for the purpose of considering Proclamation No. 216 to be in grave abuse of discretion amounting to lack or excess of jurisdiction and issue a Writ of

Mandamus directing Congress to convene in joint session for the aforementioned purpose."

"Given previous experiences with martial law, where proceedings were fraught with secrecy, a public transparent and deliberative process is necessary to quell the people's fears against executive overreach," the petitioners said.

But the Solicitor General said the petitioners' argument that it is a congressional duty to convene jointly "does not only overextend the parameters set by the 1987 Constitution, but also imposes an unnecessary duty."

Calida insisted that petitioners "should not be allowed to use the Honorable Supreme Court in testing the autonomy and independence of Congress as a co-equal branch and in interfering with its discretionary acts as granted by the Constitution."

"Prudence and respect for the co-equal departments of the government dictate that the Honorable Supreme Court should be cautious in entertaining actions that assail the constitutionality of the acts of the Executive or the Legislative department," he stressed.

Biz leaders OK with Rody's ML

Business leaders are not bothered by military rule in Mindanao, Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) Secretary Ramon Lopez said yesterday.

In a press briefing at the Kalayaan Hall in Malacañang, Lopez said he was amazed at the positive feedback from the business sector a month after martial law was declared in the South.

Martial law could even yield encouraging progress in the long run, the Trade Secretary claimed.

"It is quite unbelievable, but we're pleasantly surprised. On the business aspect, martial law has not affected it because businessmen really look into the longer term potential of a country and the fundamentals," Lopez told reporters.

"I went to Iligan and even Cagayan de Oro and the towns nearby, and talking to those with depots, distributors, they say they like martial law. They feel safer and secure," he added.

Lopez also indicated that

there are no economic disturbances all through out Mindanao except for the conflict-torn area.

"It's business as usual for areas outside the Marawi. It's really in the Marawi area where investors are really worried," he said.

The DTI chief also pointed out that investors' confidence in Mindanao has been boosted with the security developments in the island region.

"As we say, we are on a breakout, investments up, exports up, consumer - the consumer basis getting bigger, we have a young consumer, and now getting more employed. So, it's many more years of enlarging consumer base," Lopez said.

"Investors locating us here are very bullish. Not to mention the market access if they locate here, the Asean, and even our Generalized Scheme of Preferences (GSP) in US and the European Union," he added.

Meanwhile, the Wholesale Electricity Spot (WESM) will be opened in Mindanao today, Wednesday.

Energy Secretary Alfonso Cusi was optimistic over the establishment of WESM Mindanao, saying it "signals the start of a competitive electricity market in the region whose costing is very transparent."

Cusi said that the provision of more reliable and competitive supply that results in more affordable power to consumers in the region is in line with the Duterte administration's thrust to vastly improve Mindanao's economy and the quality of life of its people.

"WESM facilitates a transparent electricity market with which Mindanao power generators will have an avenue to trade un-contracted power supply," said Cusi.

"WESM will provide consumers more sources of electricity to choose from, increasing their chances of lower-priced energy," he added.

Some 11 years since being established in Luzon and over six years since taking a foothold in the Visayas, this is the WESM's debut in Mindanao.

With Ted Tuvera

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INQUIRER

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Why the MILF prefers BBL over federalism

COMMENTARY

By Miriam Coronel Ferrer

(Editor's Note: The writer served as chair of the government panel in peace talks with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front during the Aquino administration. She is also a political science professor at the University of the Philippines.)



"Only a shift to federalism will satisfy the Bangsamoro," President Duterte has stated several times. This, according to him, will correct the historical injustice committed against the Muslim population in Mindanao.

True, federalism could accommodate the proposals of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), which were modified or even discarded in the 2014 Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro.

Yet, the MILF continues to push for the passage of a Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL) in spite of its limited constitutional parameters.

So, why is the MILF not hitching its wagon to the President's federalism gambit?

Against generic 'phederalism'

To begin with, the MILF did not fight the government to change the whole Philippine system. It's the Communist Party of the Philippines that aims to do that—overthrow the old and build a new regime.

What the MILF leaders want is their own self-governed territory in parts of their claimed homeland in Mindanao. They are neutral on what the rest of the country does to itself.

One-size-fits-all

A one-size-fits-all federalism, spelled "phederalism" by some proponents, does not resonate with the MILF. Notably, all developed proposals consist of converting existing regions into similar or "symmetrical" federal states.

For the MILF and its Bangsamoro supporters, a shift to a federal setup won't do justice to the uniqueness of the Bangsamoro quest for their right to self-determination, their identity and institutions.

Bangsamoro stakeholders also criticize the more recent scheme of four federal states made up of Mindanao, the Visayas, Luzon and Metro Manila. They believe this would reduce the Bangsamoro into an "enclave" of a Min-

danao state.

Moreover, these proposals seek to confine the prospective Bangsamoro state to the current territorial jurisdiction of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM).

To the Bangsamoro stakeholders, the ARMM's five provinces, and Marawi and Lamitan cities fall short of what's left of their claimed Mindanao homeland.

The Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro, on the other hand, seeks to rectify this limited territorial coverage by enabling contiguous geographic areas to join a Bangsamoro state should they wish.

Different imagined substate

True, the reference to a Bangsamoro state in the original 2010 draft MILF compact was a substate entity enjoying wide autonomy.

This document imagined an "asymmetrical compact of free association" that is more akin to associated states like Puerto Rico or the free associated state of Palau, which are attached to the United States but enjoying nation-state status.

The MILF drew from these existing historical constructs but developed its own context-suitable model that didn't re-

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quire a federal system.

This, the group believed, could be possible via a constitutional amendment, specifically an appendage that keeps the rest of the Constitution intact.

Clearly, the MILF's vision then and now was for the Bangsamoro since the group is negotiating for them, not for or of the whole Philippines.

Ownership of process

Also, the MILF wants ownership of the outcome of the peace process.

The Moro leaders want a Bangsamoro entity that results from their own struggle—one that had moved from independence through armed struggle, to a peacefully negotiated solution within the Republic of the Philippines.

Neither a constituent assembly nor a constitutional convention is an arena that the MILF can claim as its own. Although the MILF has belatedly, albeit hesitantly, learned to engage Congress and only Congress can legislate a Bangsamoro state into existence, the group assumes that the end result would still be based on the agreements.

Without such participation by the MILF, the "free choice of the Bangsamoro people in re-

gard to their national identity"—as they had put it in their original proposal—cannot be achieved.

Complicated, shaky

The MILF thus finds the dual track of a Bangsamoro Basic Law cum federalism complicated and shaky.

Even as the MILF continues to publicly express their trust in President Duterte, the private comments and social media posts of the Bangsamoro stakeholders reflect brewing doubts on the real intent of his administration.

Given the President's tight squeeze on Congress, a BBL could have easily gone through the legislative mill within a year.

But the President issued the needed executive order (EO) to establish the expanded Bangsamoro Transition Commission only in November last year.

Confusing

A month later, he created the Consultative Commission, a body that was given six months to recommend changes in the Constitution. The MILF found this confusing.

In April, the President assured the MILF by saying he will only constitute the Consultative Commission until after a draft

BBL is submitted to Congress. The submission of a draft bill just might happen next month when Congress reopens.

Still, it is unclear from the President's repeated privileging of federalism how Congress will navigate the dual track.

Add to this the third track with Nur Misuari's faction of the Moro National Liberation Front, which is just focused on amending the existing ARMM law.

Sticking to signed documents

The MILF is just being consistent by adhering to the signed agreements.

After all, in the absence of legislation, these agreements are the MILF leaders' only hold on the government. They know that any major change could only retrogress into more changes and delays.

From this basic need for security, it behooves the MILF to stick to the signed Bangsamoro roadmap.

As MILF panel chair Mohagher Iqbal puts it: "We [had] better secure a 10 centavo already in the basket than having to gamble for a peso [that] is still in wilderness."

Evidently, between a BBL now and federalism in the future, the MILF pragmatically prefers the former. —CONTRIBUTED

28 June 2017

MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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Fears of Ilaga revival aired after BIFF raid

THE armed men who attacked and occupied two barangays of Pigcawayan, South Cotabato, last week were identified as Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF), one of several armed groups which have been raiding communities in Mindanao.

A BIFF force, variously estimated at a hundred to 300 men, had emerged from the Liguasan Marsh area and attacked an Army outpost in barangay Simsiman and occupied the elementary school in barangay Malagakit. They vandalized the school, writing messages on the blackboard and on the walls denouncing President Duterte and claiming to be "ISIS" – for Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, an extremist international Islamist movement which reportedly wants to set up a regional center in Mindanao.

The BIFF raid in South Cotabato appeared to be separate from the attack by the Maute in Marawi City, Lanao del Sur, over 160 kilometers to the north, which had prompted President Duterte to declare martial law in all of Mindanao. While the BIFF and the Maute may have acted independently of each other, the Armed Forces see the rebel forces in Mindanao – notably the Maute, the BIFF, and the Abu Sayyaf – as connected to one another in their common goal of fighting government forces.

One family in barangay Malagakit described how they tried to hide in a rice mill but were discovered by one BIFF group which killed the head of the family, who had undergone training for the local Civilian Armed

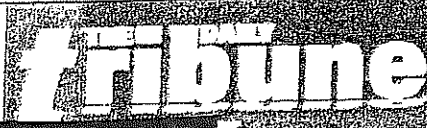
Forces Geographical Unit (CAFGU). It was not the first time the BIFF men had attacked the barangay, the residents said. Over the last 40 years or so, there have been armed clashes between the Christian residents of the barangay and Moro fighters from the Liguasan Marsh area.

The BIFF raid on Pigcawayan has raised new fears that the villagers may take up arms as they did in the 1970s when they organized what came to be known as the Ilaga. This was composed of Visayans, mostly Ilongos, who became a militia fighting alongside the Philippine Constabulary. It was a time of extremism and violence and the Ilaga became notorious for its excesses, including massacres and burning of Muslim homes in Cotabato and Lanao.

The people of barangays Malagakit and Simsiman were reported so concerned about the recent BIFF raid and their belief that it will be repeated sometime soon, that there is talk of the Ilaga being revived. It would most unfortunate if this happens, for the Ilaga in its time became a notorious group of marauders that the government for a time was not able to control.

There is a big problem of peace and order in Mindanao today but we are confident that the government forces of the AFP and the Philippine National Police have the situation well in hand. The people of Mindanao – of all tribal, religious, and ethnic groups – should all help in pursuing this goal of peace, and avoid taking steps that will only exacerbate the problem, like organizing a force along the lines of the old Ilaga.

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EDITORIAL

Negotiate but terrorists should fry

Many have been turned off by suggestions the government sent some Maranao agents to talk some sense into the leader of the Maute group during the lull in the fighting in Marawi City last Sunday during the start of the Eid'l Ftrir festival.

The meeting went against the customary policy of not negotiating with terrorists although the details of the meeting were not made public. The Palace made it clear, however, that government will not negotiate with terrorists and that the earlier group negotiating with the terrorists was not sanctioned by President Duterte.

Some of the reporters were given indications that the claimed emissaries merely negotiated for the release of some of the estimated 100 or so hostages held by the militants mainly as human shields.

Had the release of hostages been the only objective, Gen. Dickson Hermoso, who is an official of the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process, would have not clammed up on the purpose of the six or eight Maranao leaders' meeting with Abdullah Maute, who formed the Maute group with his brother Omarkhayam, who in turn is believed to have been killed in the month-long skirmish between government forces and the extremists.

Rody, who gives a lot of currency on the inner nature of Filipinos, such as negotiations for an end of the conflict with one of the leader of the Islamic State (IS) fanatics, had earlier offered to talk himself with the leaders of the Maute group.

Last November, Rody said he would befriend the Mautes to quell the conflict in Butig, Lanao del Sur, where the group then briefly occupied the abandoned town hall and nearby buildings.

After the Marawi City siege and his subsequent declaration of martial law in Mindanao, Rody closed all lines of communications with the Maute group daring the bandits to "kill all those you're holding now, but I won't talk to you."

"My order really is, to shoot you and to shoot you dead," he added.

Last June 18 in a speech, he gave hints that some "traditional leaders" wanted to initiate negotiations with the Maute brothers.

In his usual thinking out loud monologue he asked those who were suggesting negotiations "to talk about what? Surrender? Or maybe a compromise? Just like that? What happens to my dead soldiers? They have committed a crime of rebellion and there is the flag of IS. If that is not enough, what is?" he said.

During the same speech, he blamed scheming politicians and warlords in Mindanao for allowing the Maute group to stockpile firearms and ammunition in Marawi City that he said "could match even the firepower of the Armed Forces of the Philippines."

He noted that the bandits seem to have endless supply of bullets.

Rody nonetheless admitted the government's "very soft policy toward rebels" in view of the peace negotiations with the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) was another reason for radicals to stockpile their arms in the region.

"All the while, the Maute group with the connivance of the politicians there, *yung mga* warlords, were stockpiling. That is why they don't run out of M-203 grenade launchers. They have so many," he said.

Rody's realization that the IS fanatics are creating havoc due to the opportunistic politicians in the region which may result in the long-awaited crackdown against private armies and high-powered weapons in Mindanao while shaking off the pretense of some groups that they are negotiating peace with the government.

If negotiations did take place, those who took part and primarily those who led the destruction of Marawi City should all be held accountable.

Once Mindanao is free of threats of sudden flareups of violence and mayhem, then it would be the cue for Rody's goal of a federal shift to take place.

ONLINE NEWS

28 JUNE 2017

<http://www.pna.gov.ph>

People's Republic of China donates P15-M for Marawi rehab

June 27, 2017, 10:56 pm

MANILA, June 27 (PNA) -- Staying true to its bilateral relations with the Philippines, the government of the Republic of China donated PHP15 million for the relief operations and rehabilitation of the besieged City of Marawi.

Chinese Amabassador, H.E. Zhao Jianhua presented to President Rodrigo Duterte, the PHP15 million check donation that will significantly augment the resources of the Department of Health (DOH) and Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) -- two government arms currently spearheading various health and welfare operations in Marawi, including medical consultations, evacuation and logistical support.

The donation is an example of the flourishing partnership between the two countries and their shared commitment towards sustainable peace in the region.

Meanwhile, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Philippine National Police (PNP) are conducting rigid military operations in the Southern part of Mindanao to bring ISIS sympathizers before the law or else completely eradicate the extremist groups that have spawned therein.

While the government does not tolerate terrorists, it looks upon its citizens with regard, staunchly rebuilding Marawi City and bringing those affected to the path of healing.

As of June 26, DSWD had already spent about PHP 85.53 million worth of assistance to the affected families, which included provisions like food packs, hygiene and dignity kits, kitchen utensils and tents among others.

Meanwhile, PHP 52.03 million was accounted for DOH-provided health services, including medical check-ups, immunizations, medicines, mental and psycho-social services as well as food and water.

As of the latest government data, 82,767 families or 403,052 persons from Marawi have been displaced, including residents from 20 Lanao del Sur municipalities and 2 Lanao del Norte municipalities affected by the crisis. (PCO-Davao/PNA)

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Navy's latest SSV delivers 600 tons of relief supplies for affected Marawi residents

June 27, 2017, 4:27 pm

MANILA, June 27 — Some 600 of relief supplies, for persons displaced by the ongoing operations against the remaining Maute Group terrorists in Marawi City, has been transported by the BRP Davao Del Sur (LD-602), according to Philippine Navy (PN) spokesperson Capt. Lued Lincuna.

This took place during the ship's humanitarian assistance and disaster relief mission last week, Lincuna said in message to the PNA Tuesday.

The BRP Davao Del Sur is the sister-ship of the BRP Tarlac (LD-601), the country's first strategic sealift vessel which was delivered and commissioned last year.

Aside from the relief supplies, which came from the Department of Social Welfare and Development, the BRP Davao Del Sur also carried assorted heavy equipment for rehabilitation and the Armed Forces' mobile kitchen which is now being used for ongoing relief operations.

The BRP Davao Del Sur is currently conducting another HADR mission as of this posting.

Lincuna refused to give details for operational and security reasons.

"(She is) somewhere down south to support HADR but (I cannot) divulge (exact area) for security reasons," he added to the PNA.

She arrived in the Philippines last May 14 after a five-day journey from PT PAL shipyard in Surabaya which started on May 9.

BRP Davao Del Sur is also a Makassar-class landing platform dock like her sister ship BRP Tarlac.

She was commissioned last May 31, the Navy's 119th founding anniversary.

Its delivery completed the two-unit SSV procurement project with an approved budget contract of PHP4 billion sourced from the AFP Modernization Act Trust Fund.

Just like the BRP Tarlac, the PN's latest SSV will serve as a floating command-and-control ship especially in the conduct of humanitarian assistance and disaster response and will also serve as a military sealift and transport vessel.

The ship has an overall length of 120 meters, breadth of 21 meters, draft of five meters and can carry a payload of 2,800 tons.

She has a cruising speed of 13 knots and maximum speed of 16 knots and a minimum operating range of 7,500 nautical miles.

BRP Davao Del Sur can carry 500 troops, two rigid-hull inflatable boats, two landing craft units and three helicopters.

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Her first major mission was the Benham Rise operation where she transported the diving team which planted the Philippine flag in a shallow portion of the territory last June 12.

The ship and her crew departed Pier 13, Manila South Harbor last June 8 with around 100 divers headed by Army Scout Ranger Major Christopher Constantino.

The military officer and his team strapped a fiber-class laminated Philippine flag 57 meters below the surface. (Priam F. Nepomuceno with Gilbert Villaruz/PNA)

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MILF: ICRC - Humanitarian Assistance Still Needed As War Continues In Marawi City

Posted to the Moro Islamic Liberation Front Website (Jun 27): **ICRC: Humanitarian Assistance Still Needed As War Continues In Marawi City**

"The situation is far from over. Fighting is ongoing, and civilians who are trapped or are displaced continue to face challenging situations. There is still a need to support more than 200,000 displaced people with food, drinking water, sanitation facilities and health care in the coming weeks," said Roberto Petronio, Head of the ICRC sub-delegation in Mindanao in a press statement released on Friday, June 23.

This story of griming images of people fleeing from the war zone and those inside evacuation centers was conveyed by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) as the armed clashes continue in Marawi City between Government troops and ISIS-inspired Maute group backed by Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) now in its 34th day as of this writing.

An evacuee Casamudin Riga, 51 years old trader from Barangay Marinaut, Marawi City describes their situation inside the evacuation center "As very unpleasant – it's humid during the day, but it's too cold at night. As evacuees, we don't have much choice. I'm just grateful because at least my family is complete and we're safe. We hope that we can return to our homes soon, and start again."

ICRC said that in the first week of the clashes, they tried to intervene for the safe evacuation of civilians trapped by the fighting. However due to the fast-changing security situation, a humanitarian ceasefire had not been possible.

This neutral, impartial and independent humanitarian organization said that they will continue to focus on areas more difficult to reach such as the east and west sides of Lake Lanao and will continue its dialogue with the parties involved in the fighting to emphasize the protection of civilians.

"Looking forward, the future needs of the displaced families will include support for their return to Marawi City, while those who cannot go home need temporary relocation or settlement", Petronio stressed.

The ICRC and Philippine Red Cross team has been very active in providing assistance to the traumatized IDPs since the conflict broke-out in mostly Moro-Meranaw inhabited Muslim City of Marawi.

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Under Duterte?

Duterte?

Despite delays, there are some signs of progress on key projects.

After decades of neglect, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) has been engaged in an ambitious military modernization program over the past few years.

As I have detailed previously, the Armed Forces Modernization Act initiated under former president Benigno Aquino III and continued under Rodrigo Duterte divides military modernization into three horizons and phases which run up to 2028 (See: ["What's Next For Philippine Military Modernization Under Duterte?"](#)).

Amid this, the Philippine Air Force (PAF) has detailed its own plan for its modernization called Flight Plan 2028, a 14-year plan designed to last from its inception in 2013 up till 2028, which details the approach to building its capability to defend the country from not just internal threats, but increasingly external ones as well.

But like other services, the PAF has seen several delays prevent it from getting what it needs to realize this goal for various reasons including specific procurement requirements. Under the First Horizon (2013-2017), the Aquino administration had approved several projects, including close air support (CAS) aircraft, long-range patrol aircraft (LRPA), FA-50 munitions, and anti-submarine warfare helicopters.

Yet several of the contracts were only signed towards the end of his single six-year term and remain incomplete as of today, even though defense officials have pledged that they will eventually be.

Despite these issues, some inroads are still being made. A case in point was last week, when AFP's public affairs chief Arsenio Andolong told IHS Jane's that the PAF's longstanding CAS requirement had finally progressed, with Brazil's Embraer EMB 314 Super Tucano selected as the lowest bidder (the list of prospective offerings had previously included Aero Vodochody of Czech Republic, offering the L-39NG, Textron Aviation-Beechcraft of the United States and the AT-6 Wolverine, and Korea Aerospace Industries with the KA-1 Woongbi light attack aircraft).

The approval is a major step forward, especially considering that this is the fourth time DND has had to launch a bid for CAS aircraft in two years. With the bid now approved, Andolong said it will now move towards post-qualification evaluation and then contract negotiations which may be finalized by the end of 2017.

The six new CAS aircraft, which had been initially costed for 4.96 billion pesos (\$99 million), are expected to replace the PAF's aging Boeing (Rockwell) OV-10 Bronco turboprop attack planes. Those planes have been used in the AFP's fight against Islamic State-linked militants in the southern part of the country, which has recently been in the headlines following an outbreak of conflict in Marawi.

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CPP/NPA-Cagayan: NPA raids MIG safehouse in Baggao, Cagayan

NPA-Cagayan propaganda statement posted to the Communist Party of the Philippines Website (Jun 25): **NPA raids MIG safehouse in Baggao, Cagayan**

Ester Falcon, Spokesperson
NPA-Cagayan (Henry Abraham Command)

25 June 2017
Press Release

Operatives of the Henry Abraham Command-NPA raided a safehouse of the Military Intelligence Group at 9 pm last night, June 24, at Barangay San Jose, Baggao, Cagayan. Two military were killed and an unconfirmed number were wounded after a ten- minute firefight ensued.

Also raided was the house of Dexter Remudaro, a retired army. His house has been used as an intelligence safehouse of the 17th IB.

In a statement sent to Bombo Radyo Tuguegarao, the NPA said the MIG unit was punished for actively spying on activists and revolutionary forces. They are also responsible for the 2006 abduction and deaths of peasant activists Joey Javier and Arthur Orpilla, who were leaders of Kagimungan, a Cagayan farmers organization. In 2014, they were also involved in the abduction of a farmer activist from Barangay Asinga Via.

The safehouse was a few meters away from a PNP station. No police responded upon hearing of gunshots.

<https://www.philippinerevolution.info/statements/20170625-npa-raids-mig-safehouse-in-baggao-cagayan>