

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



**ARMY**

Serving the people. Securing the land.

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

01 March 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 | MARCH 1, 2017 | WEDNESDAY

**PHILIPPINE AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY (PAR)**

**FASTER LIES AFFECTING THE EASTERN SECTION OF SOUTHERN LUZON, VISAYAS AND MINDANAO**

**NORTHEAST MONSOON AFFECTING NORTHERN LUZON (As of 3:00 PM - Feb. 28, 2017)**

<b>SUNRISE</b> 6:13 AM	<b>SUNSET</b> 6:04 PM
<b>MOONRISE</b> 8:06 AM	<b>MOONSET</b> 8:36 PM
<b>NEW MOON</b> FEB 26 10:56 PM	<b>FIRST QUARTER</b> MAR 5 7:32 PM
<b>LOW TIDE</b> 6:37 AM -0.02 Meter	<b>HIGH TIDE</b> 12:37 PM 0.44 Meter

Partly cloudy to at times cloudy with rainshowers

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

Cloudy skies with rainshowers and/or thunderstorms

Light rains

	MAR 2	MAR 3	MAR 2	MAR 3	MAR 2	MAR 3		
<b>METRO MANILA</b>	24-33°C	24-33°C	<b>TAGAYTAY</b>	20-29°C	20-29°C	<b>TACLOBAN</b>	23-31°C	24-31°C
<b>TUGUEGARAO</b>	21-28°C	22-29°C	<b>LEGAZPI</b>	24-30°C	25-31°C	<b>CAGAYAN DE ORO</b>	23-30°C	24-30°C
<b>LAOAG</b>	24-31°C	24-31°C	<b>PUERTO PRINCESA</b>	25-32°C	25-31°C	<b>METRO DAVAO</b>	24-33°C	24-32°C
<b>BAGUIO</b>	14-23°C	15-24°C	<b>ILDILQ/BACOLOD</b>	25-31°C	25-32°C	<b>ZAMBOANGA</b>	24-33°C	24-33°C
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March 2017

PHILIPPINE DAILY  
**INQUIRER**

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# Many farms lost to land conversion

FROM A1

By Jinky Cabildo,  
Matthew Reysio-Cruz  
and Krixia Subingsubing  
@Team\_Inquirer



(First of three parts)

Sicogon, an island in Iloilo province, was not the popular tourist destination it once was in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

But to property developer Ayala Land Inc. (ALI) and landowner Sicogon Development Corp. (Sideco), the island had the makings of a world-class tourist destination with one hitch: 334.6 hectares of Sicogon were still classified as agricultural and occupied by 216 agrarian reform beneficiaries.

A settlement with the farmers in 2014 allowed the two companies to get the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) to approve the conversion of the property to nonagricultural use on May 29, 2016, the waning days of the Aquino administration.

As a result, the island is now being developed into a commercial and tourism hot spot of hotels, malls and residences, complete with a 1.2-kilometer airstrip.

Sicogon is just one example of converted agricultural lands that have since been turned into bustling hubs of activity, whether they be for residential, commercial, industrial or institutional purposes.

Between 1988, when the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law (CARL) took effect, and 2016,

a total of 97,592.5 hectares of agricultural land—the size of Metro Manila and Cebu City—were approved for conversion to nonagricultural purposes, according to the DAR.

The figure does not include pending applications for conversion, agricultural land reclassified by local government units and illegally converted land.

The rampant conversion of prime agricultural land, partly driven by rapid urbanization, population growth and speculation, has led to conflicting land uses.

## Two-year ban

The DAR hopes to address the problem when it proposed a two-year ban on the processing of applications for land conversions last September.

If Malacañang approves the ban, the DAR will review all conversion applications made from June 15, 1988, to June 30, 2016, to account for “rampant and unchecked conversions of prime agricultural lands,” states a copy of the second draft executive order.

The ban would apply to all awarded lands under Republic Act No. 6657, or CARL, and other similar laws, according to Agrarian Reform Secretary Rafael Mariano.

“Essentially, the moratorium seeks to determine the sta-

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tus of agricultural lands, whether they have been developed according to their five-year development plan and its impact on agricultural production," Mariano said.

Under CARL, land reform beneficiaries or landowners can apply for the conversion of agricultural lands into other uses if after the lapse of five years from its award the land stops being economically viable, or the area has become urbanized, and the land will have a higher economic value for residential, commer-

growth rates than Metro Manila and the country between 1990 and 2015, according to the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA).

Satellite images of Metro Manila from 1988 to 2014 also showed that the urban sprawl nearly doubled. Built-up areas, or intensive-use lands that are mostly covered by structures, extended from 424 square kilometers to 704 sq km, well into bedroom communities, such as Bacoor City (Cavite), San Pedro City (Laguna), San Mateo, Taytay and Antipolo City (Rizal), and Marilao in Bulacan.

Bacoor's population rose 276 percent between 1990 and 2015; Sta. Rosa's by 273 percent; San Mateo's by 207 percent; and Marilao's by 293 percent, PSA data show.

Incidentally, the provinces surrounding or near the capital have the highest land conversion rates since 1988.

Such was the case with Batangas province, where the

cial or industrial purposes.

Of the approved conversion applications in DAR regional offices over the past 28 years, 80.6 percent of the land is in Luzon, with the provinces of Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon (Calabarzon) that lie on the fringes of Metro Manila, taking up more than a quarter of the total. The Visayas accounted for 7.8 percent and Mindanao, 11.6 percent.

DAR regional offices approved a total of 40,308.8 ha while the national office approved

DAR approved on Feb. 1, 2016, the conversion of 27 ha as additional area for a solar farm in Calatagan town. Solar Philippines Commercial Rooftop Projects now has the largest solar farm in the country with 160 ha, on which rice, corn and other crops used to be planted.

#### Urban land constraints

An expected surge in conversion applications in the Visayas and Mindanao as they, too, become more urbanized, was also key to his decision to propose the ban, Mariano said.

The DAR noted that Negros Occidental and Misamis Oriental, known for vast sugarcane and coconut plantations, respectively, were among the top 10 provinces with the biggest number of conversions.

If not properly addressed, the rapid urbanization across the country could pose major challenges to land management and economic growth.

This could lead to "conges-

tion diseconomies" in which a lack of coordination between urban growth and land development could drive prices of land and demand for housing higher, according to a study on urban land constraints by Makiko Watanabe, senior social development specialist at the World Bank.

Watanabe presented the study at a conference on sustainable land governance in Manila on Feb. 8.

#### Urbanization, population growth

The Philippines has roughly 30 million ha of land, of which 9.7 million are considered agri-

57,283.7 ha. Regional offices handle conversion applications involving 5 ha and below, while the national office handles applications involving more than 5 ha.

Calabarzon and Central Luzon produce big volumes of palay and other crops, lending credence to fears that conversion of prime agricultural lands could undermine food security.

#### Agrarian reform beneficiaries

In Sicogon, the farmers, who initially opposed the joint venture project of ALI and Sideco, relented after their homes were destroyed in 2013 by Super typhoon "Yolanda" (international name: Haiyan).

The agrarian reform beneficiaries entered into a compromise deal with ALI and Sideco in November 2014. The companies agreed to set aside P114 million for resettlement housing on a 30-ha property and livelihood

cultural.

Rapid urbanization and population growth are major drivers of land conversion, according to Agrarian Undersecretary Luis Pañgulayan.

The need for housing and employment as well as the need to spur economic growth and investments have led the state to tolerate massive conversion of agricultural lands into other uses outside Metro Manila.

Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Bulacan provinces posted higher popula-

tion diseconomies" in which a lack of coordination between urban growth and land development could drive prices of land and demand for housing higher, according to a study on urban land constraints by Makiko Watanabe, senior social development specialist at the World Bank.

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# 'We really tried our best'

*Rody says sorry for German's death, deploys air assets*

By ALEXIS ROMERO

President Duterte yesterday apologized to Germany for failing to rescue Juergen Gustav Kantner, saying the Philippine government had tried its best to rescue the German who was beheaded by the Abu Sayyaf last Sunday.

"I would like to say something to the family and to the government, that we really tried our best. We have been there, the military operation has been going on for some time already, but we have failed, and so that has to be admitted," Duterte said.

"I am very sorry that the hostage, a national of your country, has been beheaded. I sympathize with the family, I commiserate with the German people," he told reporters in an interview at Malacañang.

Duterte stressed the government, through the military, exerted all efforts to prevent the beheading of Kantner without paying ransom.

"I said we tried. There's a massive operation going on and as I have just announced to you, we are beginning to use

## We really From Page 1

air assets," he said.

"There's nothing wrong in admitting a failure but it's a matter of policy that we do not surrender to the demands of paying ransom," he added.

Malacañang condemned the execution of Kantner and vowed to curb the threat of the Abu Sayyaf.

"The Palace condemns this despicable crime and the President has bound himself in principle that these groups (should be) neutralized," presidential spokesman Ernesto Abella said.

"We reiterate our deepest condolences to the German people and to the family of Mr. Kantner, and not only do we empathize but we sympathize with them. However, I'm sure the President's commitment is to ensure that these things will be addressed and curtailed in the soonest possible manner,"

he added.

Abella said Duterte was "deeply affected" by the beheading.

Jesus Dureza, presidential adviser on the peace process, said officials had exhausted all efforts to save Kantner, 70, who was held by the Abu Sayyaf in Jolo for three months.

"We grieve as we strongly condemn the barbaric beheading of yet another kidnap victim," Dureza said in a statement.

"There must be a stop to this killing of the innocent and the helpless," Dureza said as he made no mention of the ransom demand.

Kantner and his companion Sabiné Merz were taken captive in November while sailing on a 53-foot yacht near Sabah, eastern Malaysia, and brought to Jolo. Merz was shot dead when she tried to resist the militants.

his captors in a remote village in Indanan, Sulu a day before the beheading.

Año said the German captive was immediately spirited out of the area by gunmen led by Abu Rami, while the rest of bandits led by Radulan Sahiron engaged government troops in a firefight.

"At the height of the fighting he (Kantner) was there," he said.

"He was spirited out of Sahiron's camp. You know in the forest it's very easy to hide a person with six Abu Sayyaf. There's no 100 percent success in (intelligence and operations) but we have been focusing on the large group of Sahiron," Año said.

Año was responding to questions on how effective was the military intelligence set up against the Abu Sayyaf in Sulu as it now appeared that the bandits were a step ahead in evading the military.

The Abu Sayyaf are currently holding more than 30

foreign and local hostages in Sulu and Basilan, including 13 Vietnamese, seven Filipinos, a Dutch national, a Japanese, two Indonesians and two Malaysians.

"We sympathize with the family of Mr. Kantner because unfortunately he was beheaded by the Abu Sayyaf. But of course this would make our troops even more committed to pursue these perpetrators in order to bring them to justice," Año said.

Col. Cirilito Sobejana, commander of Joint Task Force Sulu (JTFS), said troops are continuing the search to locate the remains of Kantner.

Local officials are coordinating with the Moro National Liberation Front in the search, he said.

Reports of Kantner's execution emerged on Sunday evening, but the AFP only confirmed the killing on Monday, a day after the deadline for the P30-million ransom had expired.

### 'We were that close'

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) pledged in a separate statement to bring Kantner's killers to justice and continue operations to free other hostages held by Abu Sayyaf.

The AFP has deployed thousands of troops in the Abu Sayyaf strongholds of Basilan, Tawi-Tawi and Jolo islands, but despite air and ground offensives, the piracy and kidnappings of the group continue unabated.

The bandits are entrenched in local communities, complicating operations by a military wary of incurring civilian casualties.

AFP chief Gen. Eduardo Año said the troops were close to rescuing Kantner and other hostages were it not for the firefight that broke out with the Abu Sayyaf gunmen.

Año said the troops were working on an intelligence report that located Kantner and

The Abu Sayyaf purportedly uploaded a video of Kantner's beheading which was circulated on the internet by SITE Intelligence Group, a website that monitors the activities of jihadists around the world.

The Philippine National Police (PNP) appealed to the public not to circulate the gruesome video.

"We earnestly appeal to netizens, internet subscribers and mobile phone users to refrain from propagating the video clip of Mr. Kantner's murder," PNP spokesman Senior Supt. Dionardo Carlos said.

Carlos said reposting the video of Kantner's brutal execution would bring more anguish to the victim's relatives and friends.

"He rightfully deserves human dignity even in such gruesome death, while his family and friends deserve respect in this time of grief," Carlos said. – With Jaime Laude, Roel Pareño, Emmanuel Tupas, Reuters



0) March 2017

The Manila Times

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# 'Sorry we tried to save him but failed'

BY CATHERINE S. VALENTE

**P**RESIDENT Rodrigo Duterte on Tuesday apologized to Germany for the failure of government troops to save Jurgen Gustav Kantner, who has been beheaded by the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG).

Duterte said the Philippine government tried its best but failed to save the German hostage's life.

"I am very sorry that the hostage, a national of your country, has been beheaded. I sympathize with the family, I commiserate with the German people. But I said, we tried, there's a massive operation going on and I have just announced to you, they're beginning to use air assets," the President said.

"We really tried our best. We have been there, the military operation has been going on for sometime already and but we have failed and so that has to be admitted," he added.

The Abu Sayyaf beheaded Kantner on Sunday after the group's demand for a P30 million ransom was ignored.

Duterte stressed that the government is sticking to its no-ransom policy because more people will be taken hostage if ransom is paid.

► Failed A2:

## Sorry we tried to save

"There's nothing wrong in admitting a failure but it's a matter of policy that we do not surrender to the demands of paying ransom. It will just increase the numbers," he said in a news conference.

The Abu Sayyaf released a video of Kantner being killed by a bolo-wielding man on Monday.

Secretary Jesus Dureza, presidential adviser on the peace process, confirmed late Monday night that the Abu Sayyaf executed Kantner.

"We grieve as we strongly condemn the barbaric beheading of yet another kidnap victim," Dureza said in a statement. "There must be a stop to this killing of the innocent and the helpless."

Duterte reiterated his order to government forces to crush the Abu Sayyaf Group.

"It's [Mindanao] a big place. It's not a one-hectare island that you can really overrun. There are many places to hide. And for the first time, we are even using air assets," the President said.

"I have to improve on our night-flying capability. But we're nearing that. As a matter of fact, we had an operation by air and by ground the other day in Jolo," he said.

### Inhuman

The Department of Foreign Affairs

(DFA) also on Tuesday extended its sympathies to the family of Kantner.

"The Department of Foreign Affairs is greatly saddened by the death of Mr. Juergen Gustav Kantner. We condemn, in the strongest terms, this cruel and inhuman act by the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), and reiterate our firm resolve to oppose terrorism in all its forms. The Philippine Government will do its utmost to ensure that the perpetrators of this heinous crime are brought to justice," the DFA said in a statement.

"The Department of Foreign Affairs extends its deepest sympathies to the family and friends of Mr. Kantner and to the Government and the people of the Federal Republic of Germany. We stand in solidarity with Germany as it grieves for the tragic loss of one of its sons to a senseless act of violence," it added.

Foreign Affairs Secretary Perfecto Yasay Jr. who is attending a United Nations event on human rights in Geneva, also condemned the brutal killing.

In November last year, Kantner and his partner Sabine Merz were abducted while sailing in the southern Philippine sea.

WITH JAIME PILAPIP

01 March 2017

The Manila Times

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## 8-year-old ASG hostage reunited with family

BY SECRETARY  
JESUS G. DUREZA

EIGHT-YEAR-OLD REXON ROMOC, who was kidnapped in Zamboanga Sibugay and held hostage in Sulu for almost seven months, was reunited with his family on Tuesday.

We flew him to Manila and turned him over to his parents Elmer and Nora Romoc after a medical checkup done by Dr. Rose Liquete, chief of the National Kidney & Transplant Institute in Quezon City.

President Duterte, who was on top of our recovery efforts, witnessed the reunion in Malacañang.

It has been a long ordeal. Rexon was kidnapped by armed men together with his parents on August 5, 2016. They were brought to Sulu by their kidnapers. Mother Nora was released on August 22 after paying some small amount to their captors. Upon being released, she then sold everything they owned including their "sari sari" store and borrowed money from friends and relatives to pay for the release of Elmer and Rexon. On November 15, the father was released but the captors did not release

➤ ReunitedA2

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## ■ REUNITED FROM A 1 8-year-old

the boy and continued to keep him hostage. Until we recovered him yesterday.

President Duterte, so concerned about the boy, instructed me to work on his release without let-up. Former Sulu Gov Sakur Tan, his son now incumbent Totoh Tan and well-meaning Tausugs provided the needed assistance.

Some three weeks ago I again went to Sulu together with the

parents hoping to recover Rexon but we returned home empty-handed.

It has been a long agonizing ordeal for him and the family. Their lives already in shambles due to what happened, the Romoc couple, with their elder 15-year-old son had since left Sibugay and temporarily relocated outside Metro Manila with relatives. The first thing Rexon said when he was brought to me by my emissary from Sulu was: "Asa si Mama ug Papa" (Where is Mama and Papa?) I tried looking for some birthmarks to identify him.

Just to be sure he was the real

Rexon we had been looking for, I asked: "Kinsa imong papa ug mama?" (what are their names?)

His quick, terse reply: "Elmer ug Nora!" Bingo!! I hugged him tight. (I also have a grandson his age.)

Rexon will still undergo some psychiatric healing after seven months in captivity and going through the trauma of firefights and always on the move as the AFP conducted its pursuit operations.

When NKTi chief Doc Rose gifted him with a toy car with "PEACE LOVE" markings while being medically examined, he told me he also

wanted to have a helicopter for a toy. When I asked why, he told me about military helicopters occasionally hovering over them while his captors sought cover tagging him along. Although from a Cebuano-speaking family, he now used more Tausug words -- thanks to my emissary, Edmund Gumbahali, a Tausug, who helped me with the translation. He obviously relished those instances as he recalled the hovering choppers with brightened eyes.

Rexon will have his wished fatigue-colored helicopter toy when he goes home for sure.

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March 2017

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

Page: 6

# Soldier killed as NPAs step up attacks in Surigao, Misamis

By MIKE U. CRISMUNDO  
and CAMER ORDONEZ IMAM

**C**AGAYAN DE ORO CITY – A soldier was killed in Misamis Oriental, while another was wounded in Surigao del Norte as the New People's Army (NPA) escalated its attacks in Northern and North-eastern Mindanao, Monday.

Capt. Joe Patrick Martinez of the Fourth Infantry Division (4th ID), confirmed that a soldier was killed in-action in an encounter with Communist insurgents in Barangay Kaulayanan, Sugbongcogon, although he did not disclose the name of the casualty pending notification of his next of kin.

Also on Monday, troops from the 30th Infantry Battalion figured in an encounter with armed men believed to be NPA members in Barangay Tinago, Malimono, Surigao del Norte.

Report said the insurgents detonated an improvised explosive device which resulted to the injury of a soldier and damage of civilian properties.

Martinez said pursuit operations



**PO2 GEROME ANTHONY NATIVIDAD**

were already ongoing to hunt down the attackers.

The clashes came in the wake of the NPA attacks on a power plant site and a plantation last Saturday in Bukidnon.

Meanwhile, a police officer, who was abducted by the rebels last February 9, appeared on You Tube yesterday to say that he was "being treated well" by his captors.

The video showed PO2 Gerome

Anthony Natividad, of the Kailangan municipal police in Bukidnon, being interviewed by an unseen female in a location thick with vegetation.

Natividad was taken by rebels at a roadblock in Barangay Tikalaan, Talakag, Bukidnon, the latter set up last February 9. The insurgents had earlier burned heavy equipment of a construction company doing road repairs in said town.

In the video, Natividad was shown sitting under a canopy wearing a blue jacket over a black t-shirt and cargo pants, with growing facial hairs.

Natividad narrated that on the day of his abduction, he was en route to the Philippine National Police (PNP) regional headquarters in Camp Vicente Alagar in Cagayan de Oro City to get a medical certificate.

The police officer said he is being well treated and is fed with better food than what the rebels were eating.

He said: "They [NPA] are following the protocols on the CARHRIHL (Comprehensive Agreement on the Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law)."

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

## **Soldier dies, militiaman unscathed in Zamboanga del Norte town ambush**

From the Philippine News Agency (Feb 28): **Soldier dies, militiaman unscathed in Zamboanga del Norte town ambush**

**Troops are tracking down the gunmen behind the ambush-slay of a soldier early Tuesday in the municipality of Sirawai, Zamboanga del Norte.**

**A militiaman accompanying the soldier emerged unscathed from the incident.**

Chief Insp. Jimmy Abrasaldo, Sirawai police chief, **identified the fatality as TSgt. Zaldy Caling-Caling, 42, of the Army's 13th Special Force Company.**

**Unscathed was Dandan Lacsayao, a member of the militia force.**

Abrasaldo disclosed the incident occurred around 7 a.m. Tuesday **in Sitio Lote, Barangay Saint Mary, Sirawai, Zamboanga del Norte.**

Abrasaldo said Caling-Caling was driving a motorcycle with Lacsayao when four unidentified gunmen repeatedly shot them.

He noted that Caling-Caling and Lacsayao were traveling to the town proper of Sirawai coming from Narra Detachment in Barangay San Vicente at the time of the incident.

Following the incident, policemen in coordination with the military were deployed to scour possible hiding places of the ambushers.

He said investigation is underway to identify the four gunmen.

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## **Army troopers discover NPA camps in Kalinga**

From the Philippine Information Agency (Feb 28): **Army troopers discover NPA camps in Kalinga**

**Army troopers recently discovered two camps of alleged New People's Army (NPA) in the municipality of Balbalan after intensified combat operations that have forced the rebels to abandon their base.**

**2Lt. Edgar Jeric Gonzales, 50th Infantry Battalion Civil-Military Officer, said the first camp was discovered on February 14 at barangay Ab-abaan, Balbalan while the other one was on Feb. 23 at Sitio Guin-ang, Dao-angan, both in Balbalan.**

The discovery of the camps was based on tips from civilians who pinpointed the general vicinity where armed dissidents splintered into small groups to evade government soldiers.

The 50IB resumed the conduct of focused military operations in their area of responsibility following the lifting of the unilaterally-declared ceasefire on Feb. 4. Pres. Duterte directed the military to launch an all-out-war after the failed peace talk with the NDF-CPP-NPA.

**Earlier, soldiers overran a rebel camp in a remote village in Asipulo town in Ifugao following a gun battle with the NPA.**

**LTC Gulliver Señires, 50IB Commanding Officer** , lamented the cancellation of the peace talk but said they will still pursue local peace talks provided the NPAs are sincere, present sensible terms, and the right people are involved.

While no peace talk is in the offing, Duterte's all-out-war policy shall be sustained with public assurance that human rights are respected, international humanitarian law and rules of engagement are observed, he assured.

**He reiterated the call for NPA members including the militia ng bayan to surrender to avail of the benefits under the Comprehensive Local Integration Program or CLIP. CLIP offers P7, 000 re-integration assistance, P15, 000 immediate assistance, P50, 000 livelihood, remuneration of surrendered firearm, and Philhealth membership.**

<http://news.pia.gov.ph/article/view/171488268137/army-troopers-discover-npa-camps-in-kalinga>

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## **1 soldier wounded in Surigao Norte clash**

From the Philippine Information Agency (Feb 28): 1 soldier wounded in Surigao Norte clash

**A soldier was wounded and civilian properties damaged after New People's Army (NPA) rebels allegedly blasted one improvised explosive device (IED) in Tinago, Malimono, Surigao del Norte, 9:30 a.m. Monday.**

**The soldiers under the 30th Infantry Battalion (30IB), Philippine Army encountered the rebels after they responded to complaints by civilians over the alleged harassment and extortion activities of the NPA in the community.**

**Lieutenant Colonel Rico Amaro, 30IB commanding officer, identified the wounded soldier as 2Lt. Daniel F. De Guzman.**

"This is another violation of the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect to Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL) which was the only document duly signed by the GPH and the NDF at the Hague, the Netherlands, which prohibits the stockpiling of explosives inside or near the vicinity of community as it will endanger the lives of the civilians," said LTC Amaro.

"We will continuously intensify our anti-extortion drive against these communist terrorists. As what I had promised to the residents of Malimono. We will not allow anymore the NPA to conduct extortion activity, harassment and other forms of atrocities not only in Malimono but in whole province of Surigao del Norte," Amaro added.

Pursuit operation is ongoing to apprehend the terrorist group.

<http://news.pia.gov.ph/article/view/2731488257835/1-soldier-wounded-in-surigao-norte-clash>

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## **Phil Army in E. Samar urges youths to join the organization**

From the Philippine Information Agency (Feb 28): Phil Army in E. Samar urges youths to join the organization

**Around 200 youths in Eastern Samar State University Maydolong Campus, Maydolong Eastern Samar participated the Information Awareness Drive conducted by army authorities in said area.**

**The objective of the activity is aimed at encouraging more applicants to join the Armed Forces of the Philippines.**

**Civil Military Operations Officer 2lt. Dennis S. Carig of the 14th Infantry Battalion of the Philippine Army told Philippine Information Agency that one of the topics discussed during the info drive was about career guidance particularly on how to apply to become an officer and soldier in the Philippine army.**

"Being a soldier is a noble profession, that each individual dedicates their lives for his/her love of the country," Carig said.

**14th IB Commanding Officer Lt.Col. Manuel Leo Gador** said the said activity is also one way of reaffirming the commitment of the 14th IB in reaching out to the academe and youth sector that would bring inspiration on their role in nation-building.

"We hope that our partners from the academe followed suit and also be our active partners in molding the youth as agents of peace and development of our country," Gador said.

<http://news.pia.gov.ph/article/view/2681488259053/phil-army-in-e-samar-urges-youths-to-join-the-organization>

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## **Troops clashed with NPAs anew**

From the Mindanao Times (Feb 28): **Troops clashed with NPAs anew**

**GOVERNMENT soldiers clashed with the New People's Army in Asuncion, Davao del Norte and Kiamba, Sarangani on Sunday, Feb. 26.**

**Two bodies of communist rebels and two AK-47 firearms were recovered by soldiers in the encounter site in Asuncion.**

**Capt. Rhyan Batchar, spokesperson of 10th Infantry Division, said troops from 60th Infantry Battalion engaged around 20 rebels of Guerilla Front 33 in a 40-minute firefight in Sitio Alungan, Barangay Sangayen, Asuncion around 10 a.m. on Sunday.**

Two MG520 attack helicopters supported the troops with rocket fires at the position of the NPA rebels.

**Meanwhile, in a separate incident, at around 12:45 p.m., troops of 27th Infantry Battalion engaged in a five-minute firefight the NPA belonging to Guerrilla Front 73 at Sitio Tulad, Barnagay Nalus, Kiamba, Sarangani.**

Reports reaching the 10th ID revealed that families near the encounter sites have evacuated to safer grounds.

Military and PNP checkpoints have been established in different areas to prevent the NPA from fleeing the area.

**Maj. Gen. Rafael Valencia, 10ID commander,** lauded the troops for their accomplishments.

"We must press on the fight and put more pressure on the NPA until they finally realized that armed struggle is not the solution to our problems," he added.

In related news, **Lt. Erwin Bugarin, civil-military operations officer of 8th Infantry Battalion, said the first incident happened around 5:40 p.m. when armed men stormed the office of a hydro-electric power plant in Barangay Lumbayao, Valencia City, Bukidnon.**

They planted an improvised explosives device inside the building and fired gunshots on their way to escape.

**At around 10 p.m. of the same day, undetermined number of NPAs burned two spray trucks of Davco Agri Venture Corporation in Barangay Merangiran, Quezon, Bukidnon and immediately fled from the scene.**

"They no longer act on their ideals these are simply terroristic act," Bugarin said. In doing so, they are no less a terrorists who does nothing but instill fear to the people making their extortion activities unquestioned."

<http://mindanaotimes.net/troops-clashed-with-npas-anew/>

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

## **Minor NPA rebel surrenders in Davao Oriental**

From the Philippine News Agency (Feb 28): **Minor NPA rebel surrenders in Davao Oriental**  
**A minor who served as a regular combatant of the communist New People's Army (NPA) operating in the province of Davao Oriental has surrendered to the Army under the 10th Infantry (Aqila) Division.**

**Captain Rhyan Batchar, 10th ID chief information officer, told reporters on Tuesday that the minor, identified only as alias Dongkoy, 17 years of age, yielded to the elements of 67th Infantry Battalion in Davao Oriental last February 17.**

**He was a member of guerrilla front 25 of the NPA operating in the boundary areas of Davao Oriental and Compostela Valley provinces.**

"Dongkoy" is now being processed for turnover to proper authorities particularly the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Batchar added.

He said under the law, minors like "Dongkoy" who had undergone traumatic experiences while with the lawless group must be handled by capable persons in the DSWD.

Investigations are also being conducted to trace back alias Dongkoy's roots – his family members and place of origin, Batchar added.

In a separate statement issued to the media on Tuesday, **10th ID commander Major General Rafael Valencia** said the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and its armed wing, the NPA, recruit minors for their armed struggle.

"The communists must spare the children from directly participating in the armed conflict," Valencia pointed out.

He added that such irresponsible act of the CPP-NPA should be strongly condemned by the Filipino people.

**Batchar also told reporters of the surrender on Monday afternoon of three regular combatants guerrilla front 71 of the NPA in Davao Occidental and nine members of the NPA Miliyang Bayan (MB) to the elements of 73rd Infantry Battalion in Barangay Datal Anggas, Alabel town in Sarangani Sarangani province.**

He refused to reveal the true identities of the regular NPA rebels and militias for security considerations and pending investigations and processes.

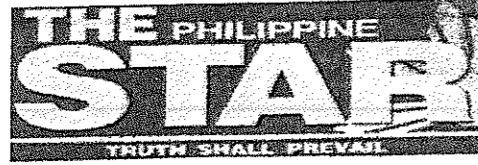
**"The three NPA regulars and nine militias voluntarily surrendered to 73rd IB troopers. Among the reasons of their surrender were hardships, fear and disillusionment to their leaders and the communist movement,"** he emphasized.

**Since February 1 this year, a total of 39 NPA regulars have already returned to the fold of the law while 19 high powered firearms were recovered from the NPAs, Batchar said.**

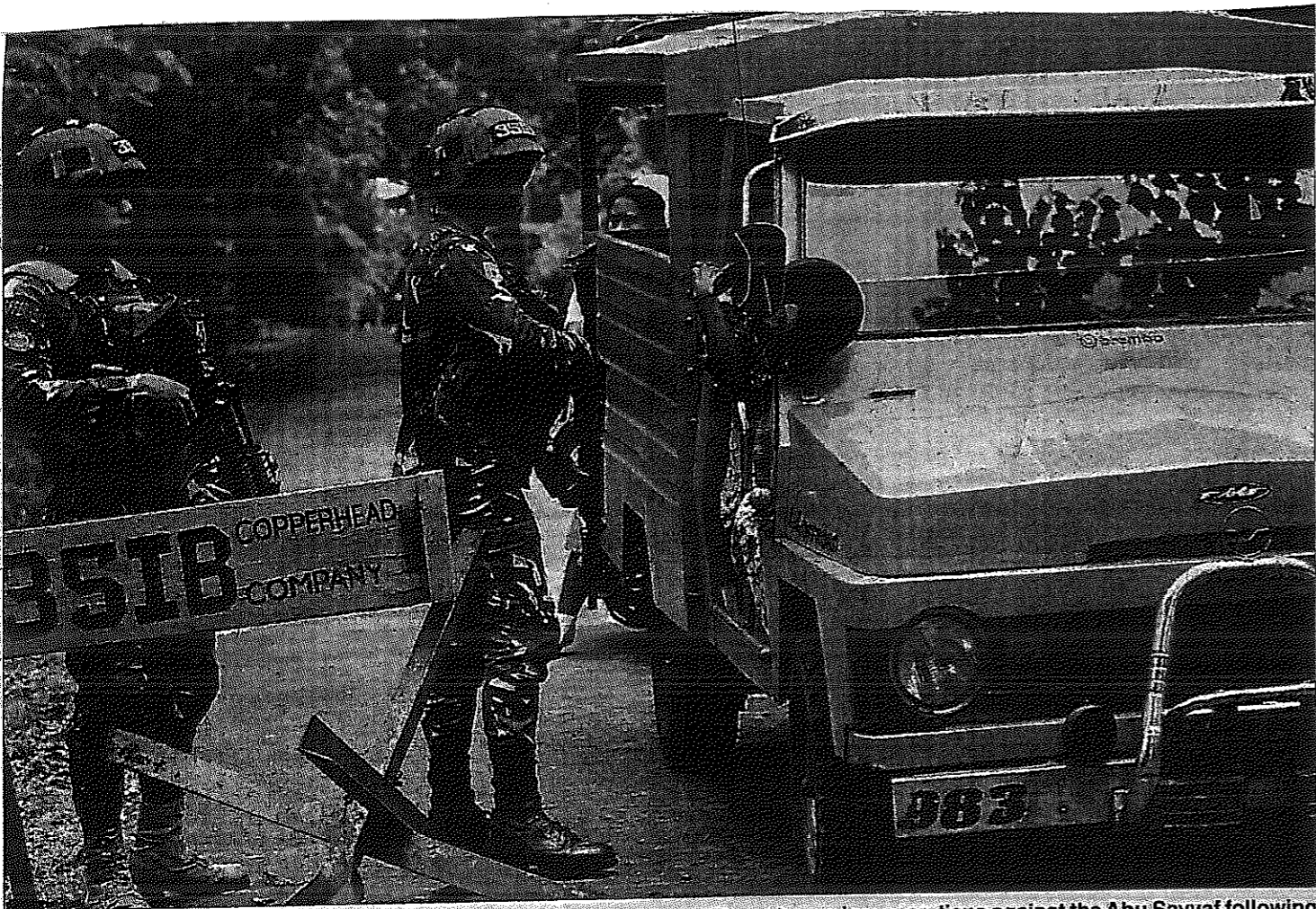
**Five of the recovered firearms were brought along by NPA regulars who voluntarily surrendered to the Army, he added.**

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Army soldiers keep watch at a checkpoint in Sulu the other day as the military stepped up operations against the Abu Sayyaf following the beheading of German hostage Juergen Kantner. EPA

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**TIGHT WATCH** Philippine Marines inspect a passenger jeepney at a military checkpoint in Indanan, Sulu. The military bombarded camps of the Abu Sayyaf Group shortly after the execution of Jurgen Kantner. AFP PHOTO

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# Sayyaf frees boy, 8, after ransom payment

By ROEL PAREÑO

**ZAMBOANGA CITY** – Shortly after releasing a video showing the beheading of its German captive, the Abu Sayyaf freed an eight-year-old boy allegedly after payment of ransom.

Sources said Ricson Romoc, who was taken with his parents in Payao town in Zamboanga Sibugay in August, was released in the vicinity of Barangay Anuling in Patikul, Sulu at around 6 p.m. on Monday.

The family of the victim reportedly paid P3 million to the bandits.

Villagers who saw Romoc reported the incident to barangay chairman Ging Hayudin, who brought the victim to Jolo. The boy was flown to this city on a private plane and reunited with his parents also on Monday night.

Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process Jesus Dureza brought the boy to Malacañang

yesterday to meet with President Duterte.

Dureza said Romoc requested for a toy helicopter, noting that the sounds of choppers hovering over Abu Sayyaf lairs had given the boy hope of being rescued.

The parents of Romoc were freed separately last year also after alleged payment of ransom.

On Sunday, the bandits beheaded 70-year-old Juergen Gustav Kantner after the deadline they set to pay P30 million in ransom lapsed.

Earlier on Monday, a video showing a masked man be-

heading Kantner with a curved knife was circulated online by the SITE Intelligence Group that monitors jihadi websites.

The military has yet to recover the body of the victim.

Last year, Canadians John Ridsdel and Robert Hall were beheaded in April and June, respectively, after their families failed to pay ransom of P300 million each.

Patrick Almodovar, a son of a court stenographer in Jolo, was decapitated in August after his family failed to raise P1 million.

– With Christina Mendez

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## Merkel deplores 'barbaric' killing

German Chancellor Angela Merkel yesterday deplored the barbaric killing of one of her compatriots by the Abu Sayyaf last weekend and called for a united international front against terrorism.

"The chancellor condemns this hideous attack that shows,

once again, how unprincipled and barbarous terrorists act," Merkel's spokesman Steffen Seibert said in a statement issued from Berlin. "We've all got to stand together in the fight against terrorists."

The Philippines and Germany yesterday condemned

the beheading of 70-year-old Jurgen Kantner by Abu Sayyaf militants who posted a video of the killing after a deadline for a \$600,000 ransom passed.

The video showed a machete-wielding militant beheading Kantner. The German

Turn to Page 8

appealed for help twice in short video messages, saying he would be killed if ransom was not paid.

"Malacañang condemns this despicable crime, and the President has bound himself in principle that these groups (should be) neutralized," presidential spokesman Ernesto Abella said.

The Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) issued a statement condemning the killing.

"We condemn, in the strongest terms, this cruel and inhuman act by the Abu Sayyaf and reiterate our firm resolve to oppose terrorism in all its forms," it said.

"The Philippine government will do its utmost to ensure that the perpetrators of this heinous crime are brought to justice. We stand in solidar-

ity with Germany as it grieves the tragic loss of one of its sons to a senseless act of violence," the DFA said.

The Philippines' armed forces pledged in a separate statement to bring Kantner's killers to justice and to continue operations to free other hostages held by Abu Sayyaf.

Last year Abu Sayyaf decapitated two Canadians in Jolo but later freed their two companions, a Filipino woman and a Norwegian. The four had been seized from a tourist resort off Davao City.

The ransom demand for the Canadians was \$6.4 million each.

Abu Sayyaf's activities in recent years have been mainly banditry, but the Philippines believes Islamic State has been



Merkel

in contact with members of the group's leadership with a view to gaining a foothold in Southeast Asia.

The Abu Sayyaf has capitalized on decades of instability in the southern Philippines

and generated tens of millions of dollars from piracy and ransom payments.

It uses the money to buy arms, high-powered boats and modern navigation equipment, allowing it to avoid detection and seize crew of slow-moving vessels with ease.

Abu Sayyaf is currently holding 26 hostages – 13 Vietnamese, seven Filipinos, a Dutch national, a Japanese, two Indonesians and two Malaysians, the military says. Experts say the group is unlikely to free any hostages without payment.

Speaking on the sidelines of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, DFA Secretary Perfecto Yasay Jr. said Manila was seeking technological help from allies to pinpoint the location of the other hostages.

– With Reuters, Pia Lee-Brago

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# Filipino nurses forced by IS to give medical training in Libya repatriated

**T**RIPOLI, Libya (Reuters) — A Filipino nurse held by the Islamic State (IS) in the Libyan city of Sirte and forced to treat militants and give them medical training will soon be repatriated together with her colleagues.

The nurse is from a group of seven women, one man and a 10-month-old child who were freed from Sirte when local forces drove Islamic State from the city last year.

Islamic State took full control of Sirte in early 2015, turning it into their North African stronghold and holding dozens of foreign captives. The Philippine na-

tionals are medical staff members who were among foreign workers already in the city when it came under the ultra-hardline group's rule.

"When they found out we were Muslim they released us but under a strict condition that we will have to work as nurses in their hospital and we had to train ISIS (Islamic State) on emergency care and nursing course," the nurse told reporters in the Libyan capital, Tripoli.

"It was a horrible time. Each day we lived in fear. We didn't know what was going to happen next. And they threatened to kill us if we left Sirte."

The Philippine staff worked at Sirte's main hospital, which the Islamic State used to treat their wounded fighters until they were pushed out of central Sirte in August.

Militants then retreated toward their final strongholds near Sirte's seafont, taking medical equipment and foreign captives with them.

Islamic State was defeated in Sirte in early December, after nearly seven months of fighting. The Philippine medical staff and many of the other foreign captives were freed in the final stages of the battle.

Since then, they have been held in

Misrata, the city that led the military campaign in Sirte. Also held there are dozens of women from sub-Saharan Africa who were captured while crossing Libya as migrants and used as sex slaves in Sirte.

Earlier this month, an Indian doctor who had also been trapped in Sirte, Ramamurthy Kossanam, was flown out of Libya.

He said on Sunday that he had worked in field hospitals run by Islamic State for about two-and-a-half months, and was shot in the hand and both legs during battles before being rescued by local Libyan fighters.



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# Sayyaf sub-leader slain in raid

BY AL JACINTO

**Z**AMBOANGA CITY: Police commandos, backed by military troops, raided a hideout of the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) before dawn on Tuesday and killed its sub-leader who was tagged as behind a spate of kidnappings for ransom in Zamboanga Sibugay.

Officials said two ASG gunmen and a Special Action Force (SAF) commando were also wounded during the firefight at Barangay Tampilan in Alicia, Zamboanga Sibugay. The slain terrorist leader was

identified as Imam Yasin.

Two of Yasin's followers – Auhaie Mohammad Abdulkarim and Murad Mohammad – were wounded and captured by the raiders.

Also wounded was Police Officer 2 Larry Palidnang, a member of the 84th SAF and brought to hospital in the nearby town of Ipil.

Officials said security forces recovered weapons from the hideout of Yasin, who was facing a string of criminal charges in Zamboanga Sibugay and Zambo-

anga del Norte provinces.

No other details were made available by the police and military on the operation and how it tracked down Yasin's group.

The raid was conducted after ASG rebels freed on Monday an eight-year old boy who was kidnapped along with his parents in the town of Payao, also in Zamboanga Sibugay last August. (See related story in A1)

The boy, whose father and mother had been separately freed on ransom last year, was released

in Patikul, Sulu after his family reportedly paid an unspecified amount of ransom.

The ASG has been holding over two dozen Asian sailors since last year after rebels hijacked their cargo ships off Sabah in Malaysia, Tawi-Tawi and Basilan provinces in the Muslim autonomous region.

Just recently, the group released a video on the beheading of German sailor Jurgen Kantner after his family failed to raise a P30million ransom demanded by the ISIS-affiliate Abu Sayyaf rebels.

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## SOLDIERS POUND ABU SAYYAF LAIRS

THE military pounded the positions of the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) in Sulu and Basilan a day after the beheading of German Juergen Gustav Kantner. Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) chief Eduardo Año said soldiers launched air strikes and shelled the ASG camp in Barangay Macalam, Al-barka in Basilan on Monday. "We have ongoing operations now in Basilan and Sulu, we will continue until

► SayyafA2

### ■ SAYYAF FROM A1

## Soldiers

we are able to rescue the remaining hostages and prevent future kidnapping," said Año, who had earlier vowed to decimate the ASG and other terrorist groups in the south in six months.

In Tawi-Tawi, the AFP chief said the military has enough troops tasked to go after the Islamic militants.

The military has yet to determine the number of casualties but Maj. Richard Enciso, spokesman of the Philippine Army's 1st Infantry Division, said there were bloodstains on the target of military operations.

"We sympathize with the family of Mr. Kantner because unfortunately he was beheaded by the Abu Sayyaf. But of course this would even make our troops more committed to pursue these perpetrators in order to bring them to justice," Año said.

Col. Edgard Arevalo, chief of the AFP Public Affairs Office, said the military's operations in the past days

have been unrelenting.

"The AFP condemns in the strongest terms this abominable act of ruthlessness, loathe, and greed of this evil terrorist group. We commit to relentlessly pursue the ongoing all-out offensives to neutralize the perpetrators of this dastardly crime," the AFP official said.

"There will be no let-up in our operations until we have rescued all the remaining kidnap victims and we have negated the Abu Sayyaf's capability to continue to fight government and perpetrate their terrorist activities," he added.

AFP units continue to search for the remains of Kantner with the help of the Philippine National Police (PNP).

Senior Supt. Dionardo Carlos, PNP spokesman, appealed to the public to refrain from propagating the video clip of Kantner's execution.

"He rightfully deserves human dignity even in such gruesome death, while his family and friends deserve respect in this time of grief," he said

**FERNAN MARASIGAN**

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DEFINING THE NEWS

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## AFP: Air assets to wipe out Sayyaf

THE Philippines' air assets will be used for the first time to boost the military's campaign to crush the Abu Sayyaf bandits, President Rodrigo Duterte said Tuesday.

He made the statement as he apologized to the German government and to the German people after their fellow German Jurgen Gustav Kantner was executed by the terrorists on Sunday after the deadline passed to pay the P30-million ransom they had been demanding.

"For the first time, we [will be] using air assets [that we did not use before because of] the problem of collateral damage," Duterte told reporters in a chance interview on Tuesday.

Armed Forces Chief Eduardo Año said the forces tasked to rescue Kantner actually chanced on a group of Abu Sayyaf bandits holding him during the critical hours before his beheading, but the bandits escaped in the nick of time.

Foreign Affairs on Tuesday

condemned "in the strongest terms" the beheading of Kantner, who was executed three months after he was kidnapped in Southern Mindanao.

"The Department of Foreign Affairs is greatly saddened by the death of Mr. Juergen Gustav Kantner," Foreign Affairs spokesman Charles Jose said in a statement.

"We condemn, in the strongest terms this cruel and inhuman act by the Abu Sayaf Group."

Next page

### AFP....

From A1

Ozamis Archbishop Martin Jumoad said Kantner's execution was a "sad moment for all people who respect and value life."

"When does God's justice fall upon them so that they may see the light? Are they really believers of one God or money is the one they adore?" Jumoad said.

Duterte insisted on the need to improve on the military's night-flying capability to track down the terrorists.

"Well, we need equipment. Until such time that we have the fast boats, the eight remaining frigates or whatever, that was ordered from Japan, but we paid for it, actually ... and we plan to

purchase more helicopters," Duterte said.

"The numbers, I would not want to tell you now but I have to improve on our night-flying capability. We're nearing to it."

In a speech before alumni of the Philippine Military Academy during their homecoming earlier this month, Duterte told the security forces to use all government resources to protect Mindanao from the Abu Sayyaf.

"The Sulu-based ASG is focused on kidnap-for-ransom. The Basilan-based ASG under [Isnilon] Hapilon remains focused on assimilating the IS violence today," Duterte said. **John Paolo Bencito, Francisco Tuyay, Sara Susanne Fabunan and Vito Barcelo**

6) March 2017



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# AFP condemns beheading

By FRANCIS T. WAKEFIELD

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) condemned the beheading of 70-year-old German national Juergen Gustav Kantner by Abu Sayyaf bandits in Sulu.

AFP Public Affairs Office (PAO) chief Marine Colonel Edgard Arevalo, made the remark after they received information from reliable sources confirming that Kantner was mercilessly and inhumanly murdered by the criminal group.

The Abu Sayyaf even released a video showing Kantner's execution.

"It's a mournful day for all peace loving and God-fearing citizens of

the Philippines," said Arevalo.

Arevalo also assured they gave their all and will continue to do a no-nonsense drive against the bandits.

"We lost some of our best men in the process, because we value the life of Mr. Kantner and that of the others who have fallen prey to this terrorist group," said Arevalo. "There will be no let up in our operations until we have rescued all the remaining kidnap victims."

Police reports earlier stated that Kantner was beheaded by the group of Abu Sayyaf leader Muammar Askali alias "Abu Rami" at Sitio Talibang, Brgy. Buanza, about 3:30 p.m. Sunday in Indanan, Sulu.

The location of the body of the

victim, however, has yet to be known according to police.

Askali earlier claimed to have kidnapped the 70-year-old Kantner while on board his yacht off the waters of Tanjong Luuk Pisuk, Sabah last November.

Kantner's female companion said to be his wife and identified as Sabrina Wetch was later found lifeless inside the yacht on Laparan Island, Pangutaran, Sulu, on November 6, 2016.

In a two-minute and 19-second video released two weeks ago, a frail Kantner is seen appealing to German and Philippine authorities to help facilitate the payment of P30 million lest he'll be beheaded by 3 p.m. of February 26, 2017.

Guarded by four heavily armed men, believed to be members of the Abu Sayyaf Group, Kantner was seen kneeling and airing his appeal in his native German language while an unidentified man was aiming a jungle bolo to his neck. Another man was recording Kantner's appeal on video.



KANTNER

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

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## PDEA inks MOA with AFP; PNP's 'Tokhang' on standby

By CHITO A. CHAVEZ, FRANCIS T. WAKEFIELD, and AARON B. RECUENCO

The Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) yesterday at Camp Aguinaldo sealing their joint conviction to keep the country safe and free from illegal drugs.

AFP Public Affairs Office Chief Colonel Edgard Arevalo said that the MOA signing held at the General Headquarters Conference Room is a vital step in clarifying the AFP's role in the government's anti-illegal drugs campaign.

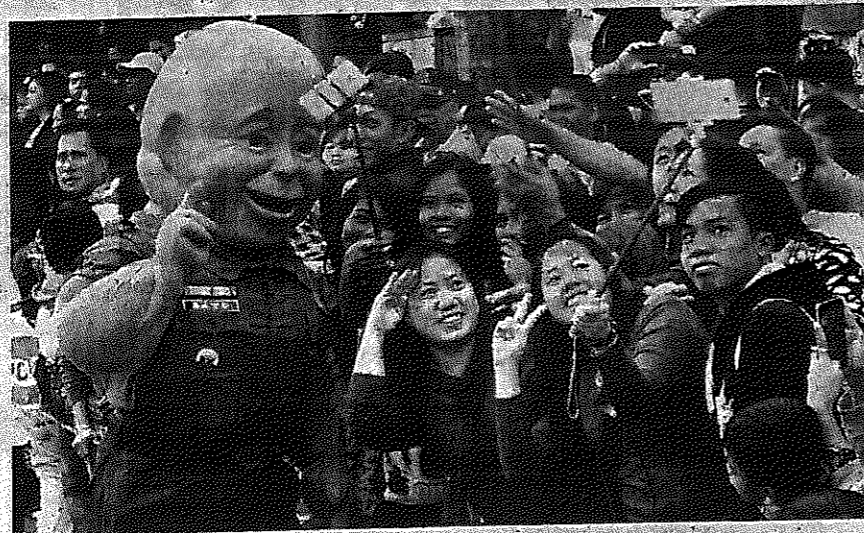
The main signatories were PDEA Director General Isidro S. Lapeña and AFP Chief of Staff, General Eduardo M. Año which was witnessed by PDEA and AFP key officials.

"With this agreement, we can now push through with our new and bigger role in ending the illegal drugs scourge," Arevalo said.

Under the agreement, PDEA and the AFP have declared their cooperation to safeguard the well-being of the Filipino citizenry particularly the youth, from the harmful effects of dangerous drugs on their physical and mental well-being, and to defend the same against acts or omissions detrimental to their development and preservation.

Also present during the ceremony were Chairman Benjamin Reyes of the Dangerous Drugs Board (DDB), Hon. Robert Ace Barbers, Representative of the 2nd District, Surigao del Norte and Chairperson, Committee on Dangerous Drugs, Hon. Seth Frederick Jalosjos, Representative of the 1st District of Zamboanga del Norte, and Hon. Arnolfo Teves, Jr., Representative of the 3rd District of Negros Oriental.

The PDEA said the government's anti-narcotics operations dropped by 75 percent since President Rodrigo Duterte pulled out the police from his war on drugs.



**'TOKHANG' PREMONITION** - 'General Bato,' the Philippine National Police (PNP) mascot in the image of its chief Director-General Ronald 'Bato' dela Rosa, obliges to a groufle with revelers at last Sunday's celebration of the Panagbenga Flower Festival in Baguio City. The crowd-drawing event was well-secured and the police community now buzzing with talk about the return of the PNP's 'Oplan Tokhang' which weeded out drug peddlers in communities around the country. (Zaldy C. Comanda)

Lapeña admitted that the PDEA cannot sustain the war on drugs because of the scarcity of its manpower and other similar resources.

Currently the agency has only has 2,271 personnel nationwide, of which more than 1,200 are drug enforcement officers, the report said.

Duterte took out the PNP from the anti-illegal drug campaign in January due to the controversy where South Korean businessman Jee Ick Joo was killed by alleged members of the Anti-Illegal Drugs Group inside the PNP headquarters in Camp Crame.

Duterte also barred the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) from undertaking anti-drugs operations.

### **Tokhang: The return**

The PNP is now readying for its second shot in the anti-drugs war, with some of its commanders already

instructed to prepare starting with the selection of policemen who are morally and physically fit for the re-launching of the anti-drugs campaign.

But Director General Ronald dela Rosa, PNP chief, would not divulge the exact date of the revival of the anti-drugs war, only saying that they are already prepared for it anytime.

"We will be informed if we will go back to the war on drugs. We will be informed in due time," said dela Rosa.

President Duterte earlier hinted at the revival of the anti-drugs war with the PNP at the forefront, as some of his allies have called on the government to resume the campaign.

Dela Rosa himself said that there is a consensus among the local officials he talked to about the need for the resumption as drug personalities have started to lord over their communities again.

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## KFR man with ASG links killed

A leader of a kidnap-for-ransom group in Zamboanga Sibugay with links to the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) was killed while two of his followers were wounded and eventually arrested following a clash with police commandos in Alicia town before dawn yesterday.

Supt. Rogelio Alabata, spokesman of the Zamboanga Peninsula region, said a member of the 84th Special Action Company of the Special Action Force identified as PO2 Larry Fallitnang was also wounded in the clash.

"It was a law enforcement operation conducted against a known KFR group in Zamboanga Sibugay," said Alabata.

Killed was Yasin Karim, who uses the aliases Imam Yasin, Commander Manbing and Commander Maas and was tagged as behind the series of abduction in Zamboanga Peninsula.

Police and military intelligence groups said the group of Karim has links with the ASG wherein their modus operandi is to kidnap hapless victims which will then later on turn over to the bandits.

Alabata said Karim was killed in the clash that erupted when police raided their lair in Sitio Taria-Taria in Barangay Tampalan while two of his followers identified as Auje Mohammad Abdulkarim and Morad Mohammad were wounded and later arrested. **(Aaron Recuenco)**

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**POLICE FILES**

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**POLICE FILES**

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### 3 sundalo huli sa illegal gambling sa Cebu

CEBU CITY – Kalaboso ang tatlong kasapi ng Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Central Command dahil sa paglabag ng PD 1602 o illegal gambling at Section 12 ng RA 9165 o Comprehensive Dangerous Drug Act of 2002.

Kinilala ang mga nahuli na sina Cpl Edril Bayles, Joar Acuba Rojas-Francisco at George Gutierrez na nakadesino sa AFP-CENTCOM.

Ayon sa kapulisan ng Guadalupe Police Station ng Cebu City Police Office na may tumawag na concerned citizen sa kanilang station na may tatlong lalaki na napakainagay habang naglalaro ng cara y cruz o "hantak".

Nang kinapakan ng mga pulis ang nasabing mga sundalo na recover sa kanilang posisyon ang iba't ibang klasi ng drug paraphernalia at ang tatlong coins na ebidensiya.

Sa panig naman ng mga nahuli, iginhiit nila na kasiyahan lang ang kanilang ginawa.

Kasalukuyang nakadetina sa Guadalupe holding cell ang tatlong AFP members.

### Lider ng kidnap for ransom patay sa engkwentro sa Zamboanga

PATAY ang lider ng isang kidnap for ransom group na mayroong koneksyon sa handidong Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) habang tatlo ang sugatan kabilang ang isang miyembro ng Special Action Forces (SAF) sa isinagawang operasyon sa Zamboanga Sibugay kahapon ng umaga.

Nakilala ang napatay na suspek na si Iman Yasim habang nadakip naman ang dalawang miyembro ng grupo na sina Aujate Moh Abdulkarim at Murad Mohamad na dinalap sa pagamutan matapos na tamaan ng bala. Samantala dinala rin sa pagamutan ang sugatan na si PO2 Larry Palidnang na miyembro ng SAF.

Ayon kay Chief Supt Billy Beltran, Regional Director ng PRO9, dakong 3:00 ng umaga nang magsagawa ng operation ang mga otoridad sa Sitio Tarlah Brgy. Tampalan Zamboanga Sibugay.

Nabatid na maghahati ng warrant of arrest ang mga otoridad laban kay Yasim nang magpaputok matapos mamataan ang papalapit na mga operatiba.

Gumanti naman ng putok ang mga otoridad na nagresulta ng pagkasawi ni Yasim at pagkakasugat ni Abdulkarim at Mohamad at ng SAF na si PO2 Palidnang matapos ang ilang minutong palitan ng putok.

Narekober ng mga otoridad ang M14 rifle, cellphone at mga subersive na dokumento sa mga suspek.

Isasailalim naman sa imbestigasyon ng mga otoridad ang nadakip na itatawang suspek habang inihahanda ang kaukulang kaso laban sa mga ito. (Mark Obleda)

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## Sundalo nirapido ng MILF members

**ZAMBOANGA CITY** - Pinagbabaril at napatay ng apat na hinihinalang miyembro ng Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) ang isang sundalo sa Sirawai, Zamboanga del Norte, kahapon ng umaga.

Sa police report, kinilala ang sundalo na si Technical Sergeant Zaldy Caling, 42, may asawa, at

tauhan ng 13th Special Forces ng Philippine Army na nakatalaga sa Narra Detachment sa Barangay San Vicente sa Sirawai, Zamboanga del Norte.

Ayon sa pulisya, minamaneho ni Caling ang kanyang motorsiklo habang angkas si Dandan Lacsayao, miyembro ng Citizen Armed Force

Geographical Unit (CAFGU), patungong Sirawai nang pagbabarilin sila ng apat na armadong lalaki, gamit ang .45 caliber pistol, bandang 7:00 ng umaga.

Kaagad na namatay si Caling habang nasugatan naman si Lacsayao, ayon sa police report.

**Nony E. Lacson**



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## ASG leader todas, 2 tauhan arestado

Napatay kahapon ng pulisya ang isa sa mga leader ng Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) sa Zamboanga Peninsula at naaresto ang dalawang kasamahan nito, habang nasugatan naman ang isang pulis sa pantlalaban ng mga bandido sa pag-aresto sa Alicia, Zamboanga Sibugay, kahapon ng umaga.

Batay sa ulat, tinangkang arestuhin ng Zamboanga Sibugay Police Provincial Office (ZSPPO), dakong 3:00 ng umaga, sa Sitio

Tarlah, Barangay Tampalan, Alicia, si Imam Yasin.

Wanted si Yasin sa kasong pagpatay sa bayan ng Ipil, ayon sa Alicia Municipal Police.

May arrest warrant din si Yasin sa kasong pagdukot at pangigkil sa isang lokal na opisyal at negosyante sa Zamboanga Peninsula.

Kinilala naman ang mga naarestong tauhan ni Yasin na sina Aujaje Moñ Abdul at Murad Mohammad.

Ayon sa report, armado si Yasin

ng M14 rifle nang makipagbarilan sa mga operatiba ng Philippine National Police-Special Action Force (PNP-SAF) na nagtangkang umaresto sa kanyang.

Nasugatan naman sa engkuwentro si PQ2 Larry Balitnang, ng 84th Special Action Force Company ng SAF.

Iniimbestigahan na ng mga awtoridadsina Abdulat Mohammad, na nakapiit ngayon sa himpilan ng Sulu Police Provincial Office.

**Fer Taboy**

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## SOLDIERS' WELFARE OVER MAJORITY'S PLIGHT

A few days before President Duterte announced the termination of the peace negotiations between the Philippine government and National Democratic Front (NDF), a religious community gathered and prayed for unity and expressed its support for the pursuit of a just and lasting peace.

But after the New People's Army announced it would lift a ceasefire it had unilaterally declared, an incensed President ended the peace talks. Charges and countercharges have been made by both parties as to the disconnect between commanders on the ground and their representatives in the peace talks. Instead of immediately calling for an investigation, the President's knee-jerk reflex jolted him into terminating an ongoing and seemingly succeeding peace talks. In so doing, he exposed his primary concern for the welfare of men in uniform over the plight of the majority of the Filipino people who are suffering injustice and penury. Such concern may have influenced him into giving undue consideration to martial forces against peace. And peace negotiations collapsed for the umpteenth time.

The College of Bishops and

the Philippines Central Conference Board of Church and Society urge, nay, appeal to President Duterte to reconsider the decision, change his mind about terminating the peace talks with the NDF, pave the way for the resumption of discussions, return to the negotiating table, and pursue with the NDF the next rounds of talks.

Mr. Duterte should not allow to go to waste the positive and substantial gains made in the three rounds of discussions with the revolutionary movement since the negotiations were resumed last year.

The termination of the peace talks will only resurrect the perils that an all-out war has brought into our midst since it began, leaving tens of thousands of combatants and civilians dead. Human rights violations will only increase in number without resolving the roots of conflict.

People, especially the poor who are the real stakeholders in the talks, are expecting that the next steps would tackle significant issues relating to socioeconomic reforms. But most importantly, as long as the peace talks continue, the people will keep on finding hope in the prospects

for peace.

The Philippine government must not lose sight of the goal. It must keep on listening to the cry of the poor. Peace negotiations must continue. Give peace a chance.

"Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the sons of God."

We are also making an appeal to the peace-wreckers. You are involved in what is really happening in the countryside, which is directly affected by the obstacles you place to ruin peace. With every pull of the trigger, you deprive children, women, indigenous peoples and other communities of the peace and justice they have been hungering and thirsting for so long. Please desist from violence. Now. Stop killing the poor. You are not pursuing the interest of the poor or of the public, but the interest of the few ruling class.

BISHOP RODOLFO JUAN,  
BISHOP CIRIACO FRANCISCO,  
BISHOP PEDRO TORIO, REV.  
ISRAEL PAINIT, REV.  
ANICETO VILLALON JR. for  
the College of Bishops and the  
Philippines Central  
Conference Board of Church  
and Society of the United  
Methodist Church

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## We pin our hopes on AFP and its six-month goal

**A**s the Abu Sayyaf said they would, they beheaded German yacht owner Jurgen Gustav Kantner at 3:30 p.m. Sunday, February 26, in barangay Buanza, Indanan, Sulu. It was 30 minutes past the deadline they had given for the payment of P30-million ransom.

They had done exactly the same thing with two previous Canadian hostages. They freed a Filipina and a Norwegian hostage after President Duterte assumed office and sought the help of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF). Malacanang said later that if ransom was paid, it was not aware of it, but police sources P30 million was paid by the family or government of the Norwegian.

An all-out military campaign indeed is the only proper government answer to the kidnappings by the Abu Sayyaf. The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) said it has committed 14 battalions to hunt the Abu Sayyaf and has engaged them not only in Sulu and Basilan, their traditional lairs, but also in Lanao del Sur and other parts of western Mindanao.

Complicating the situation is the report that the Islamic State, which seeks to establish a caliphate in the Middle East, wants a base in Southeast Asia with its substantial Muslim population and the Abu Sayyaf of southern Mindanao have become its leading local adherents.

The Islamic State has been suffering reverses lately in the fighting in Syria and Iraq and there

is fear that the Islamic State ideology will either move on to other parts of the world, such as the Philippines, or become a cyber force of like-minded jihadists acting independently around the world, but held together by their ideology and fund-raising management.

But all that is a future prospect that will have to give way to the problem of the present – which is, for the Philippines, the continued operations of the Abu Sayyaf. The AFP chief of staff Gen. Eduardo Ano said the AFP under its new commander-in-chief President Duterte expects to defeat the Abu Sayyaf in six months. That would be about June, 2017.

The national government has been reaching out to various rebel groups in the country – the Aquino government to the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and now the Duterte administration to the New People's Army (NPA) as well as to the MNLF. These are major combat groups with a long history of rebellion in the country.

We must not forget the smaller groups like the Abu Sayyaf and the Maute Group who do not seem as amenable to peace talks as the MILF, the MNLF, or the NPA. The Abu Sayyaf, in particular, has just killed a foreign hostage and may, even now, be looking around for another hostage to hold for ransom.

The AFP has vowed to wipe out the Abu Sayyaf in six months. As in the past we pin our hopes on the capability of our Armed Forces and hope it will succeed in its goal.

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GUS ABELGAS

## RESPONDE Sayyaf, pulbusin now na!

KARUMAL-DUMAL ang ginawang pagpugot ng Abu Sayyaf sa bihag nilang German national na si Juergen Gustav Kantner. Dito ay namayani talaga ang pagiging terorista na nagpapasiklab ng takot sa katauhan.

Talagang sisiklab ang kalooban ninuman lalo pa nga't ikinalat ng mga bandido ang video kung paano nila pinugutan ang dayuhan matapos na hindi makapagbigay ng P30 milyon ransom sa Sulu.

Parang manok na ginigilitan ng mga ito ang kanilang bihag dahil lamang sa bigong magbigay ng ransom. Kung tutuusin alternatibo na lamang ang ransom na hinihingi ng mga terorista dahil ang tunay na pakay ng mga iyan, ayon sa pag-aaral ng mga anti-terrorism group ay talagang magpalaganap ng takot sa tao.

Hindi naglaon, ginawa na nilang negosyo ang manghingi ng ransom sa bibihaging biktima. Kaya nga kinukunan na nila ng video at sila mismo ang nagpapakalat para manakot kasabay ng kanilang pagkita.

Dapat lupigin na at huwag nang bigyan nang pagkakataon ang mga ito gaya nang ginagawa nila sa kanilang mga biktima. Bombahin, durugin na, kapag ganito ang ginawa, naku wala kahit isa man marahil ang tututol o kokondena sa ganitong pag-aksyon.

Wala na sa tamang pag-iisip ang mga ito na hindi mo malaman kung ano ang gusto at walang ipinaglalaman. Pera-pera lang naman ang lakad at ang layon ay maghasik ng takot sa mga mamamayan.

Hindi na dapat magpatumpik-tumpik ang AFP sa pagdurog sa mga ito.

(Sundan sa page 5)

### RESPONDE... Mula page 4

Ang misis ni Kantner na si Sabine ay unang pinatay ng mga bandido noong Nobyembre, ginahasa na at binaril sa ulo sa loob ng isang Yate sa Tawi-tawi. Marami nang pinahirapan ang mga ito, kaya panahon na para pulbusin na ito nang tuluyan.

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## EDITORIAL

### We pin our hopes on AFP and its six-month goal

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Complicating the situation is the report that the Islamic State, which seeks to establish a caliphate in the Middle East, wants a base in Southeast Asia with its substantial Muslim population and the Abu Sayyaf of southern Mindanao have become its leading local adherents.

The Islamic State has been suffering reverses lately in the fighting in Syria and Iraq and there is fear that the Islamic State ideology will either move on to other parts of the world, such as the Philippines, or become a cyber force of like-minded jihadists acting independently around the world, but held together by their ideology and fund-raising management.

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We must not forget the smaller groups like the Abu Sayyaf and the Maute Group who do not seem as amenable to peace talks as the MILF, the MNLF, or the NPA. The Abu Sayyaf, in particular, has just killed a foreign hostage and may, even now, be looking around for another hostage to hold for ransom.

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## ONLINE NEWS

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

### NPA willing to meet Davao City Mayor Sara Duterte on peace issues

By: Allan Nawal, Judy Quiros, Karlos Manlupig - @inquirerdotnet  
Inquirer Mindanao / 08:16 PM February 28, 2017



Davao City Mayor Sara Duterte Carpio (INQUIRER FILE PHOTO)

DAVAO CITY – The New People’s Army (NPA) in Southern Mindanao has declared it is willing to face Mayor Sara Duterte to talk about the prospects of peace – at least in President Rodrigo Duterte’s hometown – and will even be willing to suspend its attacks on government troops during the talks with her.

In a media statement, Rigoberto Sanchez, the spokesperson of the NPA’s regional operations command, said they would like to sit down with Mayor Duterte “(t)o pursue lasting peace and advance the welfare of the masses.”

“(The) NPA (is) open to hold talks with Sara Duterte,” Sanchez said, adding that the rebel group’s declaration was meant to reciprocate the mayor’s gesture of wanting to negotiate for peace.

“The Regional Operations Command of the New People’s Army in Southern Mindanao reciprocates the gesture made by GRP (Government of the Republic of the Philippines) Davao City Mayor Sara Z. Duterte by suspending for a few hours the NPA operations and ordering any NPA camp in NDF (National Democratic Front) territories in Davao City and nearby areas to host the talks with her at a mutually agreed time and date,” he said.

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Sanchez said the NPA would be ready to discuss with Mayor Duterte "any matter that she would like to take up with the revolutionary movement, the duties and responsibilities of the people's democratic government, the role of the NPA, the on-going all-out war of the AFP and the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations."

He also viewed the offer of talks as "auspicious" amid the series of clashes in Paquibato and Calinan districts about two weeks ago – which killed two soldiers and wounded over a dozen other government troops.

These clashes prompted the mayor to offer "a space of peace" to the NPA but added that she wanted to negotiate with the rebels as a group, and not as individuals.

"I am willing to listen, if the NPA is willing to talk," adding that she had a plan that could help bring peace, at least here.

"...But I want to listen first to what you have to say. My offer is limited by my authority over the area of my responsibility," Mayor Duterte said in her message to the rebels.

Her offer of peace came in the wake of her father's firm stand not to resume formal negotiations with the rebels yet.

"The revolutionary forces recognize Sara Duterte's willingness to talk to the NPA as a group and not to individuals amid the growing public clamor to resume the suspended GRP-NDFP peace negotiations and achieve substantial gains in the peace process," Sanchez said.

However, he said the NPA felt threatened when Mayor Duterte warned that she would leave all to the military if the NPA declined her offer of peace.

"Mayor Sara must know by now that the AFP is a corrupt, wily and mercenary organization that makes a mockery of the peace process and continuously sabotages her father's and the NDFP's efforts at peace every chance it gets," Sanchez said.

Despite this, he said that the NPA has been looking forward to a meeting with the city executive to find common ground for the welfare of the people of Davao.

City Information Officer Jefry Tupas said Mayor Duterte had received the NPA's response. "She is carefully looking into it and will come up with a statement in the coming days," he said.

The military and the police said they were supporting the mayor's desire to have peace with the rebels.

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"That's a welcome move, we welcome the development. We will be supporting the initiative of Mayor Inday Sara Duterte" Maj. Ezra Balagtey, the spokesperson of the military's Eastern Mindanao Command based here, said.

"There will be adjustments but we will obey" Balagtey added.

City police director, Senior Supt. Michael John Dubria, said the mayor's move was "geared towards the good of the people and the city."

"We are looking forward to a positive result," Dubria said. **SFM**

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

## Recto: Gov't must crush Abu Sayyaf before resuming 'Tokhang'

By: [Maila Ager](#) - Reporter / [@MAgerINQ](#)  
INQUIRER.net / 02:52 PM February 28, 2017



Sen. Ralph Recto. INQUIRER FILE PHOTO/GRIG C. MONTEGRANDE

Before resuming its "door-to-door tokhang operations," the government should "knock out" first its bigger threats like the Abu Sayyaf and other local terrorist groups, newly-installed Senate President Pro Tempore Ralph Recto said on Tuesday.

Philippine National Police (PNP) chief Director General Ronald "Bato" dela Rosa earlier expressed readiness to resume the government's war on drugs, which was temporarily suspended following the alleged involvement of rogue cops in illegal activities.

But if ever the war on drugs should be scaled up, then it must be to plug the source, said the senator, referring to "shabu factories."

"To dry up demand, you must stop the supply. It's like a pipe with many holes. Instead of patching it one by one, why not just shut off the main?" he said in a statement.

"I will concede that the war against drugs should continue. But it should be on the manufacturing front. Instead of knocking on homes, the police should be battering down gates of shabu labs," he added.

But if there is "one group of addicts" the government should run after, Recto said, it must be the "murderous Abu Sayyaf."

"There will be zero public outcry if there will be a rise in the number of Abu Sayyaf killed. It is the kind of body count the people would welcome," he said.

"These terrorists have been in the beheading business for 25 years now. Isang henerasyon na. Dapat nang tuldukan (It has been a generation. It should be stopped now)," the senator added.

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Recto said the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) is now the "most violent criminal syndicate" in the country, noting its "barbarity" that he said has already made it among Asia's most brutal groups.

"In terms of damage to the national image, the Abu Sayyaf has caused more than what a hundred drug syndicates had done," he said.

But because the bandits are still holding 24 hostages, Recto said, the government could not unleash its full might to crush the group.

"I think even the President can only privately curse them kasi baka magwala at saktan ang mga bihag (because they might hurt the hostages). Imagine, even the President's trademark in effect has been taken hostage by this group," he said. *RAM/rga*

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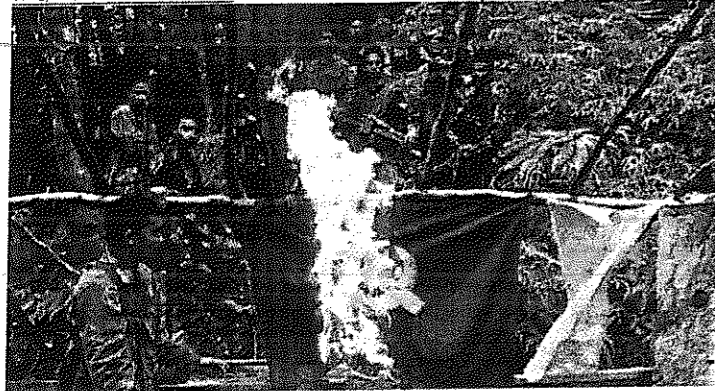
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## Army, NPA clash rages on in Misamis Oriental

By: Jigger J. Jerusalem - @inquirerdotnet

Inquirer Mindanao / 01:40 PM February 28, 2017



INQUIRER FILE PHOTO

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY – Classes in public elementary schools in two villages in Misamis Oriental were suspended as a firefight between Army soldiers and New People’s Army (NPA) rebels that began Monday continued on Tuesday.

Provincial information officer Nicole Managbanag said they received information from school administrations in Barangays Matampa in Salay town and in Guinalaban in Sugbongcogon that students were advised not to attend classes due to the fighting.

Managbanag said teachers in the two barangay were told by village officials not to hold classes early Tuesday morning.

Gerrymae Pasco, local disaster risk reduction and management officer, said no word has reached their office if residents have moved out of their homes in Matampa and Guinalaban.

“They (villagers) have not evacuated yet as the encounter is still far away but they could already hear gunshots in the distance,” Pasco said.

She said the provincial government has already prepared food packs, stored in a warehouse, in case the people in the two villages evacuate.

Capt. Joe Patrick Martinez, spokesperson of the 4th Infantry Division, earlier said the military launched pursuit operations against the rebels following an encounter on Monday in Barangay Kaulayanan, Sugbongcogon, where a soldier was killed. **CBB/rga**

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

## **Provincial gov't monitoring armed conflict in Misamis Oriental**

From the Philippine News Agency (Feb 28): Provincial gov't monitoring armed conflict in Misamis Oriental

The provincial government of Misamis Oriental is closely monitoring the ongoing armed skirmishes in the bordering towns of the province, provincial Governor Yevgeny Vincente Emano said Tuesday.

Government troopers and the communist New People's Army (NPA) have been locked in a running gunbattle in the hinterlands of Sugbongcogon in Misamis Oriental since Monday that already killed a government trooper.

Lt. Janelle Diaz, spokesperson of the Army's 58th Infantry Battalion (IB) based in Claveria, Misamis Oriental, identified the lone fatality as Private Oshin Rosala of the 58IB.

Backed by artillery fire, Diaz said that additional elements from the 58IB were dispatched Tuesday to the border of Sugbongcogon and Medina, all coastal towns, east of Misamis Oriental, to retrieve the remains of Rosala in the encounter site.

She said that the encounter took place in the outskirts of Kinaulayanan, a hinterland village, about 18 kilometers south of Sugbongcogon.

According to Diaz, the military has overrun the mobile camp of the NPA rebels in the outskirts of Kinaulayan, near the border of Medina, where the running gunbattle took place starting Monday.

"The government troopers recovered medicines, canned goods, boots, water containers and other personal belongings during an assault on the rebel's makeshift camp," she said.

Diaz said that the Army's 58IB launched a combat operation in the borders of the Misamis Oriental and the province of Bukidnon in pursuit of the armed NPA rebels who conducted a "road block" in the highway of Medina last week.

She said that as of Tuesday, the military command has not yet received information of any casualty since Tuesday morning.

Town Mayor Mildred Lagbas of Sugbongcogon said the fighting was "very far" from the Kinaulayanan, but the loud explosion of cannons from the artillery and the staccato of gun fires could be heard by the villagers.

"I ordered the suspension of classes in Kinaulayanan in deference to the young school children who might be affected by the traumatic experience," Lagbas said.

Lagbas said that she has also advised villagers to evacuate promptly once the gunbattle gets near them.

Gov. Emano said that he was worried about the effects of the armed conflict in the borders of the hinterlands of the towns of Sugbongcogon, Medina, and Salay, all in the eastern seaboard of Misamis Oriental, but expressed optimism that the conflict would not escalate.

"I am hoping that the armed conflict would remain manageable in order that mass evacuation and dislocation of the farmers and village residents in the affected areas would not take place," Emano said.

He said that the provincial government was on top of the situation considering that the Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction Management Office (PDRRMO) could be mobilized should a mass evacuation take place.

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Emano lamented that unwary residents and villagers always suffer the consequences of an armed conflict between the government troopers and the NPA rebels.

He said that in a "war" between the government and NPA, the losers would be the innocent civilians whose livelihood and peaceful life are affected.

Emano said that he personally supports the resumption of the stalled peace talk between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) in order that the country could attain lasting peace.

"Development and progress could only be attained in an atmosphere of peace," Emano said.

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

## **Military units concentrating in 2 Sulu towns in a bid to recover Kantner's body**

From the Philippine News Agency (Feb 28): **Military units concentrating in 2 Sulu towns in a bid to recover Kantner's body**

**Military units are now concentrating in Indanan-Parang, Sulu in a bid to recover the remains of German national Juergen Kantner who was beheaded by Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) terrorists Sunday night.**

This was disclosed by Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) public affairs office chief Col. Edgard Arevalo in Tuesday's briefing.

**Searches are being conducted in these locations as terrorists were spotted there.**

Arevalo did not give other details for operational and security reasons.

Despite Kantner's beheading, operations will continue until the military has successfully rescued the estimated 32 hostages still in ASG hands, the AFP official added.

"There will be no let up in our operations until we have rescued all the remaining kidnap victims. AFP units will continue to search for the remains of the Mr. Kantner to be handed to his bereaved family and to afford him decent burial he deserves," Arevalo said.

Kantner was kidnapped by the ASG bandits while his yacht "Rockall" was cruising off Sulu waters last November.

His companion, 56-year-old Sabine Mertz, was shot and killed by the bandits and allegedly raped.

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