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OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS
NEWS CLIPPINGS

06 March 2017

Monday

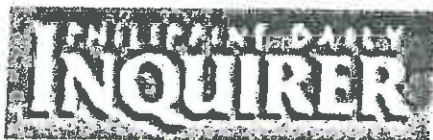
Army Core Purpose: Serving the people. Securing the land.

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BALANCED NEWS • FEARLESS VIEWS

TODAY'S WEATHER FORECAST | MARCH 6, 2017 | MONDAY

PHILIPPINE AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY (PAR)

LOW PRESSURE AREA
860 NM EAST OF HINATUAN, SURIGAO DEL SUR
NON-THEAST MONSOON
AFFECTING LUZON
(as of 5:00 AM - Mar. 5, 2017)

SUNRISE	SUNSET
5:10 AM	6:05 PM
MOONRISE	MOONSET
12:19 AM	12:30 PM
FIRST QUARTER	FULL MOON
MAR 5 9:45 PM	MAR 2 11:54 PM
LOW TIDE	HIGH TIDE
-MANILA SOUTH HARBOR-	
11:06 PM	2:51 PM
0.01 Meter	0.88 Meter

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

MAR 7	MAR 8	MAR 7	MAR 8	MAR 7	MAR 8
METRO MANILA 23 - 32 °C	24 - 33 °C	TAGAYTAY 19 - 29 °C	19 - 29 °C	TACLOBAN 23 - 29 °C	23 - 29 °C
TUGUEGARAO 21 - 31 °C	22 - 30 °C	LEGAZPI 24 - 30 °C	23 - 29 °C	CAGAYAN DE ORO 23 - 29 °C	23 - 29 °C
LAOAG 23 - 31 °C	23 - 31 °C	PUERTO PRINCESA 25 - 32 °C	25 - 32 °C	METRO DAVAO 23 - 30 °C	23 - 29 °C
BAGUIO 15 - 23 °C	14 - 23 °C	ILOILO/BACOLOD 24 - 30 °C	23 - 30 °C	ZAMBOANGA 23 - 31 °C	23 - 31 °C
SBMA/CLARK 23 - 33 °C	24 - 33 °C	METRO CEBU 24 - 30 °C	23 - 30 °C		

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04 March 2017



Page: 1

PNP launches new anti-drug group

By CECILLE SUERTE FELIPE

Less than a month after "Oplan Tokhang" was suspended amid abuses by law enforcers, the Philippine National Police (PNP) will launch today a new campaign against illegal drugs.

PNP chief Director General Ronald dela Rosa is expected to name a new group in the police force that will be at the forefront of the campaign against illegal drugs.

Dela Rosa, according to reports, will formally launch the Drug Enforcement Group (DEG). He will make the announcement during the flag-raising ceremony at the PNP headquarters at Camp Crame today.

Dela Rosa reportedly tapped Senior Supt. Graciano Jaylo Mijares, PNP Region III deputy director for administration, to head the DEG.

The new group will replace the Anti-Illegal Drugs Group

(AIDG), which was ordered disbanded following the involvement of several of its officers and men in a "Tokhang for ransom" scheme.

Tokhang, taken from the Filipino words *katok* (knock) and *hangyo* (plea), was the centerpiece of the PNP's campaign against illegal drugs. It involved going house-to-house to encourage suspected drug offenders to surrender or undergo rehabilitation.

Tokhang was suspended early this year following the involvement of several police officials in the kidnapping and murder of South Korean businessman Jee Ick-joo in the

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PNP

From Page 1

Tokhang for ransom scheme.

The controversial anti-drug campaign also triggered the killing of thousands of people by suspected vigilante groups.

President Duterte was forced to order the suspension of Tokhang following Jee's killing.

Duterte stripped the PNP and the National Bureau of Investigation of the authority to conduct anti-illegal drug operations and designated the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) to continue the campaign.

The PNP said a resurgent illegal drug trade during the suspension of Tokhang could justify its reimposition.

The President said he is

leaving it up to the PNP to decide on whether to resume Tokhang.

Dela Rosa had said the PNP will soon relaunch Tokhang but assured the public that the members of the new enforcement group will have no shady characters.

"We will be forming a new drug enforcement group manned by a new set of officers. Its members would be selected from a few," Dela Rosa told reporters on the sidelines of the 23rd anniversary of the National Police College in Cavite.

"Just be ready, ready get set go. Ready. We will be informed if we will go back to the war on drugs. We will

be informed in due time. Just wait for the announcement. I wanted to surprise our enemies," he added.

From July 1 last year to Jan. 30 this year, the PNP reported a total of 2,551 drug offenders were killed while trying to fight it out with lawmen and 2,928 others were killed by suspected vigilante groups, which the PNP classified as "deaths under investigation" (DUI).

Most of those killed during police operations are cases of "nuntaban," police jargon indicating the drug suspects supposedly resisted arrest and shot it out with policemen.

Police officials, however, stressed DUIs are cases of murder pending investigation and do not necessarily involve

illegal drugs.

Good to go

Mijares said he is ready to do the job as anti-illegal drug campaign chief.

"I'm elated, ready to do the job," Mijares told ABS-CBN, vowing to double the effort on the second chance given to the PNP to address the problem of illegal drugs.

Mijares said he would be selecting competent police officers to help him achieve the goal. He added any police officer with tainted background would not be accepted or recruited in the DEG.

Mijares is hopeful the war on illegal drugs will not be bloody.

"I'm sure the drug offenders will get the message, 'do not fight or resist arrest,' or else

it would be bloody. That will not be bloody if they surrender peacefully," he said.

According to National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO) chief Director Oscar Albayalde, his men are "raring to go."

"We are ready to return and finish our unfinished job of licking the drug problem in the metropolis. Our teams in the stations, districts and region are raring to go," he said.

Albayalde said members of the anti-drug teams have been subjected to a background investigation by the NCRPO's counter-intelligence unit headed by Senior Supt. Eleazar Matta.

"We are very strict in recruiting members of our anti-drug teams as we are bent on ridding our ranks of scalawag

cops, especially those being charged with extortion and other cases," he added.

Albayalde said all police operations against drug offenders would be working under proper intelligence and coordination with PDEA.

He said the police operation would be headed by a police officer and must be accompanied by barangay officials.

"We would coordinate our operations with the PDEA but it does not mean that their officer would lead our anti-drugs team during the raid," Albayalde explained.

Albayalde said intelligence units of the NCRPO under Matta would prepare the list of targets and the PDEA will have the last say on their anti-drug operations.

– With Non Alquitran

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March 2017

MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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Aftershocks rock Surigao

1 dies, scores injured as panic sweeps residents

MIKE U. CRISMUNDO
and AYTCH DE LA CRUZ

BUTUAN CITY – A 65-year-old woman died while scores of others were injured at the height of strong aftershocks that rocked Surigao City yesterday morning, causing damage to structures and panic among residents.

The victim was identified as Socoro Cenes of Narciso corner Lopez Jaena Streets, Surigao City. She reportedly suffered cardiac arrest during the strong aftershock that registered 5.9

magnitude, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) said.

Emergency rescue teams of the city disaster risk reduction and management council rushed to the scene in an effort to rescue Cenes but she had no pulse and was not breathing when they arrived.

Surigao del Norte Governor Sol F Matugas said 25 persons were injured and admitted at the Caraga Regional Hospital in Surigao City due to minor injuries. Another victim who was retrieved from inside a ▶4

Aftershocks rock...

◀ 1

city hardware store was immediately brought to Surigao City Hospital

The state seismic monitoring agency traced the epicenter of the quake about 13 kilometers southwest of Surigao del Norte's capital at 8:08 a.m. yesterday. It was tectonic in origin and stemmed from a depth of 13 kilometers.

Residents in Surigao City bore its brunt at Intensity 6, Phivolcs said. Its impact also reached several areas in Southern Leyte including the municipalities of Limasawa and San Ricardo at Intensity 4 and the towns of San Juan and San Francisco at Intensity 3.

Residents in General Luna, Surigao del Norte and Ormoc City, Leyte felt the quake at Intensity 2. Instrumental intensities were likewise noted in Surigao City at Intensity 7 while Intensity 1 was registered in both Borongan, Eastern Samar and Palo, Leyte.

Shortly after, state seismologists reported that lighter aftershocks occurred in succession in the towns of Del Carmen and

Basilisa also in the province of Surigao del Norte. They were measured at magnitudes 2.6 and 3.0 respectively with instrumental intensities in Surigao City.

A magnitude-3.2 quake happened in San Jose, Dinagat Islands as well about eight minutes past 11:00 a.m. This was followed by back-to-back temblors in Libjo and San Francisco, Surigao del Norte measuring 4.1 and 3.0 in surface wave magnitude less than an hour later.

According to Phivolcs science aide Anne de los Santos, the tremors were all considered aftershocks of the magnitude-6.7 earthquake in Surigao del Norte last February 10, which was triggered by a seismic movement along the Surigao segment of the Philippine fault.

"We expect damage from the magnitude-5.9 (incident)," De los Santos told the Manila Bulletin in a phone interview. She said it was the strongest aftershock they have recorded so far since the main shock nearly a month ago.

Initially, two residential houses col-

lapsed at corner Narciso and P. Reyes streets of Barangay Taft and Kaskag Village of Barangay Washington of this same city, Surigao City government information officer Annette P. Villaces said.

As of press-time, rescue teams were still conducting disaster operations and assessment of other partially collapsed houses in Barangay Sabang and other barangays, particularly those in coastal areas of that same city, she added.

As it was a Sunday, churchgoers in Surigao City ran to the streets while residents who were just about to prepare breakfast also fled to higher grounds for fear of a tsunami. Guests at various hotels, inns and lodges also ran outside the buildings.

Surigao City Mayor Ernesto T. Matugas immediately deployed social welfare officers and workers to personally extend assistance to residents.

A total power blackout also hit the entire city of Surigao when the strong aftershocks struck.

"It was very strong, glasses and bottles in my house were shattered when the strong quake hit us again," said Surigao City Vice Mayor Alfonso Casurra.

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Communists still top security threat – Esperon

By EDITH REGALADO

DAVAO CITY – The communists are still the country's top security threat, according to National Security Adviser Hermogenes Esperon Jr.

"It is communism that is the number one threat. Because the communists here want to change the way of life of the Filipinos. They want to force their way even if they are outdated already," Esperon said yesterday.

The communists have been waging an insurgency since 1968 – which the military said has claimed 30,000 lives – to overthrow the government.

Aside from the communists, Esperon added the problem of illegal drugs, extremism, terrorism, corruption, secessionism and even the alleged destabilization plots, as among the other threats the country currently faces.

"Illegal drugs because it is destroying the very fiber of our society, the very core, our families. Illegal drugs wastes so much of our resources, our Filipino values, our youth," he said.

Esperon stressed the brand of communism the leftist groups are pushing is an old issue.

"The problem with these communists is that they are still talking about imperialism when we are no longer a colony. They are talking about feudalism and fascism, when we are not fascists. I think the communists should also update themselves on what they really want," he said.

He said even China, which is the leading communist country in the world, has opened up to foreign markets and to the idea of capitalism.

Esperon however said that even if communists pose the biggest national security threat, there are political solutions to the problem.

He cited President Duterte's efforts to achieve lasting peace and unite the country under one flag.

Esperon mentioned in particular the resumption of peace talks with the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army-National Democratic Front (CPP-NPA-NDF).

Duterte restarted peace talks with the communist rebels that had been on and off for 30 years.

The two sides separately declared ceasefires in August, and the informal arrangement largely held as they continued discussions in Rome last month.

The communists terminated their self-declared truce after accusing the government of failing to release all political prisoners and encroaching on rebel-held areas.

Duterte replied by scuttling the peace talks and declaring an all out war against the communist rebels.

During his visit to Camp Teodulfo Bautista in Jolo, Sulu last Friday, Duterte reminded the troops to "expect an ambush anytime" from the rebels.

"Do not just leave your camps to stroll around," Duterte told the troops.

"We have a resurgence of assassinations, Sparrows ... many soldiers have died. Expect an ambush anytime," Duterte said, referring to the notorious special partisan unit of NPA hit men.

The President advised soldiers to go out in groups and avoid being complacent about their safety. – With Alexis Romero

OC March 2017

MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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AFP, PNP out to rescue Duterte couple in Zamboanga del Norte

By FRANCIS T. WAKEFIELD

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Western Mindanao Command (WesMinCom), yesterday said that intensified operations were launched by troops of the Joint Task Forces Zam to rescue a couple, surnamed Duterte, who was abducted in Sta. Siocon, Zamboanga del Norte, Friday night.

WesMinCom spokesperson Army Captain

Jo-Ann D. Petinglay said troops promptly responded after receiving reports that Jose Duterte, 60, and his wife, Jessica, 52, were abducted by seven to eight unidentified personalities at their residence in Sta. Maria, Siocon, at 7:20 p.m. Friday.

The abductors, with the Dutertes in-custody, were able to make good their escape by getting on a pumpboat headed for the coastal areas of Sirawai.

As of press time yesterday, there was no

confirmation from the camp of President Rodrigo Roa Duterte if the kidnapped couple was his relative.

Petinglay said Navy troops have already maximized intelligence monitoring, and alerted the Naval Task Groups in all areas to pre-empt the possible landing of the get-away vessel.

"We understand the situation of the families of the victims and we sympathize with them. It is in this light that our troops and the PNP are doing their best to bring the victims

back to their family," WesMinCom head Maj. General Carlito G. Galvez Jr. said.

"We ask for cooperation from the family and those who know any information about the incident as no matter how small, it might be of use to the immediate rescue of the victims," he added.

Galvez said the Command will continue to assist the police and local government units in tracking down the perpetrators and in rescuing the victims.

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Duterte gifts wounded soldiers

PRESIDENT Rodrigo Duterte gifted wounded soldiers in Sulu with cash and mobile phones during his visit on Friday.

The Presidential Communications Office posted a video of the visit on its Facebook account late Saturday.

During the visit, Duterte

chatted with the soldiers and personally handed to them white envelopes containing cash and checks. He also gave the soldiers the Wounded Personnel Medal.

"Maasahan ninyo na hindi ko kayo makakalimutan. Sa panahon ko, mauuna kayo palagi," Duterte assured the wounded soldiers

Samsung Galaxy phones were also visibly laid on the hospital beds of the soldiers confined at the Camp Teodorulo Bautista Station Hospital in Jolo town.

The wounded soldiers are members of Joint Task Force Sulu, which was formed to go after Abu Sayyaf bandits.

Efren Montano

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March 2017



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10 Million Pesos Awaits 10 Metrobank Foundation Outstanding Filipinos

Now more than ever, our country needs exemplary public servants, whose commitment to excellence goes way beyond the call of duty. Their services rendered, no matter how little, and jobs well done, no matter what kind, create a magnitude that positively impacts on the lives of those they so willingly serve.

For all their outstanding efforts, these individuals deserve nothing less than stellar reward and recognition.

This 2017, the Metrobank Foundation Outstanding Filipinos program will do just that. Ten (10) exemplary individuals—4 teachers, 3 soldiers, and 3 police officers—will be recognized for their initiatives and concrete contributions to the onward development of their sectors and communities.

“We are looking for individuals who are models of excellence in their professions, who thrive amidst challenges with dignity and confidence. They must display patriotism, integrity, courage, and social responsibility—values that Filipinos are most proud of,” said Metrobank Foundation, Inc. (MBFI) president Aniceto Sobrepeña.

Each Outstanding Filipino will receive one (1) million peso worth of cash prize, a trophy, and a medallion. Awardees will be formally announced and conferred the award during Metrobank’s 54th anniversary celebration in September 2017.

The 2017 awardees will also be conferred the title “2017 Metrobank Foundation Fellows in Public Service” and will be given the opportunity to share their best practices through public lectures across the country.

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The awardees will be selected under three component programs—Search for Outstanding Teachers (SOT) in partnership with the Department of Education and Commission on Higher Education; The Outstanding Philippine Soldiers (TOPS) in partnership with the Rotary Club of Makati Metro and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), and Country's Outstanding Police Officers in Service (COPS) in partnership with the Rotary Club of New Manila East, PSBank, and the Philippine National Police.

Through a nomination-based process, teachers,

and police officers who are eligible to join must have a minimum of 10 years of service with at least a "very satisfactory" rating in the last 10 years. Those who are set to retire must have at least 3 remaining years of service.

Qualified elementary and secondary teachers must have completed academic requirements for Master's Degree while Higher Education teachers must have a doctorate degree.

Qualified commissioned officers (Captain to Colonel) must have completed a Bachelor's Degree while AFP enlisted personnel (Corporal to Chief Master Sergeant) must have completed a High School degree.

PNP commissioned officers (Police Inspector to Police Senior Superintendent) and non-commissioned officers (PO2 to SPO4) must have completed a Bachelor's Degree

Interested applicants must have exhibited good moral


character and must not have been charged guilty in any administrative or criminal case.

Nominations will be accepted by the MBFI Secretariat or the nearest Metrobank branch **on or before March 24, 2017**

For further inquiries, those interested to join the Search may call telephone numbers (02) 898-8898, (02) 898-8757, (02) 945-7006 or mobile numbers

0956-873-4684 or 0933-522-4186. Please look for Dyan Tee or Neury Chan (SOT), Hero Hernandez (COPS), and Thrd Salang (TOPS). You may also send inquiries via email to outstandingfilipinos.mbf@gmail.com. Nomination forms can be accessed via the MBFI website (www.mbfoundation.org.ph) or through the Facebook page "Metrobank Foundation Outstanding Filipinos".



 Metrobank Foundation

OUTSTANDING FILIPINOS



Beyond the Call of Duty

To be an outstanding Filipina takes service above and beyond the call of duty. This 2017, the Metrobank Foundation, Inc. (MBFI) will scour every road and corner to honor ten (10) Outstanding Filipinos in the academe, police, and military sectors whose impactful works ripple across the nation. Each Outstanding Filipino will receive a P1 million cash prize, trophy, and gold medallion.

You have excelled, but it's time to go beyond. Be a Metrobank Foundation Outstanding Filipino.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

TOPS SOT COPS

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------|--|--|---|
| Years in Service | Minimum of 10 years
<i>(Those who are set to retire within the next three (3) remaining years of service)</i> | | |
| Position/ Rank | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commissioned Officers, Captain to Colonel Enlisted Personnel: Corporal to Chief Master Sergeant | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elementary Teachers High School Teachers Tertiary and Graduate School Teachers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Police Commissioned Officers: Police Inspector to Police Senior Superintendent Police Non-Commissioned Officers: Police Officer 2 to Senior Police Officer |
| Performance Evaluation | At least Very Satisfactory in the last 10 years. | | |
| Educational Attainment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commissioned Officers: Bachelor's Degree Enlisted Personnel: High School Graduate | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grad. Education must have completed academic requirements for Master's Degree Tertiary Education must have Doctorate degree | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Police Commissioned Officers: Police Non-Commissioned Officers: Bachelor's Degree |
| Character Record | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must be of good moral character Must not have been adjudged guilty/liable in any administrative, criminal or civil case | | |

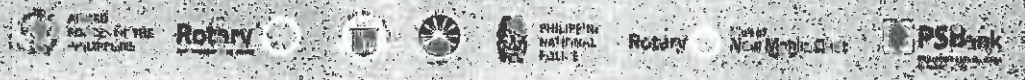
The deadline for submission of nominations is on March 24, 2017.

ACCOMPLISH YOUR NOMINATION ONLINE THROUGH:

- SOLDIERS**
bit.ly/TOPS2017NominationForm
- TEACHERS**
bit.ly/SOT2017NominationForm
- POLICE OFFICERS**
bit.ly/COPS2017NominationForm

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IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



04 March 2017



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4 Abus slain as AFP presses rescue of hostages

By ROEL PAREÑO and MICHAEL PUNONGBAYAN

ZAMBOANGA CITY - At least four members of the Abu Sayyaf group were killed yesterday, while another four suspected bandits were ap-

prehended early last week in the latest encounters with government troops.

The casualties of the latest encounter have brought the

Abu Sayyaf's death toll to 19 and its wounded to six in four major encounters within two weeks of the military's intensified efforts to rescue the hostages in Sulu.

Quoting reports from the Western Mindanao Command (Westmincom) at Camp Navarro in Zamboanga City, Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) spokesman Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla said while they were conducting focused military operations, troops from the 64th Marine Company, Marine Special Operations Group clashed with Abu Sayyaf in mountainous Barangay Lumipad, bordering

Talipao and Mambung towns, in Sulu yesterday morning.

Joint Task Force Sulu (JTFS) commander Col. Cirilito Sobejana deployed the Marines' special unit Saturday after confirming the presence of the bandit group in the area.

Westmincom spokesperson Capt. Jo-Ann Petinglay said the Marines stormed with assault rifles the undetermined number of Abu Sayyaf militants at about 4:30 a.m. yesterday.

Petinglay said heavy fire-fighting erupted shortly as the Marines, led by a Lieutenant Alvarez, stormed the lair of the bandits who were forced

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to retreat with casualties and scamper in different directions

She said the Marines scouring the encounter site found four dead Abu Sayyaf members and seven high-powered firearms, including two M16 rifles and two M203 grenade launchers

At least 28 soldiers also suffered mostly minor injuries in the series of encounters

Sources in Sulu also disclosed that a Marine was slightly injured, however, officials did not confirm the report

The bandits still hold more than 20 hostages, a number of them foreigners

Meanwhile, the four suspected Abu Sayyaf who have been captured by the 3rd Scout Ranger Battalion (SRB) in an intensified campaign in Basilan, were identified as Hamja Ummal, Asid Abdul Paging, Kili Alvarez Sabtal and Hamid Pantasan

Joint Task Force Basilan (JTFB) chief Col. Juvymax Uy said Ummal and Paging were apprehended by SRB troops under Lt. Col. Elmer Sudero

while they were on combat operations in Barangay Danapah, Al-Barka town, while Sabtal and Pantasan were apprehended in Tipo-Tipo town

The Scout Rangers recovered components of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) from the possessions of the four suspects, according to Uy

The troops later stumbled upon an Abu Sayyaf encampment while advancing and conducting clearing operations in Sitio Bohe Buug, Barangay Macalang, Al-Barka

Uy said the encampment had 30 makeshift bunkers and 16 foxholes, which the troops believe were hastily abandoned by the Abu Sayyaf to evade the military offensive

The Navy Seals' Special Operation Unit (SOU) 6 under Lt. Junior Grade Mildner Cawi also encountered the bandit group in the mangroves of Barangay Darapatu in the same town

Uy said the series of operations in Basilan has disrupted the Abu Sayyaf from planning and staging possible attacks to divert military attention in Sulu

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German's killing won't go unpunished—Palace

"Saying it was "deeply saddened," Malacañang vowed on Sunday that the beheading by Abu Sayyaf bandits of their 70-year-old German hostage, Jurgen Kantner, after their deadline for a P30-million ransom elapsed would not go unpunished.

"President Duterte has declared time and again that terrorism is the twin scourge of narco-politics, and that this government will leave no stone unturned in squarely addressing the evils of extremism and plain banditry," presidential spokesperson Ernesto Abella said in a statement.

"We reiterate our sincere sympathies to the family of Mr. Kantner, as well as to the rest of the German people, for this modern-day cruelty. Rest assured these mindless acts will not go unpunished," he said in the statement.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel has condemned Kantner's killing as an "abominable act." The Abu Sayyaf circulated a video of the beheading online.

Video messages

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

Mr Duterte had apologized to Germany for failing to save Kantner while insisting that ransoms should not be paid.

Philippine Marines dug up the head and body of Kantner late Saturday in the mountainous hinterlands of Indanan town on Jolo Island in Sulu province, where the ransom-seeking bandits were holding at least 31 other foreign and Filipino hostages, said regional



HOSTAGE'S REMAINS - The bag containing the remains of German hostage Jurgen Kantner is brought to a funeral house in Jolo, Sulu province. —AFP

military commander Maj. Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr.

Hospital morgue

Kantner's remains are in a military hospital morgue in Sulu while officials prepare documentation for transporting the body. Arrangements were being made with the German Embassy for his burial.

Kantner was seized from his yacht, Rockall, with his female German companion off Malaysia's Sabah state last November.

Kantner's companion was fatally shot on the yacht, which was later found in southern Philippines, according to the military.

The couple had survived a kidnapping ordeal off Somalia in 2008.

Abella said the remains were discovered by Marine Battalion Landing Team 3 un-

der the Joint Task Force Sulu, according to a military report.

Clashes

About two dozen Filipino soldiers were wounded in clashes that also left 16 Abu Sayyaf gunmen dead in efforts to find and rescue Kantner.

After he was beheaded, troops intensified ground assaults and airstrikes.

On Sunday, Marines killed four Abu Sayyaf bandits and seized seven rifles in an assault near Maibung town.

At least 10 other bandits were killed in a separate clash on Friday that also wounded 18 soldiers near Patikul town, said Sulu's military commander Col. Cirilito Sobejana.

An intelligence report seen by The Associated Press (AP) said the bandits behind Kantner's abduction and killing included Abu Sayyaf commander Hatib Hajan

Sawadjaan and his nephew, Mujil Yadah, who was also allegedly involved in the 2015 kidnappings of a Norwegian, a Filipino woman and two Canadians from a yacht club in Mindanao. The two Canadians were separately beheaded last year.

According to the report, the other kidnappers of the German included Moammar Askali and Idang Susukan.

Askali, a young bandit, insisted that Kantner should be killed on schedule as the Abu Sayyaf had threatened to do, but others wanted to wait longer to get a huge ransom, the report said.

The Abu Sayyaf, which has more than 400 fighters, has been blacklisted by the Philippines and the United States as a terrorist organization for kidnappings, beheadings and bombings.

—WITH REPORTS FROM AP, REUTERS, AFP, CHRISTINE O. AVENDAÑO, CYNTHIA D. BALANA AND JULIE S. ALPALA

06 March 2017

MANILA BULLETIN

THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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18 ASGs killed; body of beheaded German found

By NONOY E. LACSON
and FRANCIS T. WAKEFIELD

ZAMBOANGA CITY/CAMP AGUI-
NALDO, Quezon City—Four more Abu
Sayyaf Group (ASG) gunmen were killed
yesterday in a pre-dawn encounter with
soldiers from the Marine Special Opera-
tions Group in Lumipao, Sulu, bringing

to 18 the number of bandits dead since
the military began its intensified hunt
two weeks ago.

The death toll update on the side of
the ASG came as the military confirmed
that the body of beheaded German
hostage Jurgen Gustav Kantner was
recovered in Indanan, Sulu.

Captain Jo-Ann Petinglay ▶4

18 ASGs killed... ◀1

Armed spokesperson of the Armed Forces of the Philippines-Western Mindanao Command (AFP-WestMinCom), said the 4:30 a.m. encounter also resulted in the wounding of several ASG members and the seizure of seven high-powered firearms at the combat site.

Petinglay said Colonel Cirilito Sobejana of the Joint Task Force Sulu deployed the marines after informants reported to him the presence of the bandits in the area since Saturday night.

Soldiers from the 64th Marine Company, Marine Special Operations Group under 1Lt Alvarez, responded and conducted focused military operations in the village that led to a heavy gunbattle with the bandits.

Earlier, Petinglay said encounters between government troops and the Abu Sayyaf has already resulted in the death of 14 bandits and the wounding of six others.

There was an additional two deaths of Abu Sayyaf members in Sulu and two more in Basilan over the weekend.

Petinglay said four major encounters – three in Sulu Province (the 69th Infantry Battalion and the Abu Sayyaf in Barangay Palique, Indanan, 2nd Scout Ranger Battalion against the ASG in Indanan; and the 32nd IB against ASG members in Patikul, Sulu) and one encounter in Basilan (between the Naval SOU6 led by LTJG Mildner Cawi against ASG members in Barangay Darapatu, Al Barka, Basilan) allowed the troops to gain ground in the two provinces.

This also disallowed the bandits to establish encampments in said areas.

This series of encounters also led to the recovery of IED components and the discovery of an ASG encampment.

While advancing and conducting clearing operations in the area of Sitio Bohe Buug, Barangay Macalang, Al Barka in Basilan Province, the rangers discovered an enemy encampment with 30 make-shift bunkers and 16 foxholes, she said.

Petinglay said although there were no bodies recovered, the locals provided the information to operating troops that bandits carried with them their wounded and some were immediately buried in separate areas near the encounter sites.

On the other hand, four notorious ASG members were turned-over by elements of the Joint Task Force Basilan led by Army Colonel Juvymax Uy to the police after troops of the 3rd Scout Ranger Battalion apprehended said bandits who were carrying IED components in their possession last February 27.

Abu Sayyaf members Hamja Ummal, Asid Abdul Pagong, Kili Alvarez Sabtal, and Hamidid Pantasan were turned-over to the Basilan Provincial Police Office under Police Senior Superintendent Panapan for the filing of appropriate charges.

Ummal and Pagong were apprehended by troops of 3SRBn led by Lt. Col. Elmer Suderio who were conducting combat operations in Barangay Danapah, Albarka while Sabtal and Pantasan were nabbed by the same unit in Barangay Danapah, Tipo-Tipo, BP and were found to be carrying IED components.

Kantner's body found

Elements of the Marine Battalion Land-

ing Team 3 under the JTF Sulu recovered last Saturday the body of Kantner, the German hostage beheaded by the ASG, in Sitio Talibang, Barangay Buanza, Indanan, Sulu.

Maj. Gen. Carlito G. Galvez Jr., West-MinCom commander, said JTF Sulu Commander Sobejana immediately requested for the Scene of the Crime Operative (SOCO) Sulu to conduct site preservation for evidence and post-mortem procedure after troops cordoned the area where the Kantner's body was found at 6:30 p.m. Saturday.

Galvez said the remains of Kantner shall be kept at the Kuta Heneral Teodulfo Bautista Hospital Morgue while completing the documentary requirements prior to transport.

"We will coordinate with the appropriate offices for the disposition of the remains of the victim," Galvez said.

"Rest assured that the AFP and the entire WestMinCom will maximize all means and efforts to rescue the remaining kidnapped victims," he added.

Kantner was beheaded by the Abu Sayyaf Group in Sulu last February 26, 2017 after almost 4 months in captivity in the forested areas of Sulu.

Palace: Punishment due

The government has vowed to ensure the cruel and "mindless acts" of the Abu Sayyaf will "not go unpunished" after troops recovered the remains of Kantner in Sulu.

Presidential Spokesman Ernesto Abella extended anew the government's sympathies to the family of Kantner and assured the government is determined to address the "evils of extremism and plain banditry". (With a report from Gehalyn D. Kabiling)

06 March 2017

The Standard

DEFINING THE NEWS

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Troops kill 4 more ASG amid clashes

FOUR more Abu Sayyaf bandits were killed after ground troops stumbled on the terrorist group on the outskirts of Talipac in Sulu early Sunday morning, an official said.

Col Cirilito Sobejana, Commander of Joint Task Force Sulu, said the four were killed during a firefight in Lumipad village around 5:45 a.m.

He made the statement even as President Rodrigo Duterte's ongoing campaign against extremism and terrorism got a much needed

boost after the descendants of sultanians and royal clans in Mindanao expressed their support for the government's campaign against the two security menaces.

That resulted from the first-ever Mindanao Sultanate Summit on Peace and Security hosted by the Defense and Interior departments on March 2 to 4 that was attended by around 500 participants.

The death of the four bandits brought to 16 the number of slain terrorists after a series of military

operations against the Abu Sayyaf, which started after the group beheaded 70-year-old German hostage Jurgen Kantner in Igasan, Sulu, on Sunday last week.

Sobejana said troops of the 64th Marine Company were mobilized after a group of Abu Sayyaf bandits was reported in Lumipad village, where they arrived and engaged the bandits in a firefight.

Sobejana said soldiers found the bodies of the four bandits as

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Troops...

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well as seven high-powered firearms and two grenade launchers.

"Our troops are more than motivated to go after these bandits who know nothing but to victimize innocent civilians for their own personal gain," Major Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr. said. **Francisco Tuyay with PNA**

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Military resolved as ever vs Abus after discovery of German's body

By Ted Tuvera and Mario J. Mallari

The government is determined more than ever to finish off the terrorist Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) following the discovery of the remains of the bandit group's latest victim.

President (Rodrigo) Duterte has declared time and again that terrorism is the main scourge of narrow politics, and that the government will leave no stone unturned in squarely addressing the evils of terrorism and plain banditry," presidential spokesman Ernesto Abella, in a statement, yesterday said.

Military officials said Marines found German hostage Jürgen Kantner's body of a military evening in the militants'



remote southern island stronghold of Sulu.

"The Philippine government is deeply saddened but resolved as ever to respond to the recent discovery of the body of Mr. Kantner," Abella stressed.

"Rest assured that these mindless acts will not go unpunished," he added, reiterating Malacañang's sympathies to Kantner's family and the German people "for this modern-day cruelty."

Government troops have clashed with the Abu Sayyaf in recent days, leaving 29 soldiers injured and 14 militants dead, according to the military which said it has been unable to recover the bodies of slain terrorists.

"It was not easy to find them because of the fighting with the Abu Sayyaf kidnap group that resulted in the wounding of 29

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of our men and in the wounding of many of the enemy," said Col. Cirilito Sobejana, head of an anti-terror task force in the southern islands.

He said the government was arranging with the German Embassy to repatriate Kantner's body for burial.

Kantner's remains are in a military hospital morgue in Sulu while officials prepare documentation for transporting the body, authorities said.

Maj. Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr., commander of Western Mindanao Command (Westmincom), reiterated the government's "deepest sympathies" to the family of Kantner as he vowed to utilize all necessary resources to rescue the remaining Abu Sayyaf hostages.

"Once again, the command expresses its deepest sympathy to the family of Mr. Kantner," said Galvez.

Rest assured that the AFP (Armed Forces of the Philippines) and the entire Westmincom will maximize all means and efforts to rescue the remaining kidnapped victims," he stressed.

Focused military operations are continuing in the provinces of Sulu and Basilan to destroy the Abu Sayyaf which is still holding more than 30 hostages, mostly foreigners.

Sobejana, meanwhile, said four more Abu Sayyaf bandits were

killed while several high-powered firearms were seized after Marine forces clashed with the terrorist band in the outskirts of Talipao, Sulu, yesterday morning.

He added, the latest encounter occurred along Barangay Lumipad around 4:30 a.m.

Sobejana said elements of the 64th Marine Company of the Marine Special Operations Group were sent to the area after reports of the presence of the Abu Sayyaf terrorists in the place since Saturday.

Heavy firefight shortly after the Marines arrived in the area, said Westmincom spokesman Capt. Jo-ann Petinglay.

"The Abus immediately scampered to different directions when the fighting started and immediately fled to the area of encounter," she added.

After scouring the encounter site, Petinglay said the Marines found four dead Abu Sayyaf fighters and seven high-powered firearms including two M-203 and two M16 rifles.

There was no reported casualty on the government side.

Earlier on Friday, 10 Abu Sayyaf bandits were also killed during an encounter with pursuing government troops in Barangay Igasan, Patikul also in Sulu.

Mr. Duterte has earlier apologized for failing to save Kantner and said the military had stepped up operations against the militants. **AFP**

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AFP OPERATIONS

4 ABUS KILLED IN SULU BATTLE

By Philip C. Tubeza
@pctubezaINQ

Government troops killed four Abu Savyaf bandits in stepped-up operations on Sunday morning in Sulu province following the beheading of their elderly German hostage last week, the military said.

Members of the 64th Marine Company, Marine Special Operations Group, were conducting military operations in Maimbung town when they encountered the bandits, according to the Western Mindanao Command (Westmincom).

"These successes would not be possible if not for the swift reaction of the troops and the help of the informants," said Maj. Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr., the

Westmincom chief.

"Our troops are more than motivated to go after these bandits who know nothing but to victimize innocent civilians for their own personal gain," he said.

"Rest assured that your troops will not stop until these bandits surrender and are no longer able to create havoc and fear in the communities," he added.

Col. Cirilito Sobejana, chief of Joint Task Force Sulu, said the Marines were deployed at Barangay Lumipad, Talipao, Sulu, after informants reported the presence of the bandits there on Saturday night.

A heavy fire fight erupted shortly after the Marines arrived in the area at about 4:30 a.m. on Sunday, the military said. INQ

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<http://www.philstar.com/>

Troops recover remains of Abu Sayyaf's German captive

By Roel Pareño



The brief video, circulated on the internet by the SITE Intelligence Group that monitors jihadi websites, was the first sign that the militants proceeded with their threat to kill Kantner. **SITE Intel Group via AP**

ZAMBOANGA CITY — Government troops recovered the remains of the Abu Sayyaf's German hostage Saturday afternoon, almost a week after he was beheaded in in the town of Indanan, Sulu, a ground military commander said Sunday.

Col. Cirilito Sobejana, commander of the Joint Task Force Sulu (JTFS), said pursuing troops recovered the remains of 70-year-old Juergen Gustav Kantner about 5:45 p.m. at Sitio Talibang, Barangay Buanza. "It's positive it was the remains of the German hostage," Sobejana said.

According to the military official, the remains were recovered after the continued search and retrieval operations.

"The remains of Kantner were recovered approximately on the same spot where he was executed by the Abu Sayyaf group," Sobejana said.

Intelligence report that broke hours after the Abu Sayyaf beheaded Kantner last February 26, revealed the militants executed their captive at Sitio Talibang, Barangay Buanza barely 30 minutes after the 3 p.m. deadline ultimatum lapsed for the payment of the P30 million ransom.

Barangay Buanza is said to be a village where the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) maintain a strong presence.

Sobejana said, the remains, including the severed head and body, were still intact.

Troops immediately brought the remains to the military hospital morgue in Camp Teodulfo Bautista in Barangay Bus-bus, Jolo where police Scene of the Crime Operatives (SOCO) conducted the post mortem examination, Sobejana said.

He said they were completing all the needed documentations. The remains are scheduled to be transported to Manila on Sunday and would be subsequently turned over to the German Embassy.

Meanwhile, Sobejana said relentless pursuit operations are ongoing against the Abu Sayyaf.

"Tuloy-tuloy ang pursuit, and as we speak troops are being inserted on the ground to maintain the relentless operations," Sobejana said.

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

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20 ASG bandits killed in 2-week intense military operations

PNA

Relentless military operations against the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) in the island provinces of Sulu and Basilan have so far killed 20 bandits, the Western Mindanao Command (WestMinCom) here said on Sunday.

On Saturday, the military reported that 16 Abu Sayyaf members have been killed, while four were apprehended in the span of two weeks. The bandits' death toll increased to 20 on Sunday, following a pre-dawn operation that resulted in the killings of four more bandits.

"These successes would not be possible if not for the swift reaction of the troops and the help of the informants," Maj. Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr., Westmincom chief, said in a statement on Sunday.

"Our troops are more than motivated to go after these bandits who know nothing but to victimize innocent civilians for their own personal gain," Galvez added, who oversee the operations of military against terror groups in the entire Western Mindanao and Central Mindanao.

Col. Cirilito Sobejana, commander of the Joint Task Force Sulu, said Sunday's operation was carried out upon a tipped off from civilians, who informed them of the presence of the Abu Sayyaf bandits in Talipao.

"Heavy firefight erupted shortly after the marines arrived in the area about 4:30 this morning. The Abu Sayyaf bandits immediately scampered to different directions when the fighting started and immediately fled the area of encounter," Sobejana said.

Troops recovered the bodies of the four slain Abu Sayayaf members, and recovered seven high-powered firearms.

"As of press time, skirmishes are still ongoing with the marines on hot pursuit operation to the fleeing Abus," Sobejana said.

On Friday, President Rodrigo Roa Duterte visited Jolo to show its support to the ongoing military operations and boost the morale of its troops.

The president gave medals to the 18 wounded military personnel inside a military hospital.

"The awarding and the personal visit of the President to our wounded soldiers motivated them more to fight these bandits," Galvez said.

Capt. Jo-ann Petinglay, Westmincom information officer, said there is a possibility that the numbers of the slain Abu Sayyaf bandits could rise further as the military continue its operations in the two island provinces.

Galvez said the military intensified its operations against Abu Sayyaf bandits following the beheading of Juergen Gustav Kantner on February 26.

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<http://www.philstar.com/>

Gov't to leave 'no stone unturned' in fight vs terror

Alexis Romero



German hostage Juergen Gustav Kantner holds a flag declaring 'This is my last hour' in a photo tweeted on Dec. 29, 2016 by user @TerrorEvents

MANILA, Philippines — The government would leave no stone unturned in the fight against terrorism, Malacañang said Sunday, following the discovery of the body of the German kidnap victim beheaded by bandit group Abu Sayyaf last month.

Presidential spokesman Ernesto Abella said the government is "resolved as ever" to address the threats posed by terrorism.

"President Duterte has declared time and again that terrorism is the twin scourge of narco-politics, and that this government will leave no stone unturned in squarely addressing the evils of extremism and plain banditry," Abella said in a statement.

"Rest assured these mindless acts will not go unpunished," he added.

Abella said the Philippine government is saddened by the beheading of Kantner, which he described as a "modern-day cruelty."

"We reiterate our sincere sympathies to the family of Mr. Kantner, as well as to the rest of the German people for this modern-day cruelty," he said.

Kantner was beheaded by the Abu Sayyaf in Sulu on Feb. 26, 2017, almost four months after he was kidnapped by the terrorist group. His remains were discovered Saturday night by the Marine Battalion Landing Team 3 in Sitio Talibang, Barangay Buanza in Indanan, Sulu.

About two dozen soldiers were hurt while 16 Abu Sayyaf bandits were killed, six were wounded and four others were captured during the government forces' search and retrieval operations, the military said.

Duterte has apologized to Germany for the government's failure to save the life of Kantner.

"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," the president said last February 28.

"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 and but we have failed and so that has to be admitted," the president added.

"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."

<http://www.update.ph>

Marines kill 4 more ASG bandits

PNA

Another four Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) bandits were killed while seven high-powered firearms were seized as troops from the 64th Marine Company clashed with the brigands in Sulu Sunday early morning.

Government security forces were conducting focused military operations in Barangay Lumipad, Talipao, Maimbung in response to reports that the bandits were gathering in the area.

In the ensuing encounter, four of the ASG were killed, forcing the remainder to scamper for cover, Joint Task Force Sulu commander Col. Cirilito Sobejana said.

"After scouring the site of encounter, marines found four dead bodies of the ASG members and recovered seven high powered firearms (which includes two M-16s and two M-203s)," he added.

With Sunday's encounter, the number of ASG bandits killed by government forces within the last 72 hours has climbed to 14.

Last Friday, Joint Task Force Sulu battled an estimated 120 of the bandits, reportedly led by Radullan Sahiron, at Barangay Igasan, Patikul town around 9 a.m.

In the two-hour engagement, 10 ASG bandits were killed and undetermined number wounded.

As this develops, Western Mindanao Command (WMC) head Major Gen. Carlito Galvez lauded 64th Marine Company for their successes against the bandit group and the civilians who gave them the timely information.

"Our troops are more than motivated to go after these bandits who know nothing but to victimize innocent civilians for their own personal gain," he added.

<http://www.update.ph>

China to further modernize military to safeguard sovereignty, security

PNA

Chinese Premier Li Keqiang said on Sunday that China will continue to revolutionize and modernize its national defense and armed forces by strengthening maritime and air defense to safeguard the country's sovereignty, security and interest.

"We will continue to deepen reforms in national defense and the armed forces," Li said in his 42-page central government's report during the opening of the Fifth Session of the 12th National People's Congress at the Great Hall of the People here.

Aside from maritime and air defense, Li said China will also strengthen border control and to properly organize counter-terrorism, safeguarding stability, international peacekeeping and high seas protection efforts.

"We will enhance our capacity for innovation in defense-related science and technology and step up the development of advanced logistics and equipment," he said.

Li said military-civilian integration will also be intensified and strengthen national defense mobilization and readiness of reserve forces.

"We at every level of government should take more solid and vigorous steps to support the reform and development of our national defense and armed forces," the Premier said.

Li reported that the government under President Xi Jinping had achieved major breakthroughs in the reform of national defense and military.

"We made fresh progress and new achievements in our work to make the military more revolutionary, modern and well-structured," he said.

Li said the government's goal this year to continue military modernization is in line with Communist Party of China (CPC)'s objective of strengthening the armed forces in a new era.

"We will boost military training and preparedness, so as to ensure that the sovereignty, security and development interest of China are resolutely and effectively safeguarded," Li said.

"We will uphold the Party's absolute leadership over the armed forces and uphold and implement the system whereby the Chairman of the Central Military Commission assumes overall responsibility over military affairs," he added.

President Xi Jinping is also chairman of the Central Military Commission and secretary general of CPC, the country's ruling political party.

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Philippine military plans acquisition of missile system

Joel Dizon

In 2015, the Armed Forces of the Philippines and Department of National Defense prioritized the procurement of force protection equipment, radios, marksman rifles, and night fighting systems for the Philippine Army shelving the proposed acquisition of the PhP6.5 billion worth missile system.

The re-prioritization that time was made due to rapid change in the internal security landscape. The multi-billion missile system was then moved to AFP modernization's second horizon which is set to begin 2018.

Last week, Army commanding general Lieutenant General Glorioso Miranda said the acquisition of missile system is on planning stage.

"There's a plan – but we have to address first the needs of our soldiers in the field for them to be highly effective in addressing internal security threats," Miranda said as quoted by Philstar.com. The acquisition of missile system is still slated in AFP modernization second horizon.

"Now we have brand new rifles, tanks and medical kits and equipment but we need to still beef up the soldiers' survivability in combat," he added.

In November 2016, Israel Military Industries (IMI) and Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI)-ELTA jointly conducted a live-fire demonstration in Israel to show Philippine defense and military officials how Israeli missile system works.