

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



TEAM ARMY

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OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

NEWS CLIPPINGS

25 May 2017

Thursday

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

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

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BusinessMirror

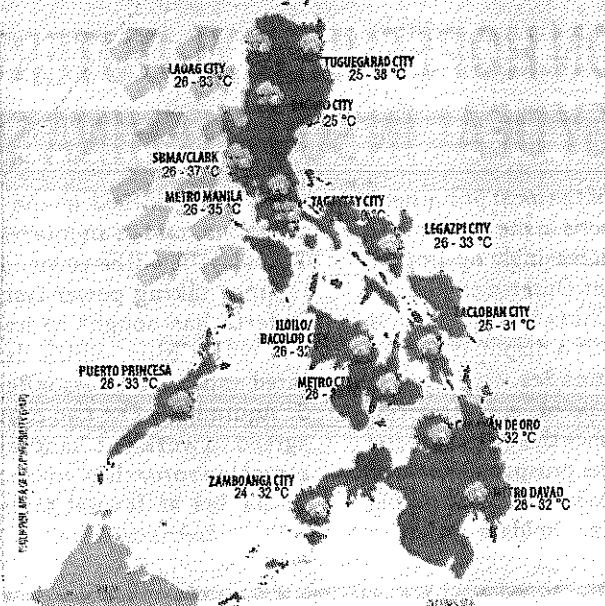
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TODAY'S WEATHER

MAY 25, 2017 | THURSDAY

SOUTHWEST MONSOON AFFECTING WESTERN SECTION OF LUZON
(As of 5:00 PM - May 24, 2017)



3-DAY EXTENDED FORECAST

	MAY 26 Friday	MAY 27 Saturday	MAY 28 Sunday
METRO MANILA	25-35°C	26-34°C	26-34°C
TUGUEGARAO	25-37°C	25-37°C	26-37°C
LAOAG	27-35°C	26-33°C	27-32°C
BAGUIO	17-25°C	17-25°C	17-24°C
SBMA/CLARK	26-36°C	26-37°C	26-36°C
TAGAYTAY	24-31°C	24-31°C	24-32°C
LEGAZPI	26-33°C	26-33°C	26-33°C
PUERTO PRINCESA	26-33°C	26-33°C	26-33°C
ILOILO/BACOLOD	26-33°C	26-33°C	26-33°C




3-DAY EXTENDED FORECAST



	MAY 26 Friday	MAY 27 Saturday	MAY 28 Sunday
METRO CEBU	26-32°C	26-32°C	26-32°C
TACLOBAN	25-31°C	25-31°C	26-32°C
CAGAYAN DE ORO	25-32°C	25-32°C	25-32°C
METRO DAVAO	26-33°C	26-33°C	26-34°C
ZAMBOANGA	24-33°C	25-33°C	25-33°C

SUNRISE	SUNSET	MOONRISE	MOONSET
5:26 AM	6:20 PM	4:49 AM	5:48 PM

LAST QUARTER	NEW MOON	LOW TIDE	HIGH TIDE
MAY 19 8:33 AM	MAY 26 9:44 AM	5:18 PM -0.22 Meter	10:20 AM 1.08 Meter

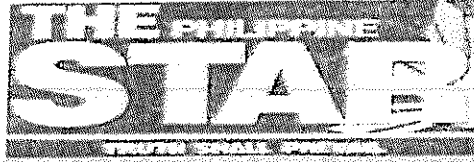
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Nationwide martial law eyed

*Rody: I will
be harsh,
but no abuses*

By CHRISTINA MENDEZ
and ALEXIS ROMERO

With the likelihood of violence in Marawi City spilling over into the Visayas and Luzon, President Duterte said yesterday he might expand the coverage of his martial law declaration for Mindanao to include the entire country.

Duterte raised the scenario in a press briefing yesterday shortly after his arrival from Moscow, where he signed the declaration and vowed to implement it harshly but without violating the rights of citizens.

"By virtue of the powers vested in me by the Constitution and by law, I had to declare martial law in the Mindanao group of islands for a period not exceeding 60 days, effective as of May 23, 2017," Duterte said.

Vowing to "protect and defend the country," he warned those "who fight us" and show "open defiance... you will die."

"Let us solve this once and for all," he said. "If it means many people dying, so be it."

The privilege of the writ of habeas corpus is suspended in Mindanao. Duterte said this may also be done in the Visayas.

Licensed gun owners may

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Nationwide From Page 1

use their weapons in self-defense against terrorists.

"If things go out of hand, actually there is severe fighting, I will allow the Mindanaoans – Moros and Christians alike – if you are in the possession of a gun licensed by government and in order to give you security and protect your family, you can bring it out," he said.

"Just show your ID or your license, specially your license. I said, *pagka nagpatayan pati civilian* (if there are killings even of civilians), I will allow the civilians to carry their guns outside of their residence," he said. "But be sure that it is licensed in your name. And do not falsify anything because you'll also be detained and investigated."

In an online video posted earlier yesterday by Presidential Communications Assistant Secretary Mocha Uson, Duterte said the martial law he declared for Mindanao would be no different from the one declared for the entire nation by the late strongman Ferdinand Marcos in 1972.

Duterte cut short his four-day official visit to Russia on receiving news about the Marawi unrest.

"To my countrymen, you have experienced martial law. This one, it would not be any different from what

president Marcos did. I would be harsh," Duterte said in the online video.

"To our countrymen, do not be too scared. I'm going home. I'm cutting my visit here to be with my countrymen. And I will deal with the problems once I have arrived," he added.

He said the Middle East-based Islamic State (IS) may have taken a foothold in Luzon and it might even expand its reach if left unchecked.

"If I think the ISIS has taken foothold also in Luzon and terrorism is not really far behind, I might declare martial law throughout the country to protect the people," Duterte said.

"I have a serious problem in Mindanao and the ISIS has taken its... their footprints are everywhere. And there are many, many foreigners and Caucasian-looking," Duterte said.

The President also ordered the military to conduct a naval blockade in the waters between the Visayas and Mindanao to prevent terrorists from fanning out across the country.

He also directed the military and the police to kill terrorists on sight.

The Chief Executive said he is ready to explain to Congress his move aimed at suppressing terrorism in Mindanao.

While describing the mar-

tial law declared by Marcos in 1972 as "very good," Duterte warned there would be severe consequences for the military and the police if they abuse their powers.

"And for those military offenders, you will have a summary hearing of a court martial. They will be subjected to military laws," he said.

"And I said, I warned everybody. Everybody is everybody. The members of military, police and anyone, do not try to challenge government," Duterte said.

He stressed the courts would remain functional even under martial law.

"No abuses of any kind. The courts are open. You can always go to the court. But in Mindanao, the remedy of habeas corpus is not available for you. And I will detain you," Duterte said.

Duterte said he has to continuously assess the situation, along with the military and the police, before lifting martial rule.

"OK, I am not an all-knowing president, it was the police and the military who said that we have reached a dangerous level," he said in a subsequent briefing.

Duterte urged the public to "give me enough time to stabilize and solve the problem."

AFP assurance

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) stressed the rights of ordinary citizens would be protected as soldiers would only be after terrorists and other armed groups.

"We can assure our people that your AFP, in carrying out its ad-

ditional functions based on the declaration of martial law, will not abuse its power," AFP Public Affairs Office (PAO) chief Col. Edgard Arevalo, said.

"If the AFP will have additional capabilities or capacity to do (its job) because of the declaration of martial law, we will do it in accordance with the existing law and respect for human rights," he maintained.

He said martial law would definitely boost the campaign against terror.

Lt. Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr., Western Mindanao Command chief, said his command has "yet to get a written guidance on how to implement the declaration of martial law in its area of operations."

Department of National Defense (DND) Public Affairs Service chief Arsenio Andolong said martial law is necessary given the situation in many parts of Mindanao.

"The imposition of martial law in Mindanao is a necessary step in order for government security forces to stop the threat that these terrorists pose, who are mostly not originally from Marawi," he said.

"As part of our operations, additional troops will be deployed to Marawi City to augment the forces already there," he added.

Presidential legal adviser Salvador Panelo said the deterioration of the rule of law in Mindanao prompted Duterte to declare martial law in the region.

The Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), for its part, assured the international community that the government is in full control of the situation and that the declaration of martial law is necessary.

"In order to suppress lawless violence and rebellion and for public safety, it is necessary to declare martial law in the entire island of Mindanao including Sulu, Jolo and Tawi-Tawi for a maximum of 60 days," the DFA said in a statement.

Curfew

Duterte said violators of the curfew raised over Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao, Sultan Kudarat, North Cotabato, Zamboanga, Jolo, Basilan and Tawi-Tawi would risk getting killed.

"If you violate the law when there is a curfew, you are bound to die," he said. "If you raise the flag of ISIS, that's the time I said this cannot be done. This must be stopped."

Duterte added that he has ordered the military to also save as many hostages used as human shields by the terrorists.

"In all decisions and actions, let me assure you that (our) primordial concern is the safety and welfare of our people," he said.

Duterte also cited powers vested upon him by the Constitution to enforce law and order.

"It is our constitutional mandate to enforce the law and provide security. It is our constitutional duty to ensure that every family, every community,

all Filipinos, are assured to live in peace and harmony," he said.

"We will stay true to our mandate and duty, this I can assure everyone," the President said.

He cited the emergence of new forms of terrorism and the existence of non-traditional security threats as reasons for his declaration.

He cited the "need to broaden and widen our network of friends and allies in pursuing our common desire to attain peace and stability, there is a pressing need to directly confront and manage our national security."

"The series of terrorist acts committed by the Maute group resulted in the loss of lives of our citizens, including policemen and soldiers, and the destructive nature of their fight thereby destroying properties and displacement of innocent civilians," Duterte said.

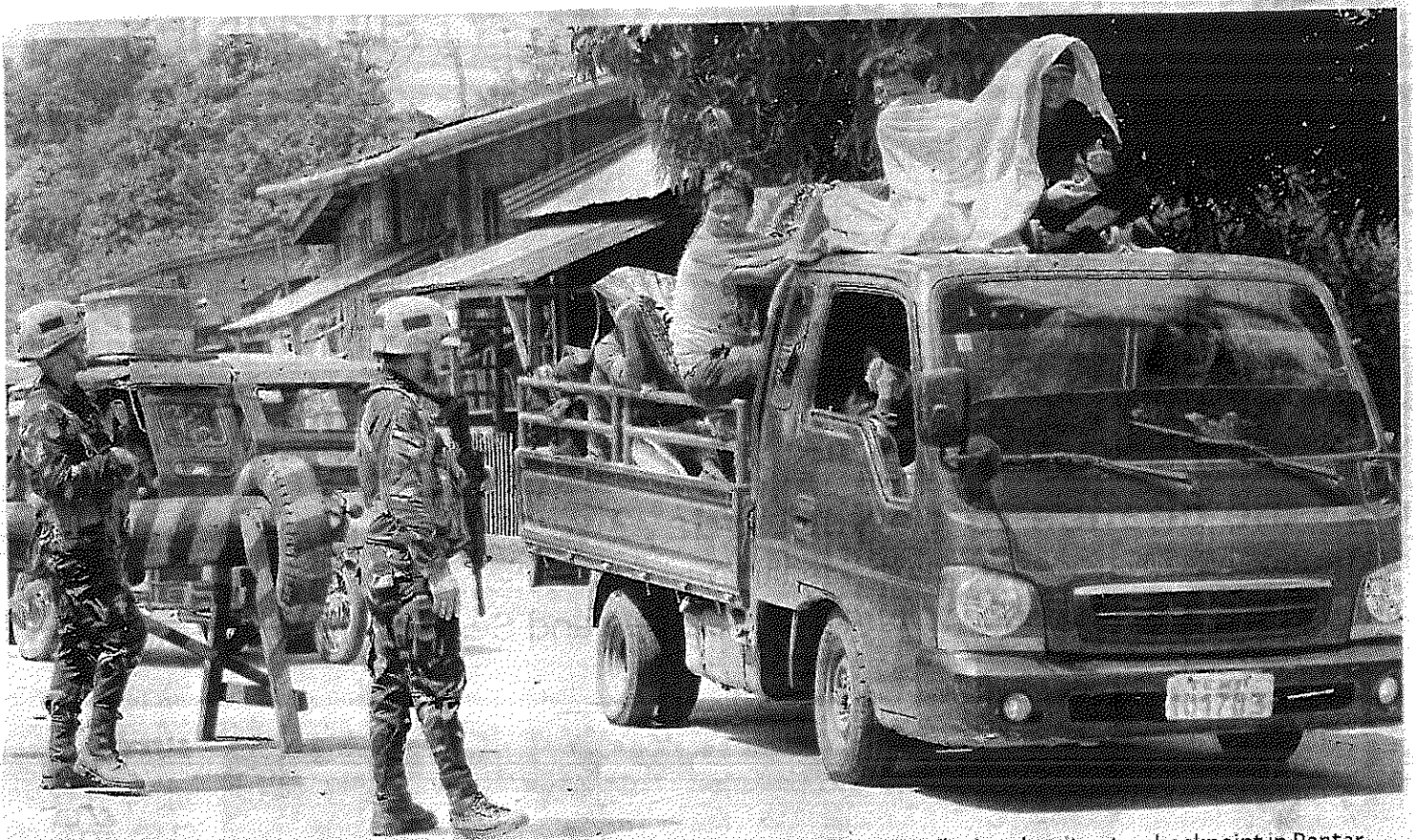
In his previous speeches, Duterte said he would not place the country under martial law as he has no intention to stay in power. He even claimed that martial law did nothing to improve the lives of Filipino during the time of Marcos.

Duterte, however, repeatedly dangled the prospect of martial law to threaten armed groups and members of the judiciary who are issuing restraining orders that delay the implementation of government projects.
- With Pia Lee-Brago, Roel Pareño, Michael Punongbayan

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MILITARY CHECKPOINT Soldiers inspect vehicles carrying Marawi residents who are fleeing the city at a checkpoint in Pantar town in Lanao del Norte province. —REUTERS

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Soldiers stand guard outside the city hall in Davao City yesterday following President Duterte's declaration of martial law in Mindanao. Mayor Sara Duterte-Carpio issued a 'hold-and-secure' order for the city. Under the precautionary measure, minors are not allowed to roam unaccompanied by adults at night and people are encouraged to practice the 'buddy system.'

EPA

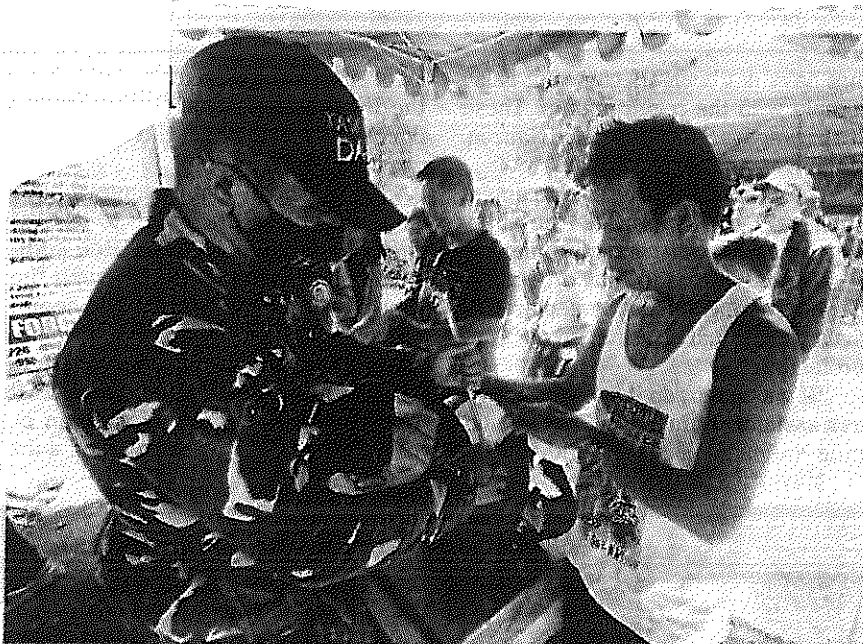
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MANILA BULLETIN

THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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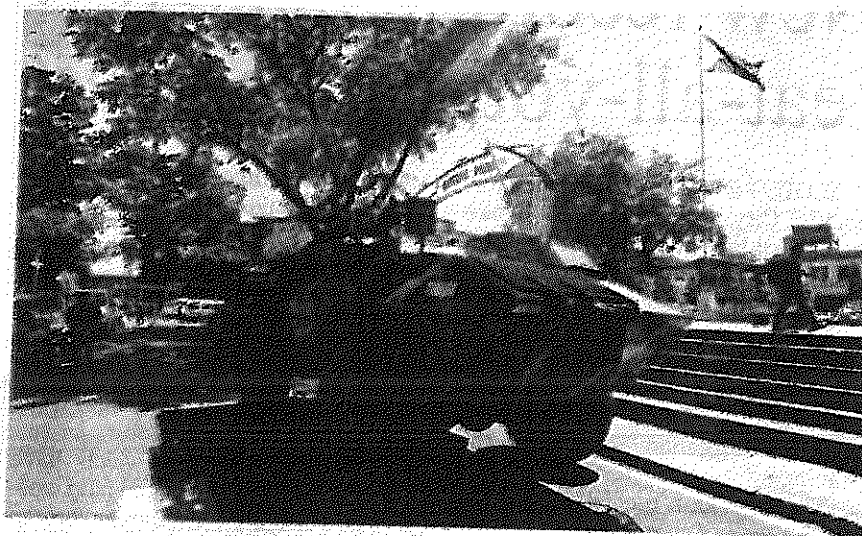


NO MORE PLAIN SIGHT DOCTRINE – A soldier from Task Force Davao scrutinizes the belonging of a passenger of a bus that was flagged down at a checkpoint in Barangay Lasang, Davao City. (Keith Bacongco)

25 May 2017

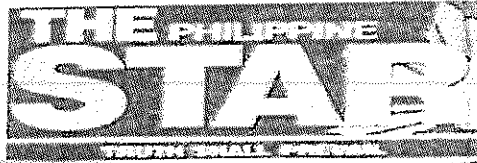
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SHOW OF FORCE – With martial rule in effect, military machinery is paraded in Davao City with this armored personnel carrier (APC) taking position in front of the Davao City Hall, Wednesday. (Keith Bacongco)

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RODY'S MARTIAL LAW

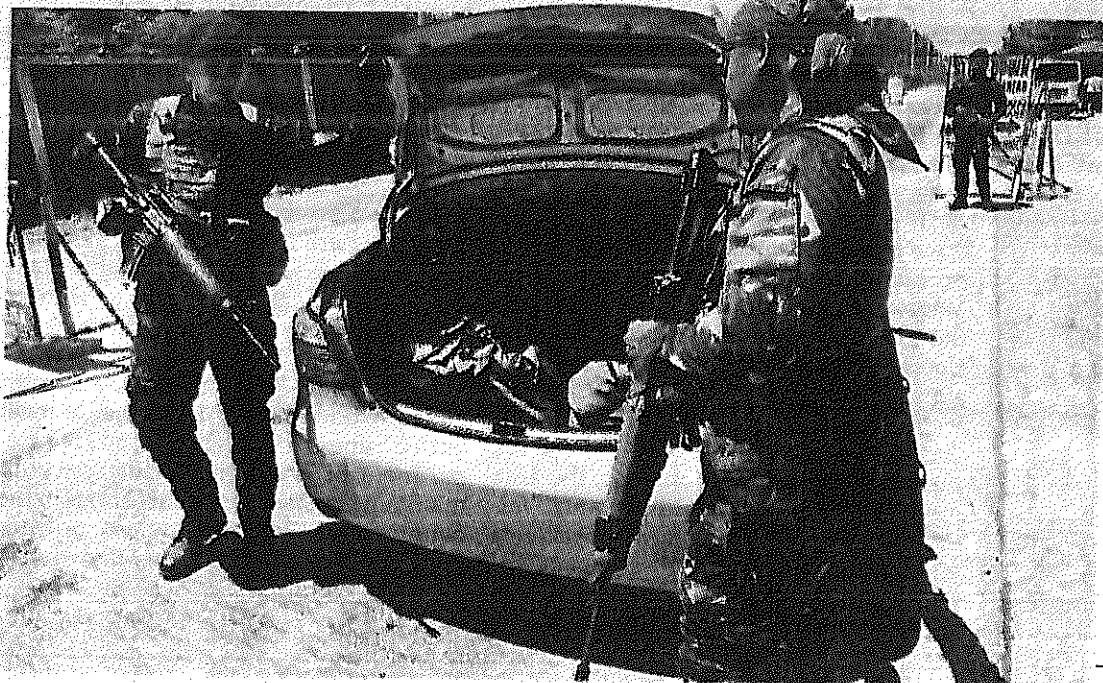
- 'Shoot to kill' for 'open defiance'
- Warrantless arrests, searches allowed
- Curfew in Lanao provinces, Maguindanao, Sultan Kudarat, North Cotabato, possibly Zamboanga
- Writ of habeas corpus suspended in Mindanao, possibly in Visayas
- Mindanao courts to remain open
- Martial law lifted when AFP, PNP say situation has 'stabilized'

Maute kills ex-police chief, seizes priest

Gunmen raid jails, free 107 detainees

Año, main martial law implementor, gets 6 more months as AFP chief

Senators slam AFP failure of intelligence



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THE DAILY
tribune
PHILIPPINE NEWS

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SUSPENSION OF WRIT UP TO VISAYAS EYED

DU30 may expand ML to contain IS group

By Ted Tuvera

President Duterte said yesterday he might put the entire nation under martial law "if things get worse" after imposing military rule on the entire Mindanao island to quell the armed incursions of extremists linked with the Islamic State (IS).

Upon arriving from an abbreviated trip in Moscow, Mr. Duterte told reporters at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) that he does not mind if his declaration of martial law will kill "many people."

Duterte declared martial law last Tuesday night for the entire Mindanao, which makes up roughly one third of the country and is home to 20 million people, in an immediate response to the attacks by the Maute group led by Abu Sayyaf head Isnilon Hapilon.

From page 1

The President, however, said his proclamation was meant to contain the IS-inspired Maute Group militants which laid siege on Marawi City but he added he will not think twice to extend military rule beyond Mindanao.

"If I think that the ISIS has already taken foothold also in Luzon, and terrorism is not really far behind, I might declare martial law throughout the country to protect the people," Mr. Duterte said.

"Checkpoints will be allowed; searches will be allowed, arrest without a warrant will be allowed in Mindanao. And I do not need to secure any search warrant or a warrant of arrest," he added.

Mr. Duterte said that the suspension of the writ of habeas corpus which accompanied the martial rule declaration may be extended to the Visayas group of islands.

"I may decide to expand the area to include the Visayas because it is just a walking distance actually. And because of the many islands, they can always escape there and begin another terroristic activity," he said.

Months back, a bomb attack was foiled in the US Embassy in Manila whose suspects were nabbed in Bulacan.

Some ISIS sympathizers also claimed responsibility of a blast in Quiapo, Manila last month during the country's hosting of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) summit. Two blasts also occurred in the same area a few days later. Authorities did not confirm that all the three Quiapo explosions were terrorist attacks.

Mr. Duterte pointed out that he has ordered state forces to shoot on sight any person outside of state forces bearing firearms as they are deemed to be inevitably an enemy of the state.

"If you are identified positively on the other side, you can be arrested and detained... If there's an open defiance, you will die. And if it means many people dying, so be it," he said.

The President stressed: "If I think that you should die, you will die. If you fight us, you will die."

"I have ordered the military, specially the Navy to embargo the islands, specially the sea that separates Mindanao from the Visayas," he added.

"I might also decide to suspend the writ of habeas corpus in the Visayas. Remember that this is not intended for the law-abiding citizens. We are the least of your worries," Mr. Duterte said.

Meanwhile, Mr. Duterte assured the public that human rights abuses will be minimized.

"But I will assure you that I will not allow abuses. (The) government is still running. Congress is functioning. The courts are open for citizens to seek their grievance," the President said.

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Año designated ML enforcer

Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Chief of Staff Gen. Eduardo Año, who is supposed to retire by June, is designated as the martial law administrator. His military stint has to be extended for another 6 months, the Commander in Chief said.

"In keeping with the law and order, it behooves now on the military, the Armed Forces to do what is expected of them - restore order," the President said.

"It will be solely between the commander in chief and the Armed Forces and the Police," he added.

Roughly 100 Maute militants roamed

5285, 5295

through Marawi city, taking a priest and an unspecified number of other people hostage from a church, setting fire to buildings and flying black IS flags, according to Duterte and his aides.

Duterte said they also beheaded a local police chief after capturing him at a road checkpoint they had set up, as he expressed outrage at what he said was the growing threat from militants in Mindanao allied to IS.

Duterte warned martial law would be "harsh" and similar to military rule imposed by dictator Ferdinand Marcos a generation ago.

He also said there would be curfews for some provinces in Mindanao, and that martial law would remain until the terrorism threat had ended.

The fighting in Marawi City erupted last Tuesday after security forces raided a house where they believed Hapilon was hiding.

The United States regards Hapilon as one of the world's most dangerous terrorists, offering a bounty of \$5 million for his capture.

The militants responded to the raid by burning buildings and conducting other diversionary tactics in Marawi, a mostly Muslim-populated city of 200,000 people, according to Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana. He said two soldiers were killed last Tuesday.

The gunmen also raided a church in Marawi and took the local priest, Father Chuto Suganob, plus an unspecified number of other people hostage, according to the head of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Philippines, Archbishop Socrates Villegas.

"They have threatened to kill the hostages if the government forces unleashed against them are not recalled," Villegas said in a statement.

Marawi City sieged

It was the outbreak of hostilities in Marawi City, Lanao del Sur that forced President Rodrigo Duterte to place all of Mindanao under Martial Law late Tuesday night.

An infuriated Mr. Duterte, who was in Moscow for a supposed four day official visit in Russia, said that he will definitely be harsh militants of the Maute Group went berserk.

Armed ISIS sympathizers occupied major thoroughfares in Marawi City as early as Tuesday afternoon. Their mobilization escalated by sun-down and was able to seize a public hospital, burn schools and churches.

Chaos on the ground went on fire over social media as residents appealed for help.

The Chief Executive, in a video message coursed through the Facebook page of Presidential Communications Assistant Secretary Margaux Uson, stressed that he will be replicating the late strongman Ferdinand Marcos' brand of Martial Law.

He also said that if it has to take a year to wage offensives against the Islamic militants, it has to.

"I have declared Martial law for Mindanao. But Martial Law is Martial Law. To our countrymen, you have experienced Martial law. This declaration, it would not be any different from what the President Marcos did. I'd be harsh," Mr. Duterte said while aboard his plane bound for Manila.

"How long? Well, yeah, how? If it would take a year to do it, then we will do it. If it's over a, within a month, I will be happy.. I have to do it to preserve the Republic of the Philippines and the Filipino people," he added.

Presidential spokesperson Ernesto Abella, in a statement, pointed out that declaring Martial Law is a must to ensure

"Within forty-eight hours from the proclamation of martial law... the President shall submit a report in person or in writing to the Congress. The Congress, voting jointly, by a vote of at least a majority of all its Members in regular or special session, may revoke such proclamation or suspension, which revocation shall not be set aside by the President.

"The Supreme Court may review, in an appropriate proceeding filed by any citizen, the sufficiency of the factual basis of the proclamation of martial law... or the extension thereof, and must promulgate its decision thereon within thirty days from its filing," it added.

The government's top security officials were also in Moscow along with Mr. Duterte but was able to monitor the events in Marawi.

Department of National Defense (DND) Secretary Delfin Lorenzana, in a press conference in Moscow, confirmed the atrocities done by the militants but made it appear that state forces are "still in control."

"The whole of Marawi City is blackout, there is no light and there are snipers, Maute snipers all around. So the troops are still on holding and several troops elements have already joined them from other neighboring units. And by Wednesday morning we are bringing in more troops from Zamboanga and Manila," Lorenzana said.

"The Maute fighters still occupy also the main street of Marawi City, it's called the Quezon Street and two bridges leading to the city. As of Tuesday, 10 p.m., there were three killed government troops, one [Philippine National Police] and two Army and 12 wounded," he added.

Lapse in intel

The Defense Chief also narrated what institutions were already occupied by the militants who have hoisted ISIS banners already.

"Maute and ISIS, a group of ISIS, has started also to occupy some establishment in Marawi City. They occupied the Amai Pakpak Hospital, this is a hospital under the [Department of Health], the City Hall, City Jail and part of the [Mindanao State University - Marawi Campus] compound," Lorenzana reported.

"Firefight ensued and our troops reacted properly. The Maute group burned several facilities: the St. Mary's Church, the City Jail, the Ninoy Aquino School, and the Dansalan

College," he added.

The skirmish all began when joint elements of the Army and the PNP were trying to serve a warrant of arrest on Isnilon Hapilon, the top Philippine-based ISIS leader, at Barangay Basak Malutlut in Marawi City at around 2 p.m., Tuesday. Isnilon's men were able to retaliate.

But Lorenzana gave hints that the military's intelligence sources were apparently caught off guard, but was quick to be on damage control by denying that there was some sort of lapse in military intelligence.

the military that they have a lot of sympathizers in Marawi City. So they were able to infiltrate Marawi without the knowledge of the military that's why they were able to go there undetected, maybe posing as civilians coming to the city until they saw this," Lorenzana said.

"If they did not see Isnilon, they will not be able to have this incident because Isnilon was there. I don't think there is a lapse of intelligence. It's just appreciation of the intelligence that was lacking there," he added.

Isnilon, who was reported to have been heavily injured in a firefight months back, was said to be in Marawi to "seek medical attention."

With the declaration of martial law, Lorenzana stressed that government authorities can easily restrict the movement of members of the Maute Group and Hapilon, who are still holed up in Marawi City.

"We will be able to control their movement, all the things that should be done under martial law, we will implement - control their movement, searches and arrest or detain people," Lorenzana said.

"He (Hapilon) was seeking medical attention and when...his hideout or his safe house was approached to arrest him they started firing at our soldiers that's why we have this encounter," said Lorenzana.

He said authorities did not expect that Hapilon was backed up by more or less 100 armed fighters.

"But we will be able to contain them as we go along...the next two days," Lorenzana said.

Hapilon is the alleged emir or leader of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in Southeast Asia. He was previously based in Basilan but transferred to Lanao del Sur in December 2016 to establish ISIS caliphate in Central Mindanao.

The defense chief also called on civilians in Marawi City to stay home until government troops clear the area.

He, however, stressed that there is still no order for force evacuation.

"Stay home, and don't go out especially at night...the Maute group has a lot of snipers," said Lorenzana.

For its part, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) assured that there will be no abuses in the implementation of martial law in Mindanao.

Col. Edgard Arevalo, AFP-Public Affairs Office chief, said that the declaration of martial is a big help in the military's operation against the enemies of the state.

"What we can assure is that your Armed Forces will not abuse its power in the implementation of martial law...we will do it in accordance with the existing law and respect human rights," said Arevalo.

He stressed that the target of military operations are the terrorists and their sympathizers and not ordinary and peace-

the safety of the citizenry in the island and minimize the possible expansion of terrorist group

"In order to suppress lawless violence and rebellion and for public safety, it is necessary to declare Martial Law in the entire island of Mindanao, including Sulu, Jolo and Tawi-Tawi for a period of 60 days," Abella said.

"The government is in full control of the situation and is fully aware that the Maute/ ISIS and similar groups have the capability, though limited, to disturb the peace. These have shown no hesitation in causing havoc, taking innocent lives and destroying property," he added.

Under Article VII, Section 18 of the 1987 Constitution: "[the] President shall be the Commander-in-Chief of all armed forces of the Philippines and whenever it becomes necessary, he may call out such armed forces to prevent or suppress lawless violence, invasion or rebellion. In case of invasion or rebellion, when the public safety requires it, he may, for a period not exceeding sixty days, suspend the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus or place the Philippines or any part thereof under martial law."

loving people

Davao City on lockdown

Meanwhile, Presidential daughter and Davao City Mayor Sara Duterte-Carpio yesterday morning urged the public to avoid going to Davao right now.

Mayor Duterte-Carpio, in a presser, said that the whole City is now locked down.

"We have already been under red alert so we will continue that. What we discussed is the lockdown on Davao City," she said.

"We advised those from outside the city that cancel their trip here if they don't have important business here."

Maute militants are believed to have caused a deadly blast last September 2 in a Davao City night market that has killed 17 civilians and injured 70 others.

Mr. Duterte then placed the entire Philippines under the State of National Emergency on "account of lawless violence" the day after.

Talking to Filipino reporters in Moscow, Lorenzana noted the IS-inspired Maute Group are not the only militants operating in Mindanao.

Mr. Duterte has repeatedly warned in speaking engagements that he wants to finish all the problems in Mindanao whenever he declares Martial Law.

"There are also problems in Zamboanga, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi in also in Central Mindanao, in the (Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters) area. And we also have some problems in the Region II, the extortion done by the (New People's Army)," Lorenzana said.

"The President has been telling these people that if I declare Martial Law, I will end all the woes. That's why he decided to implement it in all of Mindanao," he added.

Groups oppose ML call

Militant group Suara Bangsamoro (SB) for its part, said martial law will not solve the tension that erupted in Marawi City.

Martial law will also jeopardize the Government of the Republic of the Philippines' (GRP) peace efforts with the Communist Party of the Philippines-National Democratic Front (CPP-NDF), the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). SB national chairperson Jerome Succor Aba pointed out in an e-mail.

"Martial Law will only worsen the heightening peace instability in Marawi City as it intensifies and creates fresh armed clashes between the state army and the Maute group," Aba said.

"We fear for the lives of the civilians who might get caught in the crossfire. We fear for the effects of war to the civilian population," he added.

Aba also noted that their fellows on the ground fear the possibility of aerial bombings in Marawi City.

"We have received reports that aerial and artillery bombing will be conducted by the state forces to eradicate the Maute group in the city."

CPP founder Jose Maria Sison, in a news item by independent media outfit Kodac Productions, said that Mr. Duterte's Martial Law declaration is somewhat futile.

"Duterte is playing with fire if he thinks that (martial law) is a solution to Philippine problems," Sison said.

Leftist group Bagong Alyanang Makabayan (Bayan) said that while they back the administration's move to fight terrorists, the martial law declaration could increase human rights violations in Mindanao.

Mario J. Mallari

25 May 2017

The Manila Times

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PH-wide martial law eyed

BY CATHERINE S. VALENTE,
DEMPSEY REYES AND AFP

PRESIDENT Rodrigo Duterte threatened Wednesday to impose martial law nationwide to combat the rising threat of terrorism, after Islamist militants beheaded a policeman and took Catholic



■ President Duterte

hostages while rampaging through Marawi City in Lanao del Sur.

Duterte declared martial law while in a visit to Moscow at 8 p.m. on Tuesday for the entire Mindanao—which makes up roughly one third of the country and is home to 20 million people—in an immediate response to the attacks by the gunmen, who have pledged allegiance to the Islamic State (IS) group.

The declaration which will last 60 days, was effective on May 23. Duterte named Armed Forces Chief Eduardo Año as martial law administrator in Mindanao, and extended his term by six months. Año was supposed to retire in June and become Interior secretary.

“I will not hesitate to do anything and everything

►Eyed A2

■ EYED FROM A1 PH-wide

to protect and preserve the Filipino nation," the President said in a news conference Wednesday afternoon upon arriving from Moscow.

"I might declare martial law throughout the country to protect the people."

Roughly 100 militants of the Maute terrorist group roamed through Marawi city, killing five soldiers and two policemen, taking a priest and an unspecified number of other people hostage from a church, setting fire to buildings and flying black IS flags, according to Duterte and his aides.

The military said 13 Maute group members were killed in fighting, but only two bodies could be accounted for. A total of thirty-three soldiers were wounded.

Duterte said the Maute also beheaded a local police chief after capturing him at a road checkpoint they had set up, as he expressed outrage at what he called the growing threat from militants allied to IS in Mindanao.

Fifty Maute men also stormed the Marawi City Jail and Malabang District Jail and freed 107 inmates on Tuesday evening, the Interior department said. The Maute tied up and disarmed 12 jail officers.

Armed men also took away

two utility vehicles and two motorcycles, a fire truck, and mobile phones owned by the jail guards on duty.

'Open defiance'

Nationwide martial rule will be triggered upon the entry of IS-linked fighters in Luzon and the Visayas, Duterte said.

"The hardest thing to deal with would be the arrival of [IS] in our country. And it has to come to pass that there is really war going on and street fighting in Marawi itself," Duterte told reporters.

"These things government cannot allow. It is an open defiance and the violence, the atrocities continue. Government must put an end to this," he added.

Duterte cut short what was supposed to be a four-day visit to Russia after a gunfight between government troops and the Maute Group in Marawi City on Tuesday.

Clashes in Marawi City erupted as government troops were about to arrest Isnilon Hapilon, an Abu Sayyaf leader who has been named the Philippine head of the Islamic State.

The United States regards Hapilon as one of the world's most dangerous terrorists, offering a bounty of \$5 million for his capture. Security analysts say Hapilon has been trying to unite Filipino militant groups behind IS. These include the Maute group, which

is based near Marawi.

The militants responded to the raid by burning buildings and conducting other diversionary tactics in Marawi, a mostly Muslim-populated city of 200,000 people, according to Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana.

Thousands of residents fled Marawi, according to an AFP photographer at a military checkpoint near Iligan, the next biggest city about 40 kilometers away.

It was unclear on Wednesday night how many militants were still in the city or if they had escaped into nearby mountains and forests that they have long used as hideouts. There were no reports of major clashes on Wednesday.

Hapilon's Abu Sayyaf, based on the most southerly islands of Mindanao, has kidnapped hundreds of Filipinos and foreigners since the early 1990s to extract ransoms.

Writ may be suspended

As he left Moscow, Duterte said he would be "harsh" in dealing with terrorists. "I said earlier: 'Do not force my hand to do it. I have to do it to preserve the Republic of the Philippines and the Filipino people,'" he said in a video clip posted on Facebook by Communications Assistant Secretary Mocha Uson.

Arriving in Manila, Duterte said the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus might also be suspended

in the Visayas region, but assured the public that he would not allow abuses.

Suspending the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus means that the government can arrest and imprison anyone without trial.

"Remember that this is not intended for the law-abiding citizens. We are the least of your worry," the President said.

"But if you confront government and my orders are one to enforce the law. And anyone caught possessing a gun and confronting us with violence, my orders are shoot to kill. I said, I will not allow abuses. The courts are open. But anyone now holding a gun, confronting government with violence, my orders are spare no one. Let us solve the problem of Mindanao once and for all," he added.

"I will not allow the country to go to the dogs. As I said, the military has the primary role now of keeping the law and order situation and in all parts of the Republic of the Philippines," he added.

He said that as President and commander in chief of the Armed Forces, it is his duty to ensure the safety of the people.

"It is our Constitutional duty to ensure that every family, every community, all Filipinos, are assured to live in peace and harmony. We will stay true to our mandate and duty, this I can assure everyone," Duterte said.

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Nationwide martial law mulled

Duterte issues shoot-to-kill order, authorizes warrantless arrests vs terrorists; writ of habeas corpus suspended

By GENALYN D. KABILING

President Duterte is mulling the declaration of martial law in Visayas and the rest of the country if lawless violence

and rebellion spill outside Mindanao.

Upon arrival in Manila from his visit to Russia, the President announced the possible expansion of martial law as he vowed to be “harsh” in dealing

with Islamic State-linked Maute Group.

Duterte had earlier warned that his brand of martial law will be the same as what the country experienced when it was declared in 1972 by ▶ 6

Nationwide martial...

◀1

then President Ferdinand E. Marcos.

"It would not be any different from what President Marcos did," he stressed in Russia, while preparing to return home.

In his arrival press conference, Duterte said he has already issued a shoot-to-kill order against terrorists as well as authorized warrantless arrests to clamp down on lawless violence in areas covered by martial law.

Curfews in select areas in Mindanao may also be declared. He said curfew may be declared in Lanao del Sur, Lanao del Norte, Maguindanao, Sultan Kudarat, North Cotabato, Zamboanga, Basilan, Tawi-Tawi and Jolo to protect the civilians.

Writ of habeas corpus

The President likewise authorized the suspension of the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus in Mindanao during the martial law period.

Arrest and search without warrants as well as more government checkpoints have also been sanctioned by the President.

"If I think the ISIS has already taken foothold also in Luzon and terrorism is not really far behind, I might declare martial law throughout the country to protect the people," the President said in his remarks.

"Government may consider the covered areas of martial law in the event that members of the Maute Group and other ISIS-affiliated terrorists seek sanctuary or expand their terroristic activities in the Visayas and Mindanao," said Duterte, who cut his Russia visit short to oversee government operations against the Maute terror group.

Naval blockade

Duterte said he has ordered the

military to put naval blockades in areas connecting Visayas and Mindanao to prevent the escape of the terror suspects. He initially said he may expand martial law declaration to include Visayas since it is "walking distance" to the many islands in Mindanao.

"Because of the many islands, they can always escape there and begin another terroristic activity. I have ordered the military, especially the Navy to embargo the islands, specially the sea that separates Mindanao from the Visayas," he added.

The President had earlier placed Mindanao under martial law for 60 days following the terror activities committed by Islamic State-linked Maute Group in Marawi City, Lanao del Sur. A proclamation on the martial law declaration was signed by the President while in Russia but a copy has not yet been released.

For now, the President said he has authorized the government troops to "spare no one" in hunting down the terror suspects and keeping peace and order in Mindanao.

Duterte also designated Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Eduardo Año as administrator of martial law. He decided to extend the tour of duty of Año for another six months, instead of appointing him as next secretary of the Department of the Interior and Local Government by June.

Arming civilians

Duterte also intends to allow the arming of civilians to protect themselves and their families from terror threats.

"Just show your ID or your license, especially your license. I said, pagkangapatayan, pati civilian, I will allow the civilians to carry their guns outside

of their residence. But be sure that it is licensed in your name. And do not falsify anything because you'll also be detained and investigated," he said.

He said law-abiding citizens have nothing to worry about the martial law declaration.

"But if you confront government and my orders are one: To enforce the law. And anyone caught possessing a gun and confronting us with violence, my orders are shoot-to-kill," he said. "I will not hesitate to do it. My human rights is different. It is an institutional theory which we will reserve and observe," he said.

No abuses

He also assured there would be no abuses during the martial law implementation, saying his primary concern is the safety and welfare of the people. "I am not willing to allow abuses. Government is still running, Congress is functioning. The courts are open for citizens to seek their grievance," he said.

The Department of National Defense (DND) supported President Duterte's assurance, saying martial law does not suspend the Constitution but authorizes the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) to take over law enforcement operations from the Philippine National Police (PNP) and conduct arrests and searches in accordance with the rule of law and human rights.

With the remedy of habeas corpus unavailable in Mindanao, Duterte said authorities can detain terror suspects for 36 hours.

"It is our constitutional mandate to enforce the law and provide security. It is our constitutional duty to ensure that every family, every community, all Filipinos, are assured to live in peace and harmony. We will stay true to our mandate and duty, this I can assure everyone," he said.

Duterte also defended his decision to declare martial law in Mindanao, not just Marawi City, because he would not allow the spread of lawless violence.

"It is an open defiance and the violence, the atrocities continue. Government must put an end to this," he said. "I cannot gamble with ISIS because they are everywhere. And you know what is happening or you must be very aware of what happened in the Middle East," he added.

He also called for public cooperation to prevent the spread of ISIS threat in the country. He said he is committed to solve the problem of Mindanao once and for all.

"I am appealing to the humanity of everybody, especially those who sow terror: Do not allow the ISIS to come in. I warn you again. Do not do it because as I have said my response would be harsh," he said.

"I will not hesitate to do anything and everything to protect and preserve the Filipino nation," he said.

Duterte said martial law will end once the security situation has been stabilized.

The President said he plans to make a written report to Congress to justify the martial law declaration in Mindanao. He also invited Congress leaders to visit Davao to get a briefing about the security situation in Mindanao.

Full alert

In the wake of the martial law declaration, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and Philippine National Police (PNP) in Mindanao were placed on full alert.

But AFP Public Affairs Office (AFP-PAO) chief Marine Colonel Edgard Arevalo assured yesterday that the situation in Marawi City has been stabilized and security forces are in full control of the situation.

Despite this assurance, police

forces in Mindanao are working closely with the military to seal off all possible escape routes of the members of the Maute Group, Chief Supt. Dionardo Carlos, PNP spokesman, said.

Police commanders in Mindanao were also ordered to intensify security measures in their respective areas of jurisdiction to prevent the spillover of the attacks in Marawi City.

Carlos said all unit commanders were directed to conduct checkpoints and chokepoints and secure all the vital installations, economic key points, and places of convergence.

"They were also tasked to ensure high state of operational readiness to thwart any hostile action that maybe launched by terror groups," said Carlos.

Supt. Lemuel Gonda, spokesman of the Northern Mindanao regional police, said they have been under the highest security alert status to ensure that no similar attacks would happen in any part of Northern Mindanao.

Yesterday, the PNP leadership also activated the Crisis Management Committee both at the regional and national level of the police in order to have a clear picture of what is happening on the ground.

In Cebu City, the local government and the local police are on alert following the attack in Marawi City, according to Cebu City Mayor Tomas Osmeña.

In the Western Visayas, both the PNP and the AFP are also on full alert following the Marawi City attack.

Chief Supt. Cesar Hawthorne Binag, director of Police Regional Office (PRO-6), said police forces in the region are in close coordination with the AFP. (With reports from Ben R. Rosario, Francis T. Wakefield, Aaron B. Recuenco, Yas D. Ocampo, Antonio L. Colina IV, Mars W. Mosqueda Jr. and Tara Yap)

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Martial law will be harsh, says Du30

FROM A1

**By Lella B. Salaverria
Jeannette Andrade,
and Reuters**

President Duterte warned on Wednesday that he would deal harshly with terrorists, after declaring martial law in Mindanao following clashes in Marawi City, Lanao del Sur province, between government forces and Moro extremists who had pledged allegiance to the Islamic State (IS) jihadist group in Iraq and Syria.

Mr. Duterte, who cut short a visit to Russia, said martial law in Mindanao under his administration would not be different from martial rule under dictator Ferdinand Marcos, remembered by many Filipinos as one of the darkest chapters of their recent history.

He said he had also suspended the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus in Mindanao, which would allow the authorities to arrest people without warrants.

'I'll be harsh'

"Martial law is martial law. My fellow countrymen, you've experienced martial law. It would not be different from what President Marcos did. I'll

be harsh," Mr. Duterte said in a live interview on Facebook with Assistant Presidential Communications Secretary Mocha Uson aboard his plane before leaving Moscow to return to Manila.

Mr. Duterte said he had no choice but to declare martial law in Mindanao following a failed raid by soldiers on Tuesday on a hideout of the Maute terrorist group, which triggered clashes and chaos across Marawi City.

He said IS could not be allowed to gain a foothold in the Philippines and he would do whatever it took to rebuff extremists from the Maute group and the Abu Sayyaf, even if it meant many would die.

"Anyone now holding a gun, confronting government with violence, my orders are spare no one, let us solve the problems of Mindanao once and for all. Do not force my hand into it," he said on a speech upon his arrival at Ninoy Aquino International Airport.

"If I think you should die, you will die. If you fight us, you will die. If there's an open defiance, you will die and if it means many people dying, so be it," he added.

Mr. Duterte placed all of Mindanao, home to about 20 million people, under martial law on Tuesday night after gunmen, including a group reportedly led by Abu Sayyaf leader Is-

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nilon Hapilon, rampaged through Marawi City.

He said the imposition would last for 60 days, but it could last a year if it would take that long to quell the crisis.

"If it would take a year to do it then we'll do it. If it's over within a month, then I'd be happy. To my countrymen, do not be too scared. I'm going home. I will deal with the problem once I arrive," he said.

In a news conference at Ninoy Aquino International Airport after his arrival from Moscow, Mr. Duterte raised the possibility of expanding the coverage of his proclamation to the Visayas and even Luzon to protect the people from terrorists who had pledged allegiance to IS.

"I am appealing to the humanity of everybody, especially those who sow terror, do not allow [IS] to come in. I warn you again do

not do it because as I have said, my response would be harsh. I will not hesitate to do anything and everything to protect and preserve the Filipino nation," he said.

Martial law, Mr. Duterte said, would mean checkpoints, arrests and searches without warrant, and it would go on for as long as it took to restore order, but he would not tolerate abuses of power by police or soldiers.

Mr. Duterte has repeatedly

threatened to place Mindanao, the scene of decades-long Moro separatist uprisings, under martial law.

But human rights groups have expressed fears that martial law powers could further embolden Mr. Duterte, whom they have accused of allowing extrajudicial killings of thousands of drug suspects in a crackdown on illegal drugs.

Marawi sealed off

Details from inside Marawi City were sketchy because the largely Muslim city of more than 200,000 people appeared to be largely sealed off and without electricity.

Abu Sayyaf and Maute group gunmen abducted a Catholic priest and more than a dozen churchgoers while laying siege to Marawi City overnight on Tuesday, burning buildings, ambushing soldiers and hoisting black flags of the Mideast jihadist group.

Battles abated on Wednesday as the military tried to isolate Maute gunmen while awaiting reinforcements.

Thirteen terrorists and seven members of the security forces have so far been killed and 33 troops wounded in the fighting, according to the military. INQ

IN THE KNOW

The President as Commander in Chief can place the Philippines or any part of it under martial law or suspend the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus "in case of invasion or rebellion, when the public safety requires it," according to Article VII, Section 18 of the 1987 Constitution.

The 1935 Constitution also stipulates the same conditions in its martial law provision.

But the use of this power is now limited in the 1987 Constitution. The President must submit a report to Congress in person or in writing within 48 hours of the proclamation of martial law.

Congress, in turn, voting jointly, by at least a majority of all its members in regular or special ses-

sion, may revoke the proclamation, and the President may not set aside the revocation.

The period of martial law cannot exceed 60 days.

Unlike the late President Ferdinand Marcos, the current President cannot suspend the Constitution, close Congress or supplant the civil courts.

The Constitution states: "A state of martial law does not suspend the operation of the Constitution, nor supplant the functioning of the civil courts or the legislative assemblies, nor authorize the conferment of jurisdiction on military courts and agencies over civilians where civil courts are able to function, nor automatically suspend the privilege of the writ."

The Supreme Court "may review, in an appropriate proceeding filed by any citizen, the sufficiency of the factual basis of the proclamation of martial law or the suspension of the privilege of the writ or the extension thereof, and must promulgate its decision thereon within 30 days from its filing."

The suspension of the privilege of the writ will apply only to persons judicially charged with rebellion or offenses inherent in or directly connected with invasion.

As such, any person arrested or detained will be judicially charged within three days, otherwise the person must be released.

—INQUIRER RESEARCH

Source: 1987 Constitution

25 May 2017



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Let's give Duterte benefit of the doubt, says Robredo

By Philip C. Tubeza,
Jerome Aning,
Dona Z. Pazzibugan
and Nikko Dizon
@Team_Inquirer

Vice President Leni Robredo said this was the time for Filipinos to be united for the sake of the country's security after President Duterte declared martial law in Mindanao, even as civil society groups warned that the declaration would lead to more human rights violations.

"Let us trust our AFP (Armed Forces of the Philippines)," said Robredo, who visited the AFP headquarters in Camp Aguinaldo yesterday morning for a briefing on the situation in Marawi City, which is under attack by a group affiliated with the Islamic State.

Asked if she agreed with the declaration of martial law or if it was an overreaction, she said it was hard to say.

"For me, let us wait for the official declaration of the President. Anyway, under the Constitution, within 48 hours, the President will send information to Congress as to why (martial law) is needed," Robredo said.

She called on the people to "pray for our men and women who are protecting the people of Marawi" and "for our fellow Filipinos who are caught in the crossfire."

Respect for human rights

The military yesterday assured the Vice President that human rights would be respected while implementing martial law in Mindanao.

"We will respect human rights and we will recognize existing law," said Marine Col. Edgard Arevalo, AFP public in-



AFP BRIEFING Vice President Leni Robredo attends a military briefing on the Marawi City situation at the Armed Forces' Command Center in Camp Aguinaldo. —PHOTO COURTESY OF THE OFFICE OF VICE PRESIDENT

formation office chief.

Though supportive of the government's strong action against local terrorists enscornced in Marawi, civil society groups and nongovernment organizations were wary over Mr. Duterte's placing Mindanao under martial law.

The groups aired their concern over possible human rights abuses following Mr. Duterte's statement that his martial law would be "harsh" and would be no different from that imposed by the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos in 1972.

"Let us be clear, the Maute group-Abu Sayyaf and/or Isis wannabes operating in Marawi must be stopped. The burning of civilian facilities such as the UC-CP school must be strongly condemned," Renato Reyes, secretary general of Bagong Alyansang Makabayan, said in a statement.

"However, we oppose Duterte's martial law declaration because it is open to all

sorts of abuses by state security forces notorious for human rights violations," Reyes said.

Aerial, artillery strikes

Suara Bangsamoro expressed concern about reports that aerial and artillery bombing would be conducted by state forces to eradicate the Maute group in Marawi.

"We fear for the lives of the civilians who might get caught in the crossfire. We fear for the effects of war to the civilian population," said Jerome Succor Aba, Suara Bangsamoro chair.

Josua Mata of the labor group Sentro condemned what he labeled as an "atrocious attack" on the people of Marawi but said the declaration of martial law was "a heavy-handed response to the situation that even the AFP now claims is under control."

The military solution will not provide long-term solutions to terrorism and other problems in Mindanao, accord-

ing to the indigenous peoples group Katribu.

Diligence in merit review

Warning against the return of dictatorship, the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) called on legislators to exercise “due diligence” in reviewing the merits of Mr. Duterte’s martial rule in Mindanao.

“Let us be reminded of the lessons of the 1972 declaration under a regime of a dictatorship, that we may never again repeat this dark past and continue to recognize the higher value of human dignity at all times,” the CHR said on Wednesday.

It also reminded the government to uphold “the rights of all Filipinos” while addressing the terrorist attacks and the resulting humanitarian crisis in Marawi.

The CHR stressed that despite the declaration of martial rule, the Constitution crafted after Marcos’ downfall assured respect for civil liberties and the protection of the rights to life, and freedom from torture, warrantless arrest, illegal detention and other human rights.

Lawlessness

Karapatan, a nongovernment human rights watchdog, said the martial law declaration would result in gross violations of people’s rights.

“Martial law will inevitably result in intensified military operations, including aerial strikes which can kill and affect hundreds of civilians, and an open season for extrajudicial killings, illegal arrests, torture and other forms of rights violations,” said Karapatan secretary general Cristina Palabay.
INQ

25 May 2017



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Leni: Trust our AFP; businessmen back martial law

Stories on Page

By MICHAEL PUNONGBAYAN and HELEN FLORES

Vice President Leni Robredo called on Filipinos yesterday to cooperate and support the military and the government in resolving the crisis in Mindanao.

Robredo refused to directly answer questions on President Duterte's declaration of martial law in the south after hostilities broke out in Marawi City.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) has declared the situation under control. Mindanao is also still under a state of national emergency on account of

lawless violence since September last year, following a bombing in a Davao City night market that killed 14 people and injured many others.

Duterte cut short his trip to Russia after declaring martial law while still in Moscow. Clashes between government troops and the Maute group, along with the Abu Sayyaf, resulted in casualties, injuries and damage to properties.

"This is not an ordinary fight, we are fighting terrorists," Robredo told reporters in

Camp Aguinaldo after meeting with military officials led by deputy chief of staff Lt. Gen. Salvador Melchor Mison Jr.

"For me, at this time, we should unite. Let us trust our soldiers, let us trust our AFP that the goal is to stop terrorism," Robredo said, expressing confidence that the military would be able to resolve the crisis soon.

"This is the time that we protect the security of our country together. This is not the time to be divided," she said.

The Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP) and the president of the League of Cities of the Philippines expressed support for Duterte's move, while the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) urged the government to uphold human rights of Filipinos amid criticisms that the martial law declaration was a knee-jerk reaction.

The National Union of People's Lawyers (NUPL) called on Duterte to recall the martial law declaration, saying it was unnecessary and that the President's warning that he would be harsh was dangerous.

Robredo appealed to Filipinos to remain calm and urged them to pray for the soldiers and civilians caught in the crossfire, as well as to help in relief efforts.

"We expect that this incident will soon end," the Vice President said.

"In the wake of this conflict, help and support will be urgently needed for those affected. I have instructed my office to begin relief operations for those in need. We call on all sectors of society who can extend assistance to respond as soon as possible," she said.

Robredo said they had been in contact with the leadership of the AFP "and they have assured us that they are in control and that the conflict will be suppressed at the soonest possible time."

The Vice President said

she was also assured by the AFP leadership that they would protect human rights despite the martial law imposition.

She called on the public to be vigilant but also responsible, especially in posting information on social media so as not to cause alarm.

Pro, anti sentiments aired

In a statement by its board of directors led by national president Rosario Setias-Reyes, the IBP said the martial law proclamation is within the powers of the President under the 1987 Constitution and appears to have valid basis.

The IBP noted the hostilities in Marawi City could spread to other parts of Mindanao and other terrorist groups could take advantage of the situation.

The IBP assured the people there are safeguards in the Constitution against martial law abuses, such as diminution of their rights.

It added "civil and judicial authorities will continue to function except in places where the continuation of such functions has been rendered difficult."

As proof of this, the IBP cited the order of Chief Justice Ma. Lourdes Sereno yesterday for courts in Mindanao to remain open despite martial law.

"The IBP supports all legal means to end this unrest in Mindanao and encourages the achievement of peace through

lawful means," the statement stressed.

Still, the IBP called on the AFP and the government "to wield the power with caution and regard for the rule of law" as it vowed to be vigilant in defending the Constitution.

Angeles City Mayor Edgardo Pamintuan, president of the League of Cities of the Philippines, said he was supporting the martial law declaration as a "measure to destroy" all terrorist groups once and for all, noting that the Abu Sayyaf had also operated in Luzon and the Visayas.

Ozamiz Archbishop Martin Jumoad also expressed strong support for the move, saying there was peace and order in Mindanao when the state of lawlessness was declared in 2001 during the Arroyo administration.

But Jumoad said to place Mindanao under martial law for 60 days seemed too long.

CHR chairman Chito Gascon told The STAR the "President as commander-in-chief has vast powers to call out the Armed Forces to suppress rebellion and lawless violence."

"The courts and legislative bodies can serve to determine if the prerogative was appropriately exercised. Human rights should be upheld at all times and CHR will continue to monitor," he added.

In a separate statement, CHR spokesperson Jacqueline de Guia said they are monitoring the situation in Marawi

City through the regional human rights commission of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

"We are with the nation in prayer for the safety of our brothers and sisters in Marawi as well as our security forces," she said.

"We are hopeful that the incident is contained, perpetrators are brought to justice and violence does not spread further," added De Guia.

Knee-jerk reaction

Meanwhile, the NUPL said the declaration of martial law should be an option of last resort and should be strictly within the bounds, requirements and limitations of the Constitution.

NUPL secretary-general Ephraim Cortez said "placing the entire Mindanao under martial law will open the flood gates for unbridled human rights violations and abuses."

"In the end, it is the civilian population who will be greatly affected. It gives blanket power and authority to conduct military crackdowns and operations that would result in the further diminution of the people's constitutional rights," he added.

The group said the recent incidents in Mindanao do not justify the declaration of martial law and that it is not an appropriate solution to the conflict. – With Edu Punay, Janvic Mateo, Ding Cervantes, Roel Pareño

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PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER

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Terrorists hold priest hostage

By **Edwin O. Fernandez**
@inquirermindanao

COTABATO CITY—Marawi City Bishop Edwin dela Peña said he rushed back to his diocese after he received word about gunfights and explosions there from his secretary, who was calling to update him while he was on the road.

Around 8 o'clock on Tuesday night, six hours after the first report of clashes in Marawi, he received another call. Instead of his secretary's voice on the other line, he heard a man who identified himself as an "Isis member."

In an interview with the church-run radio station here on Wednesday, Dela Peña said the man told him his group had seized Marawi parish priest Fr. Teresito "Chito" Suganob and other church workers.

By then, Marawi's Cathedral of Our Lady Help of Christians had already been set on fire by members of the Abu Sayyaf led by Isnilon Hapilon and the Maute group. Both Hapilon and the Maute group had pledged allegiance to the Islamic State (IS).

As details of the attack in Marawi emerged, fears mounted that Asia's largest Roman Catholic nation could be falling into a growing list of countries grappling with the influence of the IS.

Burning school, jail

The extremists also set ablaze Dansalan College and Marawi City Jail. They had freed a total of 107 inmates, including members of the Maute group, from the city jail and the Malabang District Jail, 45 minutes away, according to Gov. Mujiv Hataman of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM).

At least five soldiers and two policemen were killed in clashes with the terrorists on Tuesday, according to a military officer who spoke on condition of anonymity. The officer said at least 33 other government troops also were wounded.

The President said one of the officers was stopped at a checkpoint and beheaded by the terrorists.

The terrorists gunned down another officer, Senior Insp. Freddie Manuel Solar, a 2007 graduate of the Philippine National Police Academy and the intelligence chief of the Marawi City police.

At least 13 terrorists were killed, according to military spokesperson Col. Edgard Arevalo.

GMA 7 reported nine civilians were killed by the gunmen, showing pictures of the bodies of the victims who had been tied up before they were shot.

Dela Peña said he was allowed to speak with Father Chito on the phone to assure him

that the priest was still alive

Ceasefire demand

"They (terrorists) want to leave Marawi City Tuesday night and sought unilateral ceasefire from the Army or else they will kill Father Chito and other hostages," Dela Peña said.

He said in the radio interview that he passed on the ceasefire demand to the military, which did not respond.

By the time the interview was over, more than 50 percent of Marawi's more than 200,000 residents were heading out of the city to nearby towns and the cities of Iligan and Cagayan de Oro, Hataman said.

Catholic church prelates appealed for the safety of the hostages and sought the help of Muslim religious leaders for their release.

"I appeal to the conscience of the hostage takers not to harm the innocent as the Islamic faith teaches," said Cardinal Orlando Quevedo, archbishop of Cotabato.

Safety of hostages

Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) president Archbishop Socrates Villegas urged Filipino Catholics to pray for the safety of the hostages.

"We also call on the Maute group that claims to bear arms in the name of a Merciful and Benevolent God—the very same God we Christians worship and adore—to do the One God true honor by the mercy and benevolence that are two of our God's most exalted attribute," Villegas said.

Villegas said Suganob was not a combatant. "He was a

LOCATION OF TERRORISTS

11 BARANGAYS

Barangay Bangon
Barangay Saber
Barangay Tuca
Barangay Banggolo
Barangay Naga
Barangay Monkado Colony
Barangay Caloocan
Barangay Marinaut
Barangay Mapandi
Barangay Matampay
Barangay Basak Malutlot

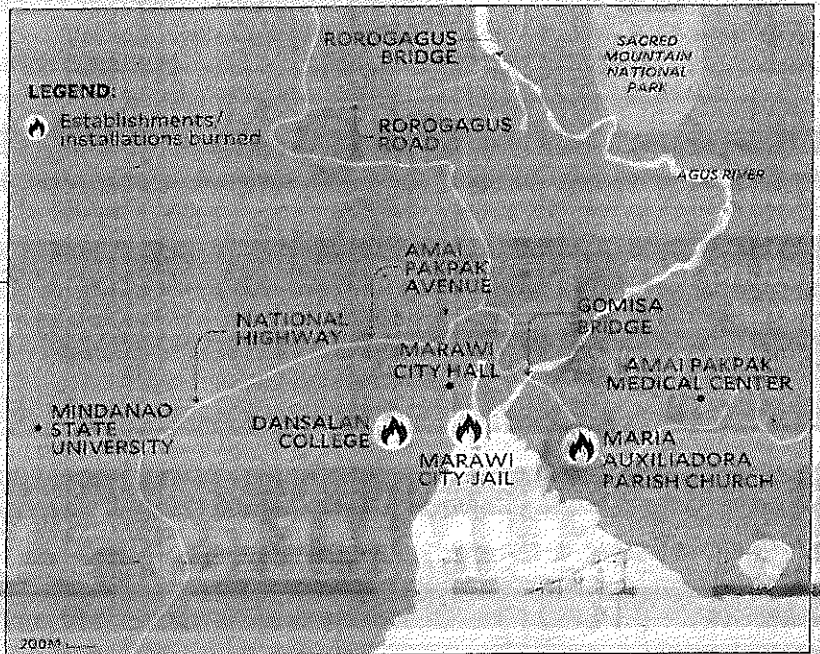
threat to none His capture and that of his companions violates every norm of civilized conflict," Socrates said.

Snipers all around

The heavily bearded Suganob is a known peace advocate in Marawi. The 62-year-old priest headed the local chapter of the National Movement for Free Elections before leading the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting in Marawi.

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana told The Associated Press (AP) late on Tuesday that there was a power outage in Marawi and there were "Maute

CRISIS IN MARAWI CITY



INO GRAPHICS

snipers all around."

Lorenzana spoke on the phone from Moscow, where he was accompanying President Duterte on an official trip.

Mr. Duterte declared martial law for the entire Mindanao before cutting his trip short and headed back to the Philippines.

Hapilon, an Arabic-speaking Islamic preacher known for his expertise on commando assaults, was wounded by a military airstrike in January.

The United States is offering a bounty of \$5 million for Hapilon's capture.

Troops sealed off major entry and exit points to prevent

Hapilon from escaping, military Chief of Staff, Gen. Eduardo Año, told AP by phone also from Moscow, where he was with the President.

"We will conduct house-to-house clearing and do everything to remove the threat there. We can do that easily," Año said, but added it was more difficult in an urban setting because of the need to avoid civilian casualties.

He said the gunmen erected IS flags at several locations.

The Maute group has been blamed for a bombing that killed 15 people in Davao City last September and a number of attacks on government forces in

Lanao del Sur, although it has faced setbacks from a series of military offensives

The fighting in Marawi erupted on Tuesday afternoon after security forces raided a house which they believed Hapilon and his men had used as a rendezvous site.

More than 100 gunmen responded to the raid by burning buildings and staging other diversions, according to Lorenzana.

Political analyst Ramon Casiple said the Maute group was clan-based whose members in Marawi came to Hapilon's assistance.

"It is difficult to root out from there," he said. "The Mautes are embedded in the population."

Bursts of gunfire

Hearing the first burst of gunfire, Abdul Bantuas, 40, said he thought it was part of the preparations for the holy month of Ramadan in Marawi where the sound of gunfire was common.

"But one, two and three shots became many. I told myself this is something unusual," he said.

He saw Air Force planes flying above the city and heard "very loud explosions" near the Mindanao State University compound.

Later, gunmen, some armed with AK-47 rifles, put up road blockades, Bantuas said.

"One or two armed men tried to enter my house through the gate but it was locked, they knocked on houses, others fired their guns in the air, others waved black Isis flags," he said.

Dino Mapandi said some of the gunmen burned at least four vehicles outside a Land Bank of the Philippines branch.

Longest night

Bantuas said he decided to evacuate his family and waited overnight for a chance to flee from the city.

"It was the longest night of my life," Bantuas said. "We did nothing but wait for the sun to shine so we can move out."

On board a van, the Bantuas left at 7 a.m. on Wednesday. What was used to be a 30-minute ride to Iligan took five hours because of the heavy traffic caused by the exodus, he said.

Mapandi said the men in his family decided to stay behind to watch over their four-house compound.

"It is so silent now," Mapandi said in a phone interview around 1 p.m. on Wednesday.

"It's like we're in a ghost town. There's no traffic, no people on the streets," he said. "It's like waiting for a storm."

—WITH REPORTS FROM NICO ALCONABA, PHILIP C. TUBEZA, JIGGER JERUSALEM, AFP AND AP INQ

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Police chief beheaded, 5 soldiers slain in clash

By Mario J. Mallari

At least five soldiers and 11 civilians were killed while 28 others were wounded and several hostages, including a Catholic priest, were taken as hostages in the ongoing clash between Islamic militants and state forces in Marawi City.

As of yesterday afternoon, the military was still struggling to regain full control of buildings, including government installations, which were occupied by members of the Maute Group

and followers of Isnilon Hapilon, the acknowledged emir or leader of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in Southeast Asia.

The militants also beheaded a local police chief, President Duterte also reported.

He said the attack occurred near Marawi City which is under siege by Islamic militants.

"The chief of police in Malabang was on his way home, going back, he was stopped by a checkpoint manned by terrorists and I think they decapitated them right then and there," Duterte said.

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From page 1

Duterte said continuing sporadic skirmishes showed the group's "capability to sow terror and unleash harassment and inflict destruction" across the country's south.

The president flew home Wednesday from Moscow, where he had cut short an official visit to Russia to deal with the Marawi crisis.

"What will be the challenge for our security forces is to regain these structures, we have to regain them. But they (terrorists) have snipers on top of these buildings and this is what we need to address," said Col. Edgard Arevalo, military public affairs office chief, said.

The terrorists also burned down several facilities, including a church.

At least 11 civilians, most of them non-Muslims, were murdered by the terrorists in cold blood at the height of the siege of Marawi City.

Bishop Edwin dela Pena, Bishop of the Prelature of Marawi, said that the armed men burned down the Mary Help of Christians Church before taking several hostages, including Fr. Teresito Suganob.

According to Dela Pena, the terrorists demanded for the stoppage of military operation against them.

Meanwhile, thousands of Marawi City residents have started fleeing to safer grounds amid the ongoing military operation there.

Broadcast reports showed traffic going out of Marawi City have been heavy since Tuesday when government troops attempted to arrest Hapilon – triggering intense clashes.

While only 800 evacuees are officially taking shelter at the Lanao del Sur provincial capitol, more have fled Marawi City for safety.

ARMM Vice Gov. Haroun Alrashid Lucman Jr. compared the city to a "ghost town" due to the evacuees.

"We heard a lot of gunfire and explosions yesterday. We hid inside, we were too frightened to go out," Noraisa Duca, a Muslim resident

of Marawi, told *AFP* at the checkpoint.

Skirmishes ongoing

Authorities reported further skirmishes overnight in Marawi but it was unclear on Wednesday night how many militants were still in the city or if they had escaped into nearby mountains and forests that they have long used as hideouts.

The Abu Sayyaf Group has kidnapped hundreds of Filipinos and foreigners since the early 1990s to extract ransoms.

Security analysts say Hapilon has been trying to unite Filipino militant groups behind IS.

These include the Maute group, which is based near Marawi.

Muslim rebels have been waging a rebellion since the 1970s for an independent or autonomous homeland in Mindanao, with the conflict claiming more than 120,000 lives.

The main Muslim rebel groups are involved in peace talks with the government.

But the Abu Sayyaf, Maute and other hardline groups want to set up an Islamic caliphate in the south for IS, according to security analysts.

Terrorists but not IS

The Philippine National Police (PNP), meanwhile, said terrorists who are now sowing fear in Marawi City are not IS members.

In a press conference in Camp Crame, Quezon City, PNP Public Information Office (PIO) chief and spokesman Chief Supt. Dionardo Carlos said the terrorists being hunted down by government forces in Marawi City are members of the local Maute terror group.

He stressed that while the Maute terror group has declared support for IS, however, they can only be considered as IS sympathizers and not actual members.

At the same time, the PNP official appealed to the public to be careful of what they post or share in social media to avoid spreading fear and panic.

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Maute springs 107 inmates

By JOHN UNSON

LANAODEL SUR – Maute gunmen set free 107 inmates in two jails they attacked late Tuesday amid gunfights in the streets of Marawi City.

The militants also snatched eight people as fighting ensued in Barangay Basak Malulut, scene of initial encounters between the Maute group and the Army's 103rd Brigade.

Gov. Mujiv Hataman of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) said Maute gunmen simultaneously stormed the Malabang District Jail and the Marawi City Jail at dusk Tuesday, disarmed the guards and freed a

total of 107 inmates.

The militants also commandeered several vehicles, including a prison van and a fire truck of the Marantao fire station in their escape.

"They even took one government vehicle used in transporting detainees from the jail to the court," Hataman said, referring to the prison van.

Hataman said he received a report from security officials in Marawi City that eight people were snatched by the militants as fighting spread through villages outside Barangay Basak Malulut.

The firefight between the militants and government troops spilled over to seven vil-

lages in Marawi City by dawn yesterday.

"We already have the names of the people the Maute terrorists abducted but we have to keep their names in the meantime," Hataman said.

Hataman confirmed the militants burned a church and the Dansalan College in Marawi City.

A relief contingent led by ARMM Vice Gov. Haroun Al-Rashid Lucman was deployed to attend to the needs of residents affected by the hostilities.

Lucman said thousands of residents in Marawi have evacuated to nearby Iligan City.

-With Cecille Suerte Felipe

25 May 2017

Tempo

Page. 2

Thousands flee Marawi as troops, tanks deployed

Thousands fled strife-torn Marawi City yesterday in anticipation of a government offensive to drive out hundreds of heavily-armed members of the Maute Group who stormed the Muslim-dominated Western Mindanao city Tuesday.

As troops and tanks poured into the city, residents left their homes aboard vehicles and motorcycles toward Cagayan de Oro and Iligan City. Many fled on foot.

President Duterte, who cut short his trip to Russia, placed Mindanao under martial law. He arrived yesterday in Manila.

In his arrival speech, Duterte reiterated that he will deal with the militants "harshly" after declaring martial law.

He revealed that the militants beheaded a local police chief.

"The chief of police in Malabang on his way home, going back he was stopped by a checkpoint manned by terrorists and I think they decapitated them right then and there," Duterte said.

The Chief Executive said he may consider other areas in the event the militants seek sanctuary or expand "their terroristic activities."

He mentioned the central Visayas region where militants recently also launched attacks far from their southern strongholds.

On Tuesday, armed men slipped into the city of 200,000, attacked a hospital, burned a Catholic-run school, freed inmates of a jail facility and took an undetermined number of hostages.

The Amaq news agency, a propaganda arm of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), posted an Arabic advisory, claiming the ISIS-sanctioned attack.

Amaq reported that five alleged spies were killed, but did not elaborate.

The alleged fatalities could have come from the siege of the Amal Pakpak Medical Center and the Dansalan College.

A driver and a security guard were reportedly shot dead during the attack against the hospital. Militants blocked the hospital gate with a commandeered police patrol car installed with the ISIS black flag at around 2:40 p.m.

Bishop Edwin dela Pena confirmed the militants' torching of the decade-old cathedral inside the school.

In Manila, Archbishop Socrates Villegas said militants have seized a priest and other hostages inside the Cathedral of St. Mary's. He

identified the priest as Fr. Chito Suganob.

"We beg every Filipino to pray fervently for Fr. Chito and other hostages," said Villegas, head of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP).

Also attacked were the Marawi City and the Malabang District jails where more than 100 inmates were freed.

Jail Senior Superintendent Mamerto Delloro said the militants carted away assorted firearms, stole a Toyota Revo, a Mitsubishi Montero Sports, two prisoner vans, two motorcycles, and the mobile phones of jail personnel.

After sporadic clashes Tuesday that left at least two soldiers and a policeman dead, there were no reports of major encounters yesterday.

The Armed Forces (AFP) also confirmed that 12 troopers were wounded and moved to safer grounds. It did not provide their identities.

Marine Col. Edgard Arevalo, chief of the AFP Public Affairs Office (PAO), said the military is in full control of the situation and that the militants were contained in one area.

"If they (militants) have areas, buildings or structures occupied, this does not represent the entirety of Marawi City," Arevalo said.

Arevalo said the troopers' biggest challenge is how to neutralize snipers entrenched on top of the



35, 5295

TROOPS arrive at their barracks to reinforce fellow troops following the siege by Muslim militants, on the outskirts of Marawi city. (AP)

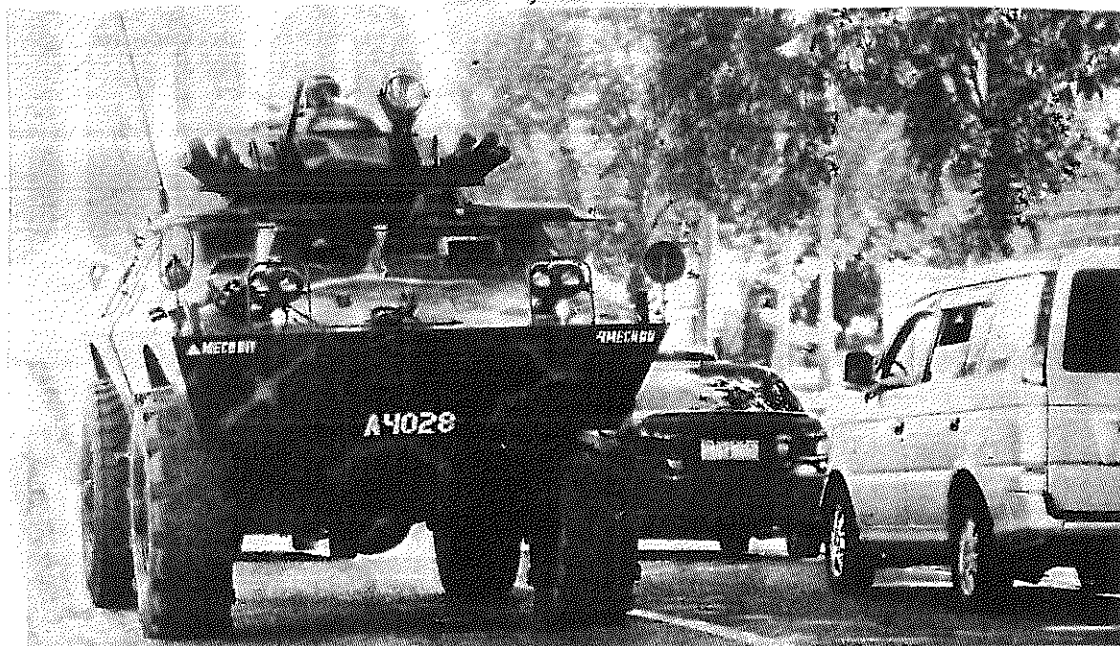
buildings.

"But your security forces are trained soldiers, they are professionals. What we sent there are tried and tested soldiers because they have to provide the countermeasures we need to do before we can say that Marawi is free from local terrorist group," he said.

When asked how many troops were deployed to Marawi City, Are-

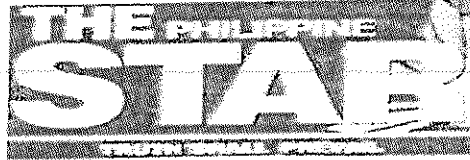
valo said for security reasons he cannot give the exact number of figures.

"I cannot give you the exact number but what I can tell you is that they are coming from different parts of the country. We have been mobilizing them since last night," Arevalo said. **(Ali Macablang, Francis Wakefield, Aaron Recuenco, Leslie Aquino, Chito Chavez, and AP)**



AN ARMORED personnel carrier is seen stationed at a checkpoint in Pantar, Lanao del Norte, just 10 kms away from Marawi City which suspected Maute Group militants attacked Tuesday. (Mark Balmores)

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'Truth first casualty in Marawi siege'

If there is a first casualty in the ongoing fighting between government forces and the Islamic State (IS)-inspired Maute group, it is the truth.

"Except for the half truths, the media is on the receiving end of all the lies on what really is happening in Marawi City," a senior military reporter said, referring to the statement released by the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP).

The AFP report said only 15 gunmen of the Maute group were involved in the fighting.

However, Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said

that around a hundred Maute gunmen attacked Marawi City.

The fighting in Marawi erupted on Tuesday afternoon after security forces raided a house where they believed a leader of the infamous Abu Sayyaf was hiding.

"We are expecting the arrest of Isnilon Hapilon. They (troops) didn't know that he was backed up by more or less 100 armed fighters, but we will be able to contain them as we go along, by tomorrow or the next two days," Lorenzana told a midnight press briefing in Moscow.

The military's Western Min-

danao Command spokesman, Capt. Joan Petinglay, said only 15 Maute gunmen headed by Hapilon were in the city.

Petinglay also described as disinformation reports that the Maute group torched a school and the city jail and entered the city's Amai Pakpak Medical Center.

But the National Risk Disaster Management Council has confirmed the reported takeover by the Maute group of the hospital, which is located near Marawi City Hall.

– Jaime Laude, Janvic Mateo, Emmanuel Tupas

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Marawi fighting leaves 21 dead, 31 wounded

By JAIME LAUDE

Government forces flushed out Maute group militants from their positions in Marawi City last night, leaving at least 21 people dead and 31 wounded, officials said.

Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Public Affairs Office chief Col. Edgard Arevalo said 13 of the fatalities were gunmen of the Islamic State (IS)-inspired Maute group that had occupied the hospital and city hall in Marawi since Tuesday.

Five soldiers and two policemen also died while 31 soldiers were wounded in sporadic clashes with the militants, he said.

Western Mindanao Com-

mand chief Lt. Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr. added some 120 civilians snatched by the militants were rescued.

The civilians were used as human shields by the militants who holed out at the Amai Pakpak Medical Center.

The civilians included eight patients, 49 construction workers and 21 hospital staff.

Troops also cleared the Dansalan College and rescued 42 teachers who were trapped inside during the attack.

Five soldiers were killed and 31 were wounded in the attempt to rescue the hostages, Galvez said.

Galvez said the troops accounted for 13 Maute gunmen

killed, with two bodies of the militants recovered at the scene of the firefight.

Alert

The rampage forced President Duterte to declare martial law in the entire region of Mindanao on Tuesday night.

Duterte had to cut short his trip to Russia after learning the Maute group attempted to occupy Marawi City in the same way the IS took over large areas of Syria and Iraq.

Police units nationwide were ordered to strengthen security measures to prevent possible diversionary attacks from the Maute.

The Philippine National

Police (PNP) reminded its commanders that full alert status remains in effect all over the country.

"All unit commanders are directed to strengthen target hardening on vital installations, economic key points as well as places of convergences and ensure high state of operational readiness to thwart any hostile action that may be launched by terror groups," PNP spokesman Chief Supt. Dionardo Carlos said.

Carlos denied reports that the rebels seized government installations. He said no government buildings are under rebel control.

On reports that the militants took over Amai Pakpak, Carlos

said the Maute gunmen only sought treatment for their wounded comrades.

"They were there to seek medical assistance," he said.

Carlos added they have not received reports that the militants beheaded several civilians.

He said the PNP is monitoring the actual situation in Marawi through the crisis management committees activated by the regional and national headquarters.

Officials reminded Marawi residents to remain calm and stay in their homes or evacuate to safer places as security forces pursue the rebels.

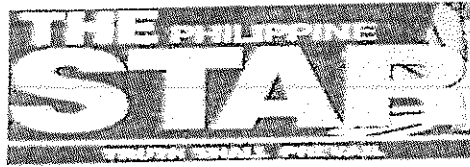
"We appeal to the public to be extra vigilant and respon-

sive by providing information on enemy location and their movements so government forces can swiftly conclude this important security operation," Carlos said.

Reports identified one of the slain police officer as Senior Insp. Freddie Solar who was killed in the initial shootout.

Solar, chief of the regional Drug Enforcement Group in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, was accompanying his wife at a hospital in Marawi when the militants killed him during the attack. – With Cecille Suerte Felipe, John Unson, Roel Pareño, Lino de la Cruz, Emmanuel Tupas, Ben Serano, AFP

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Año, ML enforcer, gets 6 more months in AFP

With his new role as “implementor” of martial law in Mindanao, Gen. Eduardo Año’s term as Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) chief has been extended for six months by President Duterte.

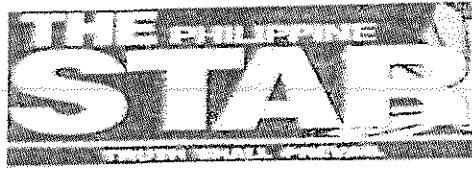
This means he has to hold off early retirement as well as his taking over the top position at the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG).

Duterte on May 10 announced the appointment of Año to the top DILG post, replacing Ismael Sueno. Año was expected to assume the post of DILG secretary before his mandatory retirement from the AFP in October.

Meanwhile, Undersecretary Catalino Cuy remains as officer-in-charge at the DILG.

– Christina Mendez

25 May 2017



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MNLF unaffected by martial law

By PERSEUS ECHEMINADA

The Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) is not affected by the declaration of martial law in Mindanao because it is not involved in the armed uprising in Marawi City, a ranking official of the group said yesterday.

Spokesman Emmanuel Fontanilla said MNLF founding chairman Nur Misuari is closely working with the government to maintain peace and order, particularly in Sulu and Tawi-Tawi.

"MNLF has long renounced violence and war in attaining its political objective," Fontanilla said yesterday, although he expressed concern that martial law would worsen the peace and order situation in the Lanao areas.

"I personally believe that martial law will worsen the situation," he said.

But Misuari's legal counsel Rex Bugaring said martial law is the answer to the terrorist activities of the Islamic State (IS)-

inspired Maute and Abu Sayyaf group.

He also pointed out that although martial law is limited to Mindanao, the military and the police can pursue and arrest without warrants the leaders of terrorist groups who are involved in armed rebellion and directing the attacks from their base in Manila.

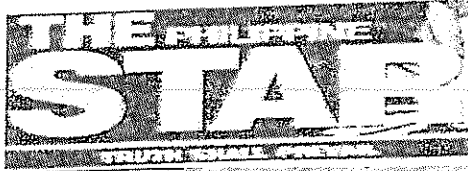
Meanwhile, the military told the MNLF and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) not to worry, assuring them of the primacy of the peace process amid martial law.

Western Mindanao Command chief Lt. Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr. made the assurance to dispel apprehensions among the mainstream rebel factions which have forged agreements with the government.

The Bangsamoro Transition Commission, an independent body mandated by Executive Order 08 to draft the Bangsamoro Basic Law, has condemned the violence in Marawi City, which happened at a time when the BTC is conducting public consultations and is about to finish the draft BBL.

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Intel failure resulted in siege – senators

By **MARVIN SY**

Failure of intelligence and coordination among security forces led to the siege in Marawi City that resulted in the declaration of martial law by President Duterte in the entire Mindanao region, several senators said yesterday.

Sen. Gregorio Honasan, chairman of the Senate committee on national defense and security, said there was a failure in the ability of the security forces and local government units (LGUs) to coordinate.

"We must understand that the LGUs are the convergence points on this. We need to harness the information gathering capability and reporting in place," said Honasan, a retired Army officer.

Now that the President has declared martial law, Honasan said it is important for the public not to overreact because the situation is localized and contained.

He said there is a need to regulate the entry of people in the affected areas in order to prevent infiltration of terrorist elements.

Sen. Panfilo Lacson, a former chief of the Philippine National Police (PNP), said that there was a failure of intelligence, considering that such a huge number of armed personnel from the Maute group was able to take over critical areas in Marawi.

"We should have learned our lesson from Mamasapano (Maguindanao). The planning should include the extrication, cover and buffer, all of these things. But why did it happen again?" Lacson said, referring to the operation conducted against Abu Sayyaf

group leader Isnilon Hapilon in Marawi City.

As far as the declaration of martial law is concerned, Lacson aired his confidence that the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) is professional enough to handle the situation without committing any abuses.

The important thing now, Lacson said, is to contain the Maute members because he suspects they are trying to project themselves as being engaged in a religious war.

The PNP denied that there was failure of intelligence in Marawi and claimed that the

police knew about the planned attack by the Islamic State (IS)-inspired Maute group in Marawi City a week before the clashes that started on Tuesday night. An official of the PNP Directorate for Intelligence who requested anonymity said the intelligence information about the attack was relayed to authorities on May 17, or a week before government troops engaged an armed group that has pledged allegiance to IS.

"There was no failure of intelligence. We got the information and relayed them to the ground," he added.

The source, however, refused to categorically say if PNP chief Director General Ronald dela Rosa was informed about the threat. "The information was disseminated, passed on to the proper authorities," the source said. "As early as May 17, we have already relayed the information to the ground." Dela Rosa and Chief Supt. Reuben Theodore Sindac, police director of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, were both part of the entourage of President Duterte in his visit to Russia.

– With Cecille Suerte Felipe

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DND denies lapses in intel; probe sought

By John Paolo Bencito and Macon Ramos-Araneta

DEFENSE Secretary Delfin Lorenzana on Tuesday night said there was no lapse in intelligence that allowed Maute group terrorists to go on a rampage in Marawi City, but admitted that some of the reports they received were not properly appreciated.

"We knew they were there, and in fact, there was this big firefight somewhere in Piagpo and in the mountainous area surrounding it. I don't think there was a lapse of intelligence; it's just the appreciation of the intelligence that was lacking," Lorenzana told reports in Moscow.

The military said fighting started when combined government

forces on Tuesday raided a house where Abu Sayyaf leader Isnilon Hapilon, previously reported as badly wounded a few months back, was believed to be hiding.

At around 1:45 p.m. Tuesday, a joint operation of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and Philippine National Police was launched in Marawi City to capture Hapilon, but security forces were apparently caught off guard by more than 100 Maute group members who took over vital installations in the area.

In a press briefing, Lorenzana said the Maute group was receiving "small amounts of funding" from international groups.

"That's why they asked [Abu Sayyaf leader Isnilon] Hapilon to transfer to expand their base," he said.

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Lorenzana confirmed three people were killed in the clashes after the terrorists occupied a hospital and a jail, and burned down buildings, including a Catholic Church.

A priest and several churchgoers were taken hostage by gunmen, reports said.

In contrast to Lorenzana's assessment, Senator Panfilo Lacson said the Maute group attacks were made possible by a failure of intelligence.

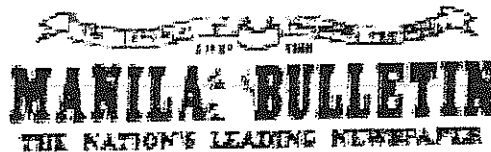
Lacson said he was baffled how a huge number of armed terrorists were able to enter Marawi City at the time when the Philippine National Police was conducting operations against Hapilon, who was spotted in the area with 15 followers.

Senator Gregorio Honasan, on the other hand, said there was a "failure to coordinate" by local leaders.

"We must understand that the local government units are the convergence points for this... We need to harness the information-gathering capability and reporting systems that are in place so that we can be more proactive," he said.

A former deputy governor of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao told a TV interview that members of the Maute group had infiltrated Marawi City days before the attack on Tuesday.

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

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Gabriela reps file bill barring military, police personnel from gov't posts

By **CHARISSA M. LUCI**

Lawmakers want to bar all retired and active military and police personnel, including officers from holding government posts.

Gabriela Women's Party (GWP) Reps. Emmi de Jesus and Arlene Brosas led yesterday the filing of House Bill 5712 which seeks to prohibit all

military and police personnel from being appointed to civilian positions

"The line between civilian authority and the armed forces has been further blurred with President Duterte's appointment of over a dozen military men to key government posts. This should be stopped and civilian rule must be upheld, especially amid the declaration of martial rule in Mindanao," De Jesus said.

HB 5712 provides that all military and police officers and personnel shall be disqualified from being appointed in a concurrent or any other capacity to the positions of secretary, undersecretary, head or member of governing bodies of government-owned or controlled corporations and agencies or other equivalent positions. Such prohibition shall apply even after the military or police officer

shall have been separated from service, including retirement.

"This measure becomes more important as a de facto military rule continues to unfold," De Jesus, a martial law victim, said.

Joining De Jesus and Brosas in filing the bill were fellow Makabayan solons – Bayan Muna Rep. Carlos Isagani Zarate, ACT Teachers Rep. Antonio Tinio and France Castro; Anakpawis Rep. Ariel Casilao and Kabataan Rep. Sarah Jane Elago; and JL Burgos, brother of missing activist Jonas Burgos whose abduction has been linked to an AFP chief.

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BusinessMirror

PHILIPPINE BUSINESS LEADER

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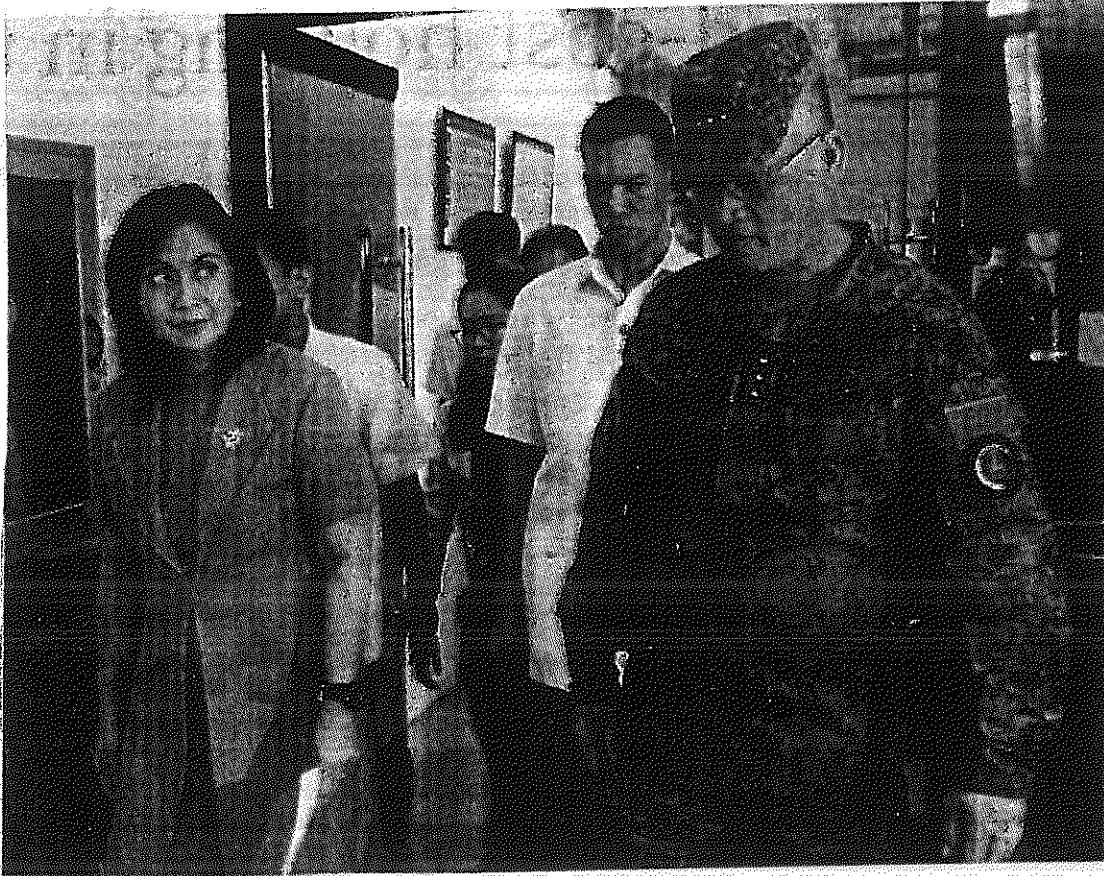
STARS GALORE The Commission on Appointments's Committee on National Defense confirmed 26 flag and senior officers of the Armed Forces to the ranks of lieutenant general, rear admiral, major general and brigadier general during its recent plenary session. RDV/DMM/AG

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Vice President Leni Robredo (left) meets Colonel John Pulido (right) of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and other military officials yesterday morning at the AFP headquarters in Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City for a briefing on the ongoing clash between government troops and armed militant Maute Group in Marawi City, Lanao del Sur. (EPA)

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SHOOTING STRAIGHT

BOBIT S. AVILA

It's right to declare martial law in Mindanao

While we were expecting economic gains and a strong bond of friendship between Russia and the Philippines, unfortunately due to trouble in Marawi City in Lanao del Sur, Pres. Rodrigo "Digong" Duterte had to cut off his historic four-day visit to Russia because of clashes between the Maute terror group and government forces in Marawi City.



Apparently, when a military-backed police team was sent to Marawi City to serve search warrants against Maute leader, Isnilon Hapilon and some members of his terror group suddenly 15 fully armed Maute men opened fire on the personnel from the military's 103rd Brigade Philippine Army 1st Infantry Tank Division and this developed into a siege in Marawi City, which hopefully the military can diffuse very soon.

To reinforce the military/police in Marawi, on Tuesday afternoon, two Air Force planes dropped several bombs in selected areas of the city, particularly in the border with Lanao del Sur beside Lake Lanao. These clashes erupted while Muslims are preparing to start the fasting month of Ramadan, which is expected to begin this Friday May 26. For the record, it was only last November when President Duterte revealed the link between the Maute group to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) after the encounter between the military and the Maute group in Lanao del Sur.

Incidentally, three years ago, we saw on Facebook certain Muslim groups flying the black flag of the ISIS in Marawi City. But alas, their presence in the Philippines was flatly denied by the Aquino regime who insisted that it was only ISIS propaganda. If there is anything that the Aquino regime totally knew, it is how to use propaganda to sell their ideas to the Filipino people. Because the Aquino regime failed to address the Maute Group, now they have grown into the terror group that threatens our peace today.

It is unfortunate that Pres. Duterte had cut off his official visit to Russia. I'm sure that his Russian hosts understand the situation happening in the Philippines, after all Russia too has similar problems with their Chechen Muslim separatists.

No doubt that the situation in Marawi City is critical and I got messages from Muslim friends (notably from Mr. Ramon Salapuddin) in Marawi City that peace loving Muslims do not support the Maute terror group and above all, they totally agree with Pres. Duterte's declaration of Martial Law in Mindanao. Pundits have asked... why the entire Mindanao. Let me just tell them that many parts of Mindanao are also being terrorized by the New People's Army (NPA) so it is high time to check this threat to our peace.

We also learned from news reports that the Maute Group apparently took control of a government hospital and has laid siege to many parts of Marawi City. Of course they have the help and support of many people living in that city. In order to diffuse the tension, I dare say that Pres. Duterte rightfully declared Martial Law in the entire Island of Mindanao because Pres. Duterte is a decisive leader and best of all, he put a time cap of 60 days on this declaration of Martial Law. If only then Pres. Ferdinand Marcos put a time cap to his declaration of Martial Law.

With Martial Law in place in Mindanao, the military can swoop down on the Maute group in Marawi City and disarm and arrest all those who support this terror group. Mind you, this is not the first time that Martial Law was declared in the Philippines since the declaration of Martial Law by then Pres. Ferdinand Marcos on Sept. 21, 1972.

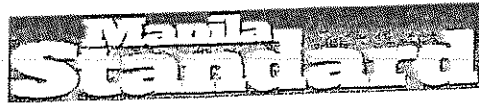
On Dec. 5, 2009, then Pres. Gloria Macapagal Arroyo declared Martial Law in the entire province of Maguindanao in the wake of the brutal Maguindanao massacre. Again, this is because Pres. Arroyo was a decisive leader. We expected that during the siege of Zamboanga on Sept. 9, 2013, then Pres. Benigno "P-Noy" Aquino should have also made the same declaration to diffuse the tension in Zamboanga City, but unfortunately he did not want such a declaration on his head even if it was necessary at that time.

Meanwhile the Abu Sayyaf has been on the run in this past couple of months, however, apparently the Maute Group has become a major headache of the Duterte government. Now this group has grown bigger and bolder and one thing that the military/police learned during this encounter is that the Maute Group has the support of a lot of residents in Marawi City.

Again, we urge the military/police intelligence groups to seriously look into who are the major supporters of the Abu Sayyaf and the Maute Group. It is high time that anyone, Muslim or Christian for that matter who helps or aids any terror groups is a traitor to this country and should be dealt with in accordance with our laws. Mind you, the Abu Sayyaf was able to infiltrate Bohol because of help from within. These are valuable lessons we learned.

Email: vsbobita@moscom.com or vsbobita@gmail.com.

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Terror in Marawi



**POP GOES
THE WORLD**
**JENNY
ORTUOSTE**

DAESH-INSPIRED terror is coming closer to our doorsteps each day.

This fact is underscored by the ongoing conflict in Marawi City, coming the day after the bomb attack on the Ariana Grande concert in Manchester.

Both the concert bomber and the Marawi attackers—the Maute group—are said to be members of, or influenced by, Daesh (Islamic State in Iraq and Syria).

The other day, the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police conducted a joint operation to capture Maute leader Isnilon Hapsilon.

The Maute (Abu Sayyaf militia) engaged in a firefight with government troops. In the ensuing battle, the Cathedral of our Lady Help of Christians in the city was torched, as was Dansalan College, and the black flag of the terrorists was raised at Amai Pakpak hospital, as seen in photos

posted on social media.

The conflict has escalated to the point that President Rodrigo Roa Duterte imposed martial law upon the entire island of Mindanao.

Two things are most significant here: The terror attack, and the declaration of martial law.

First, the terror attack. There is no room for a terror group in our country. To know that there are Filipinos who have pledged their allegiance to Daesh is horrifying. Such an organization has no other purpose than to overthrow the present society and impose through terrorist tactics the inhumane, cruel, and repressive regime of Daesh in the Philippines.

To serve their foreign masters and curry their favor, the Maute will most likely adopt the same terror tactics Daesh uses, including bombing events with huge crowds such as the one at Ariana Grande's concert, which was attended mostly by children and teenagers.

Is this what we want for our people—to live in fear? For the machinery of society to grind to a halt, as people refuse to leave their homes to study,

work, play? For the economy to crumble and the country be plunged into a dark age it never suffered in its history, but that we see unfolding now in Iraq every day? Maute and other terror groups like it must be eradicated to prevent this. The AFP and PNP are doing their duty in Marawi right now, and keeping the rest of us safe, for which we salute them.

Second, the declaration of martial law. Do government troops have the situation under control? Has Hapsilon been captured? There isn't much news coming out of the conflict area, because troop movements must be kept secret from the enemy. Did Duterte impose martial law on Mindanao because our soldiers and police are out of their depth, or because it would be easier for them to manage the situation under such a law?

One of the most painful lessons we learned from the Marcos years is the martial law can be used to commit and justify atrocities against the people, who are the ones caught in the crossfire between government and rebels. The law provides a 60-day period for martial law,

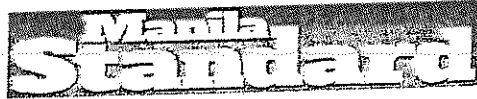
yet Duterte, in a video posted by Mocha Uson, clearly said it could remain in place for a year. And why the whole of Mindanao? Is this really necessary?

At the moment the situation is too fresh and events are still developing. Many things are still uncertain, among them the safety and condition of the people of Marawi and the government troops trying to protect them. What we can do right now is rally the rescue and relief groups and stand by to deliver food, necessities, and medical help when the time comes.

As we have seen from the Manchester bombing and all other Daesh-led or -inspired attacks that preceded it, it is not easy to fight terror. But we can do it, and nipping the Maute terror group in the bud now will prevent it from growing any further and causing more harm and devastation in the future.

Dr. Ortuoste is a California-based writer. FB: Jenny Ortuoste / Twitter: @jennyortuoste, @gogirlracing (sports) / IG: @jensdecember, @artuoste (art)

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DUTY CALLS
FLORENCIO FIANZA

Martial law in Mindanao

AFTER repeated pronouncements over the past several months from the President himself, he has finally done it—declare martial law in the whole of Mindanao from, of all places, Moscow. This was perhaps triggered by the ongoing clashes in Marawi City where a group of armed men from the Maute group entered the City apparently to provide assistance to a beleaguered group of Abu Sayyaf under their leader Isnilon Hapilon.

As of this writing, the picture is still not clear as to the circumstances of the clashes. Maybe in the coming days, the public will learn more. The apparent ease of the Maute group to penetrate an urban center of 200,000 people raises some concerns, more so because in the past several weeks, the government has scored accomplishments in the fight against the Maute group and Abu Sayyaf. With this penetration of the city, it would appear that the strength of the Maute group has not diminished. If this is the case, the problem in Mindanao could be a lot more serious than the public has been made to believe.

Just a few days ago, an Army battalion was deployed in Davao City to augment security provided by the police. It is not known whether this has any connection with the fighting that is going on in Marawi City or just a coincidence. But if the situation is indeed deteriorating, then the government should inform the public accordingly. Although this martial law will last for 60 days, the question that everyone probably wants to ask is, was the declaration necessary, given the vast powers of the presidency? Could it not have been possible for the President to tackle the problem with his current powers without resorting to Martial Law? Under Martial Law, the writ of habeas corpus is suspended and warrantless arrests can be made. To many who are old enough to remember the martial law years of President Ferdinand

Turn to A5

Martial...

From A4

Marcos, this will surely bring back dreadful memories of those years.

Let us remember, though, that Mindanao is not the entire country. Mindanao even in the best of years has always been a problem. In spite of the fact the majority of our AFP personnel are deployed there, government has not been able to exercise full control over the island. This is one reason why so many armed groups are able to operate there with impunity. Today, instead of the three traditional armed groups like the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, Moro National Liberation Front and Abu Sayyaf, two have been added with the entry of the Maute group and the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters.

These are only the Muslim groups. If the Communist Party of the Philippines/New People's Army is included together with private armies, the problem becomes a lot bigger.

Many presidents before President Du30 have attempted and tried in many ways to solve the problem but the Mindanao problem persist to this day. President Marcos, for instance, looked at the problem as something political that could not be solved by armed conflict. This is the reason why we have the Tripoli Agreement. He also co-opted the traditional politicians but the fighting continued.

President Cory Aquino also signed many agreements with Nur Misuari. President Fidel Ramos believed in negotiations but added economic development into the mix. He believed that a peace deal coupled with sustained economic development to provide jobs and opportunities would divert people's attention from fighting.

President Estrada embarked on an all-out war and had the MILF running. The Armed Forces was able to retake all territories controlled by the MILF. Unfortunately for him, his tenure was cut short by almost four years. We therefore cannot judge whether his ap-

proach to the problem could have been successful.

Meanwhile, not much effort took place with the administration of Presidents Gloria Arroyo and Noynoy Aquino. In fact, during the term of President Arroyo, the Maguindanao massacre took place with the murder of more than 50 people, mostly journalists. It was allegedly masterminded by the political kingpin and warlord Andal Ampatuan Sr. The trial of those involved is still ongoing.

With Noynoy Aquino, we saw many raids by the MNLF and Abu Sayyaf like the one in Zamboanga City and the now-infamous Mamasapano encounter where President Aquino took an active role.

One of the reasons for the election of President Duterte was the belief that he, being from Mindanao, understands the problem there better than anyone and therefore stands a better chance of solving it.

With this Martial Law declaration in Mindanao together with the state of lawlessness already existing throughout

the country, he has now taken the most extreme measure. Since it will last only 60 days, this step must be a short-term solution to an age-old problem. Whether he will be successful is of course another matter. We would hope that there will be a plan of action that will cover the 60 days. Otherwise, the whole exercise would fail.

I have always believed that the long-term solution to the Mindanao problem is the strengthening of all government institutions supported by a professional, competent and well-equipped Police and Armed Forces so that government can function as it should. But to those who have lived there all their lives, order is better established through the barrel of a gun.

It is a complex problem. I hope that the declaration of Martial Law in Mindanao will not have a long-term negative effect on our economy or make the problem worse. And that its short-term negative effect on tourism and branding of the country would disappear rapidly.

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SENTIDO KOMUN
Celso Lagmay

DAPAT lamang asahan ang walang pag-aatubiling pagdedeklara ni Pangulong Duterte ng martial law sa Mindanao. Natitiyak ko na nasagad na ang pagganggalit niya sa walang pakundangang paghahasik ng sindak at karahasan ng mga rebelde, lalo na ng Maute Group, na kahapon lamang ay lumusob sa Marawi City.

Isipin na lamang na sa kasagsagan ng state visit ng Pangulo sa Russia, idineklara niya ang batas militar kaugnay nga ng sinasabing rebelyon sa naturang lugar. Umuwi siya kaagad. Dahil dito, hindi malayo na lalong paigtingin ng administrasyon ang paglipol sa mga

criminal elements na matinding balakid sa pagtatamo natin ng tunay na kapayapaan.

Magugunita na sa pagkakahirang kamakalawa kay Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim bilang chairman ng Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA), lalong umugong ang mga pangamba lunggil sa paglawak ng militarisasyon sa Duterte administration.

Ang naturang mga pangamba ay maaaring bunsod ng sunud-sunod na paghirang ni Pangulong Duterte sa matataas na opisyal ng Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) at ng Philippine National Police (PNP). Kamakailan lamang ay itinalaga ng Pangulo sina dating AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Roy Cimatu bilang Secretary ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources

Nasagad na ang Pangulo

(DENR) at Gen. Eduardo Año bilang Secretary ng Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) bagamat kasalukuyan pa siyang nanunungkulan bilang AFP Chief of Staff. Nauna na ring itinalaga si dating AFP Chief of Staff Ricardo Visaya bilang hepe ng National Irrigation Administration (NIA).

Gayundin sina dating AFP Chief of Staff Hermohenes Esperon bilang National Security Adviser; Retired Major General Delfin Lorenzana bilang Secretary ng Department of National Defense (DND); Retired Major General Alexander Balutan bilang PCSO General Manager; Marine Captain Nicanor Faeldon bilang Bureau of Customs Commissioner, at marami pang iba.

Natitiyak ko na ang pag-alma ng

nasabing mga grupo sa paghirang ng ex-military men sa Duterte cabinet ay nakaangkla sa sinasabing pagbuo ng Pangulo ng military junta.

Iminamatuwid naman ng ibang grupo ng sambayanan, lalo na ng umano'y mga makabayan, na ang mga retiradong opisyal ng militar ay mistulang nagdadala ng mga kalansay sa Gabinete dahil sa kanilang hindi nalulugar na paglabag sa mga karapatang pantao.

Ang naturang mga pangamba at pagtutol ay taliwas sa aking paninindigan. Matindi ang aking paniniwala sa disiplinang militar sa matinong pagmamahal sa gobyerno, lalo na ngayon na tayo ay girigivagis na kaliwa't kanang karahasan at mga katiwalian, bukod pa rito ang kasumpa-sumpang illegal drugs na kailangang mapuksa.

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ONLINE NEWS

(25 May 2017)

GMA NEWS 7/TV:

Martial law is martial law, I'll be harsh –President Duterte

Published May 24, 2017 8:17am

President Rodrigo Duterte said that the martial law he declared late Tuesday evening in Mindanao is going to be "harsh" --a move precipitated by attacks of ISIS-linked Maute Group on Marawi City.

In an exclusive interview with the newly-appointed assistant secretary of the Presidential Communications Office Mocha Uson, Duterte said, "I'll be harsh. Martial law is martial law ... kayong mga kababayan ko, you have experienced martial law... it would not be any different from what President [Ferdinand] Marcos did."

Uson posted the video of her interview with the President on her Facebook account early Wednesday morning.

In the interview shortly before Duterte left Russia for the Philippines, he also assured the Filipinos: "Don't be too scared."

"I'm going home I'm cutting my visit here [Russia] to be with my countrymen. And I will deal with the problem once I arrive."

"I am sad but what makes me happy is that I was able to have a last-minute meeting with President Vladimir Putin and I was able to communicate all the things that I wanted to tell him. Positive naman ...," he added.

Asked how long he intends to put Mindanao under iron rule, he said, "If it would take a year to go then ... I will do it. If it is over within a month then I'll be happy." —LBG/TJD, GMA News

GMA NEWS 7/TV:

Maute group holds hostage Marawi priest, several parishioners —bishop

Published May 24, 2017 10:42am

Updated May 24, 2017 10:55am

Members of the Maute group torched a cathedral and took hostage a priest and several parishioners during a siege in Marawi City on Tuesday, a bishop said Wednesday.

Bishop Edwin dela Peña said the Maute group members torched Cathedral of Our Lady Help of Christians and abducted several people, including Father Teresito Suganob.

Also kidnapped by the bandits were Wendelyn Mayornita, the parish church's secretary and a certain Professor Nik-nik, the parish council president.

Dela Peña added that two working students and several parishioners were also taken by the bandits to "an undisclosed location."

"They have taken hostage a parish priest and several parishioners," the bishop told radio dzBB in an interview.

Dela Peña said the bandits barged in the church while parishioners were holding a novena. He added that they were supposed to celebrate the Fiest of the Mary Help of Christians today.

The bishop said the hostage-taking incident has been reported to the police and the military.

Reports said more than a hundred members of the Maute group, the Bangsamoro Islamic Liberation Front and Abu Sayyaf group attacked the city on Tuesday.

The bandits also reportedly torched the city jail and a school in Marawi.

President Rodrigo Duterte has placed the entire Mindanao under Martial Law due to the attack in the city. —ALG, GMA News

GMA NEWS 7/TV:

AFP: Marawi City situation under control as military pursues Maute bandits

Published May 23, 2017 11:04pm

A military official said the situation in Marawi City was "under control" despite the clashes with the Maute Group.

"Based doon sa information na ibinigay sa akin ng aking commander, si General Bautista... ang area is contained, ngayon po ay nagcoconsolidate po ang ating tropa para at least panatilihin pong matahimik 'yung Marawi," said Lt. Gen. Carlito Galvez, Jr., chief of the Western Mindanao Command (Wesmincom).

"Sa tulong ng ating Armed Force at PNP, we are ano... we are under control and we will immediately finish the pursuit operations we are having now in other areas," he added in an interview on GMA News TV's State of the Nation.

Galvez also said the military was still validating reports if foreign terrorists were also in Marawi City as previous pictures showed that an ISIS flag was raised in the area.

"Sa ngayon po hindi pa po klaro 'yung sa report considering na ongoing pa rin operations but nakita namin na ano... according to the report, is 'yung Maute group namataan sa area ng Marawi City so we acted on it and we found out that the operation is very correct," Galvez said.

"Normally ganon naman ang ginagawa ng Maute, they wanted to identify themselves as member of the ISIS para meron silang support from the ISIS community in Iraq and Syria," he added.

"We want to downplay... titingnan po namin talaga 'yung kakayahan nila ngayon," Galvez said.

The Wesmincom chief also assured the public that the military was looking to contain the local terrorist group as some residents already expressed fear for their lives.

"Stay calm. The Armed Forces is trying its best to contain the situation.

Doon na po sila sa kanilang mga residente and then lalo na ngayon na medyo walang kuryente, brownout... Manatiling kalmado po," Galvez said. —Anna Felicia Bajo/NB, GMA News

GMA NEWS 7/TV:

Three dead, 12 hurt in Marawi City as troops pursue Maute bandits

Published May 24, 2017 2:37am

By ANNA FELICIA BAJO, GMA News

Three government troopers were killed while 12 others were wounded following clashes with the lawless Maute Group in Marawi City.

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana at a briefing in Moscow also confirmed that Maute fighters still occupied the city's main street and that they had burned schools, a chapel and a jail.

"As of tonight, there were three killed government troops, one PNP and two army... and 12 wounded," said Lorenzana, who's in Russia as part of President Rodrigo Duterte's delegation on his official visit

"The whole of Marawi City is blacked out, there is no light and there are Maute snipers all around. So the troops are still on holding and several troops have joined them from other several neighboring units," he added.

"Our troops reacted properly but as of tonight, the Maute group burned several facilities, the St. Mary's Church, city jail, the Ninoy Aquino school and the Dansalan college. The Maute fighters still occupy also the main street of Marawi City," Lorenzana said.

Lorenzana added that on Wednesday, more troops from Zamboanga and Manila would be brought into Marawi City.

He also confirmed, based on reports he obtained from soldiers, that there were no civilians roaming around the streets as they stay in their houses. **-NB, GMA News**

GMA NEWS 7/TV:

AFP verifying report on parish priest, parishioners taken as hostages by Maute group

Published May 24, 2017 12:11pm

By AMITA LEGASPI, GMA News

The Armed Forces of the Philippines is still verifying reports that the Maute group took as hostages a Catholic parish priest and several parishioners in Marawi City.

"Kailangan po nating i-validate iyang information na iyan na merong hostage etc sapagkat napakaraming unang balitang lumabas na may hisnostage, may pinatay, may pinugutan etc," AFP public affairs office chief Col. Edgard Arevalo told reporters Wednesday.

"Gusto po nating payapain ang kalooban ng ating mga mamamayan. Basta hindi po tayo maniwala agad sa mga ganitong information," he added.

He said unverified information being circulated is being used by the local terrorist group to advance their interest.

"Ang kalaban natin dito ay terorista, they are working highly on propaganda. The more na napapabalita na may ginawa silang karumal-dumal, the more na sumisikat ang kanilang pangalan and the more sila nakakakuha ng attention sa foreign terrorist group." Arevalo said referring to Maute group and ISIS.

"Kung mapapansin n'yo hindi ko pinapangalanan ang alinmang local terrorist group. We would like to call them purely local terrorist group because we do not want to glorify them by giving their names as a terrorist group," he added.

In an interview with radio dzBB, Bishop Edwin dela Peña said that Father Chito Suganob and others were in the Cathedral of Our Lady Help of Christians when members of the Maute group forced their way into the cathedral.

The group allegedly took with them Suganob and others as hostages and threatened to kill the hostages if the government forces will continue its offensive against them. — RJS, GMA News

GMA NEWS 7/TV:

AFP: Stop social media posts that will worsen Marawi City situation

Published May 24, 2017 1:20am

The military on Tuesday night called on the public to "refrain" from posting information on social media that would just aggravate the situation in Marawi City.

"We fervently urge our people to refrain from posting in social media information that would tend exacerbate the situation. Especially photos and videos on the movements of our troops and on terrorist propaganda circulating through social media," said Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) chief Col. Edgar Arevalo in a statement.

"We will continue to provide updates as often as possible with due regard to the security of our operating forces and the conduct of the operations itself," he added.

There are photos and videos circulating over social media on the supposed status of the area following atrocities committed by Maute terrorist group.

Arevalo noted that the "sporadic firefights heard were harassment actions by terrorist sympathizers that were conducted as diversionary tactics to divide the attention of the reinforcing AFP personnel."

Arevalo also assured the public that the situation in Marawi City has been stabilized, noting that there were no foreign terrorists involved in the gunfights.

"Security forces are in full control of the situation. The armed men we are dealing with are not ISIS but local terrorist group. The news being circulated by these terrorists and their sympathizers are spurious and are meant to spread lies and disinformation," Arevalo said.

Arevalo also dismissed the "eyewitness account" that the Amai Pakpak Hospital was occupied and that there were people held hostage.

Arevalo added that the Marawi City Hall was not occupied by armed groups.

He also said that operations are ongoing to fully contain the situation. — BAP, GMA News

GMA NEWS 7/TV:

Senate waits for Duterte's report on martial law in Mindanao

Published May 24, 2017 10:26am

By KATHRINA CHARMAINE ALVAREZ, GMA News

The Senate is awaiting President Rodrigo Duterte's report on his declaration of martial law in Mindanao, Majority Leader Vicente Sotto III said Wednesday.

"We have to wait for the report of the President in order for us to exercise our constitutional duty on the declaration of martial law," Sotto said in a text message.

"In the meantime, we ask everyone to remain calm," he added.

Sotto said members of the Senate is set to "tackle the procedure" with regards to their constitutional duty to look into the report of the President.

Senate President Aquilino "Koko" Pimentel III is yet to arrive in Manila as he is part of the delegation of Duterte to Russia.

Earlier, House Majority Leader Rodolfo Fariñas said they were also awaiting the President's report on the matter.

The initial notice from Fariñas said that all House members "are advised to stay put" in the capital, with Duterte mandated to submit a report on his declaration, made Monday night, within 48 hours.

On Tuesday night (Manila time), Duterte decided to cut short his official visit after declaring martial law in Mindanao for 60 days amid the attacks in Marawi City.

Article VII, Section 18 of the Constitution states that the President should submit a report in person or in writing to Congress within 48 hours from the proclamation of martial law.

Congress may revoke the proclamation "voting jointly, by a vote of at least a majority of all its members in regular or special session." — RSJ, GMA News

GMA NEWS 7/TV:

Martial law in Mindanao no obvious justification —analyst

Published May 24, 2017 12:50pm

Updated May 24, 2017 1:22pm

President Rodrigo Duterte's declaration of martial law in Mindanao has no justification, unless the government has an intelligence report that a coordinated operation against the government is all over the southern Philippines.

GMA News' resident analyst Richard Heydarian told "Unang Balita" on Wednesday that the ISIS-linked Maute Group's attack on Marawi City was only part of a "marketing strategy" and it has no capability yet of controlling a territory or population.

"Di ko pa nakita ang justification ng government for the martial law declaration. Baka meron silang intelligence report na may coordinated operations, hindi lang sa Marawi City but across Mindanao," he said.

"Pero yun nga, sa ilalim ng ating Constitution (1987) dapat magpresenta ng report ang ating Pangulo sa Kongreso, so yung Kongreso dapat ang mag-scrutinize kung talagang may basehan ang martial law sa buong Mindanao."

Not enough basis

Atty. Christian Monsod, one of the framers of the 1987 Constitution, in a separate interview on News TVs' "News To Go," said that there was not enough basis for the declaration of martial law in Mindanao.

"It doesn't look as if there was rebellion there, under Section 134 of the Revised Penal Code. Kasi, sabi ng 1987 Constitution natin, martial law can only be declared in the case of rebellion or invasion," Monsod said.

"Tinanggal na po yung phrase '...or imminent danger there of...' mula sa 1935 Constitution na siya namang ginawang batayan ni Ferdinand Marcos sa pagdeklara ng martial law," he added.

"Pero, certainly, the president as commander-in-chief can call the Armed Forces to suppress or prevent lawless violence," he said.

"For me, the situation in Marawi sounds like lawless violence and not rebellion and from what I hear, Marawi is still under the control of the local government and military forces are well-positioned there to address any kind of violence or terrorism that may be contemplated by these elements," Monsod said.

Sufficient factual basis

Former University of the Philippines College of Law dean Pacifico Agabin disagreed, saying there was sufficient factual basis for the declaration.

"I have not read the proclamation but from the news reports, I think there is some basis. Violence may be deemed as a form of rebellion," Agabin told GMA News Online.

Former Ateneo De Manila School of Government dean Antonio La Viña, meanwhile, said a martial declaration in Marawi was justified.

"For Marawi yes but for the rest of Mindanao, I do not know. The government has not released information on that," he said.

Asked if the declaration should have been limited to Marawi and its surrounding areas, La Viña said: "It really depends on the information the president had." —with Virgil Lopez/LBG/KG, GMA News

GMA NEWS 7/TV:

Lacson sees intel failure, Honasan 'failure of coordination'

Published May 24, 2017 12:36pm

Updated May 24, 2017 2:08pm

By KATHRINA CHARMAINE ALVAREZ, GMA News

Senator Panfilo Lacson on Wednesday said there was failure of intelligence from authorities to prevent Tuesday afternoon's attacks of the Maute Group in Marawi City.

"You can call it that," Lacson said when asked by reporters if there was failure of intelligence.

"Kasi papaano nakapasok ang ganoon karaming armed group, tapos at the time when the PNP (Philippine National Police) was conducting operations against [Abu Sayyaf leader Isnilon] Hapilon?" the senator pointed out.

Lacson, a former PNP chief, said he supports the idea of deploying additional military personnel to contain the situation in Marawi, which prompted President Rodrigo Duterte to put the entire Mindanao under martial law and cut short his Russia trip.

"We should really attend to this problem and we should go hand in hand with the executive in really neutralizing ang threat," he said.

Senator Gringo Honasan, a former military officer, said there was a "failure of ability to coordinate," as he stressed the need for the participation of local government units (LGUs).

"Ang pinaka-abusado nang excuse is failure of intel, sisihin na naman ang military at pulis," Honasan said.

"But we must understand that the local government units are the convergence points for this, intel comes from barangay, eskinita, kalsada. We need to harness the information-gathering capability and reporting systems that are in place so that we can be more proactive," he said.

Honasan further said: "Kung yung pinaka-malalaki at pinaka-makapangyarihan na bansa nasingitan, tayo pa?"

Senator Miguel Zubiri, a close ally of Duterte, said some LGU officials may even be cooperating with the Maute group, adding that he supports the need for martial law in Mindanao.

"Siguro meron siyang (Duterte) nakikita na iilang miyembro ng LGU na medyo kasabawat dito. It's unfortunate to say this but yan ang katotohanan. Hindi naman makakalusot sa mga barangay na hindi alam ng mga kapitan sa mga barangay at hindi alam ng mga members ng LGU," said Zubiri, who is from Mindanao.

Zubiri said authorities must explain to the Senate oversight committee on the use of intelligence funds what led to the clashes in Marawi.

"That's a start. Kailangan nila magpaliwanag bakit nangyari ito," he told reporters. —KBK, GMA News

GMA NEWS 7/TV:

'ARMY CAUGHT BY SURPRISE'

Maute group infiltrated Marawi City days before the attack —ex-ARMM exec

Published May 24, 2017 2:30pm

A former official of the Autonomous Region Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) on Wednesday said members of the Maute group have infiltrated Marawi City days before the attack on Tuesday.

"Ang mga sundalo when they responded they thought they were dealing with a small group of armed men. Iyon pala na-infiltrate na ang Marawi City for many days na," former ARMM deputy governor Norodin Alonto Lucman said in an interview on Unang Balita.

He added: "Andito na yung mga baril ng iba't ibang grupo. So the Army was caught surprised by the numbers of armed men who fought back. So maraming lugar dito sa Marawi City na hawak ng grupo."

Lucman said the Maute group have prepositioned their firearms in the city before they carried out the attack.

The bandits, which claims affiliation with ISIS, torched a cathedral, a city jail and at least two schools in the city.

President Rodrigo Duterte has placed the entire Mindanao under Martial Law, which Lucman said is widely supported in Lanao.

The military said three government troops were killed and 12 others were wounded during clashes with the Maute group member.

Lucman said fighting erupted early afternoon and lasted until late Tuesday.

"There's an area ang laki ng barilan... Mula kagabi walang nakatulong dito sa Marawi City kasi bakbakan talaga. Gumagamit ng mortar lahat ng malalakas na papatok. Ngayon the Army has to retake the city," he said.

He said there are reports that the Maute group was reinforced by other groups.

In an interview on radio dzBB, City Mayor Majul Usman Gandamra said he received reports that more than a hundred armed men were involved in the attack.

He added that the Maute group was reinforced by members of the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters and the Abu Sayyaf group.

Lucman, meanwhile, said the armed men involved in the attack spoke the dialects of Yakan and Tausug tribes.

The bandits torched a cathedral, two schools and a city jail, reports said.

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines said that a priest and several parishioners in the city were taken by the bandits as hostages. —ALG, GMA News

www.bomboradyo.com:

Davao City isinailalim sa 'lock down' matapos ang deklarasyon ng Martial Law

Posted By: Bombo Radyo Davaoon: May 24, 2017 | 7:14 AM No Comments

DAVAO CITY – Isinailalim ngayon sa red alert status at lock down ang lungsod ng Davao kasunod ng deklarasyon ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte na magpatupad ng Martial Law sa buong Mindanao matapos ang nangyaring engkuwentro sa Marawi City sa pagitan ng tropa ng pamahalaan at Maute group.

Sa kasalukuyan, nagpatupad ngayon ng mahigpit na seguridad sa mga coastal areas maliban sa isasagawang mahigpit na inspeksiyon sa mga sasakyan na papasok sa lungsod.

Pinayuhan naman ni Mayor Inday Sara Duterte ang publiko na kung hindi importante ang mga pupuntahan mas mabuti umano na manatili na lamang sa kanilang mga bahay.

Samantalang sinabi naman ni Col. Erwin Bernard Neri, commander ng Task Force Davao (TFD) na dahil suspendido ang pagpapatupad ng habeas corpus, may kapangyarihan umano ang militar na hulihin ang mga pinaniniwalaang terorista.

Siniguro naman ng opisyal na hindi malalabag ang karapatang pantao ng mga indibidwal.

www.bomboradyo.com:

5 sundalo sugatan sa sagupaan kontra Maute group sa Marawi city

Posted By: Bombo Jovino Galangon: May 23, 2017 | 8:14 PM No Comments

Limang sundalo ang sugatan matapos ang sagupaan nila ng rebeldeng grupo na Maute sa lungsod ng Marawi.

Ayon kay Lt. Col. Jo-ar Herrera, tagapagsalita ng 1st Infantry Division ng Phil. Army, nakatanggap sila ng sumbong mula sa mga residente na mayroong presensya ng mga armadong grupo na kinabibilangan ni Abu Sayyaff leader Isnilon Hapilon dakong alas-dos ng hapon.

Matapos ang pagdating ng mga otoridad ay agad silang pinaputukan ng mga rebeldeng grupo.

Dagdag pa nito na walang hostages at casualties ang naitala sa naturang insidente at kasalukuyan na silang nagsasagawa ng clearing operations.

Sinabi naman ni Mayor Majul Gandamra, na ginawa pang lusubin ng mga rebeldeng grupo ang isang pagamutan pero nilinaw nito na walang anumang hostage ang kanilang kinuha.

www.bomboradyo.com:

Maute attack sa Marawi City, walang epekto sa Russia trip ni Duterte – Esperon

Posted By: Bombo Reymund Tinazaon: May 23, 2017 | 8:57 PM No Comments

MOSCOW – Tiniyak ni National Security Adviser (NSA) Hermogenes Esperon Jr. na hindi makakaapekto sa biyahe ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte sa Russia ang nagpapatuloy na engkuwentro ng government security forces at teroristang Maute group sa Marawi City.

Si Esperon ay nasa Russia, kasama rin sina Defense Sec. Delfin Lorenzana, AFP Chief of Staff Eduardo Año at PNP Chief Ronald dela Rosa.

Sinabi ni Esperon, batay sa kanilang natatanggap na reports, kontrolado na ng government forces ang sitwasyon sa Marawi City.

Magugunitang limang sundalo na ang sugatan sa engkuwentro na nagsimula kaninang alas 2 ng hapon sa Mindanao State University Compound sa Marawi City partikular sa Basak Malulut village nang makasagupa ng Maute group ang First Tabak Division.

Maliban sa bahagi ng unibersidad, pinasok din ng mga terorista ang isang Amai Pakpak Medical Center pero umalis din ngayong gabi bago mag-alas 9 ng gabi.

Sinabi ni Dr. Hussein Lucman ng ospital, wala naman silang sinaktan maliban sa pagtangay ng ilang medical supplies at kusang umalis din kahit wala pang dumarating na mga sundalo. Nagkaroon din ng sunog sa Marawi City Jail pero hindi pa makumpirma kung kagagawan din ito ng Maute group.

Inihayag ngayong gabi ni Lt. Col. Jo-ar Herrera, spokesman ng 1st Infantry Division, nagsasagawa na sila ng clearing operations sa area at inaasahan na ang pagdating ng dagdag puwersa ng militar.

www.bomboradyo.com:

No to Martial Law, Yes to God's Law – Bishop Dinualdo Gutierrez

Posted By: Bombo Radyo Koronadalon: May 24, 2017 | 11:41 AM

KORONADAL CITY – Kuntani wala ginlakip ang probinsiya sang South Cotabato sa deklarasyon sang Martial law bangud malinong kag wala sang kinagamo sa probinsiya.

Ini ang ginpahayag ni Bishop Dinualdo Gutierrez sang Diocese of Marbel bilang reaksiyon sa deklarasyon sang Martial law sa bug-os nga isla sang Mindanao.

Suno kay Bishop Gutierrez, magapabilin ang stand sang simbahan nga "No to martial law, Yes to God's law!".

Apang sa pihak sini, nagapati sa gihapon ang obispo nga indi magdesisyon ang pangulo para sa kapahamakan sang mga pumuluyo sang Mindanao.

Dako man ang kumpiyansa sini nga indi maghimo sang paglapas sa human rights law ang mga militar kag kapulisan sa probinsiya apisar nga ginpaidalom na sa martial law ang probinsiya.

Kadungan sini, nagpanawagan ang Obispo sa mga pumuluyo nga magpangamuyo para sa kalinong, mangin alerto kag magkooperar sa mga otoridad.

www.bomboradyo.com:

Marawi City naging ghost town, mga residente lumikas

Posted By: Bombo Radyo CdeOon: May 24, 2017 | 1:35 PM No Comments

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY – Nagmistulang ghost town ang buong lungsod ng Marawi ngayong araw.

Ito'y matapos magkanya-kaniya sa paglikas ang mga residente sa nasabing lugar at sinamantala rin ang ceasefire.

Ayon kay Dra. Notara Magumnang, sarado ang lahat ng mga tindahan at negosyo dahil sa takot ng mga residente.

Nahihirapan din sila sa kanilang komunikasyon dahil nakakaranas ng totally blackout ang buong lugar.

Naalarma rin daw sila sa mga kumakalat na text messages na binigyan lang sila ng hanggang alas-12:00 ng tanghali na lumikas dahil nagbanta ang mga Maute group na may gagawing pambobomba sa nasabing lugar.

Dahil dito, nakaranas ng grabeng trapiko ang Marawi City dahil nag-uunahan ang mga residente na lumikas sa nasabing lugar.

Ang ibang walang masakyan ay minabuting maglakad kahit walang kasiguraduhan kung saan magtutungo sa gitna na rin ng matinding sikat ng araw.

Habang nagaganap ito wala pang inaanunsiyo kung saang lugar magkakaroon ng evacuation centers.

Nitong hapon ay magkakaroon ng emergency meeting ang lokal na pamahalaan para sa mga susunod na hakbang.

Una nito, nanawagan si PNP spokesperson C/Supt. Dionardo Carlos na mag-ingat sa mga misinformation sa social media upang hindi mag-panic ang mga tao.

www.bomboradyo.com:

'We will resolve conflicts in less than 60 days – AFP

Posted By: Bombo Radyo CdeOon: May 24, 2017 | 2:27 PM

CAGAYAN DE ORO – Pagsisikapan umano ng Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) na malutas ang sagupaan ng tropa ng gobyerno at ISIS-linked Maute group sa Marawi City bagao pa man ang 60 days.

Ayon kay AFP Public Affairs Office chief Marine Colonel Edgard Arevalo, under control na ng militar ang naganap na bakbakan sa pagitan ng dalawang panig.

Nangako rin si Arevalo na tatapusin nila ang pursuit operations para sa ikatatahimik ng lugar.

Una nito, tiniyak ng AFP na hindi nila abusuhin ang implementasyon ng Martial Law sa buong Mindanao.

Nanawagan din siya sa publiko na aasahan ang maraming mga checkpoints at hindi dapat maalarma sa maraming presensiya ng mga sundalo na makikita sa bawat lugar.

Nilinaw din ng nasabing opisyal na walang Islamic State of Iraq (ISIS) sa Pilipinas.

www.bomboradyo.com:

Martial law declaration ni Duterte 'di malinaw, dapat muna sumangguni sa expert – lawyer

Posted By: Bombo Radyo Iloilo: May 24, 2017 | 2:24 PM

ILOILO CITY – Naniniwala ang isang political at legal expert na "ambiguous" o hindi malinaw ang pagdeklara ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte ng Martial Law sa buong rehiyon ng Mindanao.

Ito ay kasunod ng sagupaan ng puwersa ng gobyerno at Maute group sa Marawi City.

Sa panayam ng *Bombo Radyo Iloilo* kay Atty. Hector Teodosio, miyembro ng Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP) Iloilo Chapter, sinabi nito na dapat may ginawang formal declaration ang pangulo at kanya itong nilagdaan upang pormal ang pagpapatupad ng batas militar.

Ayon kay Teodosio, marami ang maaapektuhan sa pagdeklara ng batas militar kung saan suspendido ang civil law, civil rights, habeas corpus at ang application o extension ng military law o military justice sa sibilyan.

Naniniwala ang abogado na walang kompletong detalye ang presidente sa nangyayaring sagupaan sa pagitan ng tropa ng gobyerno at ng Maute group dahil nasa Russia pa ito nang nagpalabas ng utos at basta lang ito nagbitaw ng deklarasyon ng batas militar matapos matanggap ang masamang balita.

Sinabi ng abogado na dapat may nilagdaan na Presidential Proclamation ang pangulo upang mapaliwanag nang mabuti ang saklaw ng batas militar.

Nararapat rin aniya na sumangguni muna ang pangulo sa mga kalihim nito sa Department of National Defense, Department of Interior and Local Government, National Security Council, Kongreso at sa militar bago nagdeklara ng Martial Law.

Kilala raw si Duterte ayon sa abogado na papalit-palit ng desisyon at posible na babaguhin nito ang saklaw ng pagpapatupad ng Martilaw Law anumang oras.

Napag-alaman na ayon sa Article VII, Section 18 ng 1987 Philippine Constitution o Saligang Batas, may karapatan ang isang pangulo bilang commander-in-chief na magdeklara ng Martial Law na may maximum na 60 araw o dalawang buwan.

www.bomboradyo.com:

Martial Law declaration sa Mindanao, may limitasyon – experts

Posted By: Bombo Radyo Tuguegaraoon: May 24, 2017 | 2:44 PM

TUGUEGARAO CITY – Ipinaliwanag ni Fr. Ranhilio Aquino, dean ng San Beda College Graduate School of Law na isa sa mga kapangyarihan ng pangulo ng pilipinas ay ang pagdedeklara ng Martial Law kung may rebellion tulad sa kaganapan ngayon sa Marawi City.

Ayon sa kanya, malawak ang discretion ng Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte na pagbasehan ang mga facts sa sitwasyon

Gayunman, sinabi niya na may limitasyon dito dahil sa kailangan sa loob ng 48 oras ay kailangang pagbotohan ng mga mambabatas kung ipapawalang-bisa, ipagpapatuloy o palalawigin pa ang Martial Law.

Idinagdag pa ni Father Aquino na sinumang mamamayan ay pwedeng dumulog sa Korte Suprema para kuwestiyunin kung may basehan ba o wala ang Martial Law declaration.

Kasabay nito, nilinaw ni Aquino na bagamat umiiral ang batas militar sa Mindanao ay walang suspension ng writ of habeas corpus.

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Ayon naman kay Akbayan Rep. Tom Villarin, "uncalled for" at isang "knee-jerk reaction" muli ang naging desisyon na ito ng punong ehikutibo.

Nangangamba raw siya na lalo lamang lalala ang sitwasyon sa Mindanao, maging ang problema sa mga paglabag sa karapatang pantao kasabay ng deklarasyon na ito.

Maging si Magdalo Rep. Gary Alejano ganito rin ang pananaw sapagkat naka-confine lamang daw sa Lanao del Sur ang pag-atake ng Maute group.

Hindi naman din kontento si Alejano kung ang dahilan daw ng deklarasyon na ito ay security problems sa Mindanao, maliban pa sa krisis ngayon sa Marawi, sapagkat matagal na rin aniyang problema ito ng rehiyon.

Gayunman ay umaasa naman daw siya na hindi na tatagal pa ang deklarasyon ng Martial Law at kaagad na makontrol ng pamahalaan ang Maute group at ilan pang banta ng terorismo sa Mindanao at sa buong bansa.

www.bomboradyo.com:

Paliwanag ni Duterte, kalagayan ng publiko, kailangan kung palalawigin ang Martial Law – Senate president

Posted By: Bombo Dennis Jamitoo: May 24, 2017 | 2:54 PM

Pangunahing magiging rason kung palalawigin ng Kongreso ang Martial Law sa Mindanao ang magiging paliwanag ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte.

Pero ayon kay Senate President Koko Pimentel, mabigat na basehan din ang kalagayan ng publiko sa Mindanao na apektado ng kaguluhan.

"There is no question that the violence perpetrated by the Maute gang of terrorists allegedly in connivance with Abu Sayyaf has to be met by the corresponding force of the government to insure public safety of the residents of Mindanao and the tourists visiting the island," wika ni Pimentel.

Posible namang gawin bukas ang paghimay sa deklarasyon ng Martial Law dahil nakasaad sa batas na may 48 oras lamang ang Pangulo para ipaliwanag ang basehan nito ng kaniyang ibinabang batas militar.

Gagawin naman ang joint session sa House of Representatives dahil walang sapat na pwesto sa gusali ng Senado.

Troops hunt down Abu leader, Maute cohorts

Written by Mario J. Mallari

Wednesday, 24 May 2017 00:00

- Fierce clashes erupted yesterday afternoon between government forces and members of the Maute terror group, with the military conducting air strikes. The combat operation was launched following reports that Abu Sayyaf leader Isnilon Hapilon, along with the core members of the Maute group, was sighted in the area allegedly out to conduct terror attack. Lt. Col. Jo-ar Herrera, spokesman of the Army's 1st Infantry Division (1D), said that the operation was launched after reports from the local community in Marawi City about the presence of the terrorists in the area. Herrera said that the military started the operation at around 2 p.m. But as of press time yesterday there were still no result.

- The operation was launched in a residential area in Barangay Pasak, Marawi City.

"We launched surgical operation to neutralize the group which is planning to sow terrorism in Marawi City," said Herrera.

"Initially, we saw about 15 armed men... based on the report, allegedly including Isnilon Hapilon... so we are conducting operation against high value target," he added.

The military has been tracking down Hapilon in Lanao areas since January following reports that he was seriously wounded during air strike in Butig town. Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Chief of Staff Gen. Eduardo Ano described Hapilon then as being carried by his men on a makeshift stretcher and needed blood transfusion to survive.

A leader of the Abu Sayyaf group operating in Basilan, Hapilon is the acknowledged emir or leader of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in Southeast Asia.

He transferred to Central Mindanao, particularly in Lanao del Sur last December supposedly to establish ISIS caliphate there.

Thousands flee combat zone

The fighting reportedly sent thousands of residents fleeing while others were locked inside their homes. It happened about two days before the start of the fasting month of Ramadhan.

Marawi City is part of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

Police said the fighting erupted in the villages of Caloocan and Basak Malutlut, near the Lanao del Sur police provincial command and Mindanao State

University.

In a phone interview, Senior Supt. Oscar Nantes, Lanao del Sur police provincial director, said the clashes erupted between the Maute group and government forces at about 3 p.m. when a military-backed police team was to serve search warrants against members of the terror group.

Fighting erupted when the Maute group opened fire on personnel from the military's 103rd Brigade, he said.

Chief Supt. Reuben Sindac, PNP-ARMM regional director based here, said all police units across Lanao del Sur have been placed on heightened alert against the possible spillover of the fighting.

Armored personnel carriers backed the ground troops in fighting the still undetermined number of Maute Group members, Nantes said.

As of 4 p.m., two Air Force planes dropped several bombs in selected areas of Marawi City, particularly in the border with Lanao del Sur beside Lake Lanao.

Sporadic gun shots could still be heard in the heart of Marawi City, according to Zia Alonto Adiong, an ARMM lawmaker and a resident of Marawi City. He appealed for residents to stay home.

The clashes erupted while Muslims are preparing to start the fasting month, which is expected to begin this Friday with the possible sighting of the moon on Thursday night. There was no reported casualties as of posting time.

Martial law in Mindanao: What we know

Agence France-Presse / 03:38 PM May 24, 2017

Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte has imposed martial law in Mindanao to combat militants who have declared allegiance to the Islamic State group.

Here is what we know about why he declared martial law and what happens next:

What happened to trigger martial law?

Duterte acted after security forces on Tuesday battled dozens of gunmen in Marawi, a city of about 200,000 people. One policeman and two soldiers died in the fighting, authorities said.

Tuesday's violence was the latest in a series of deadly clashes with militants who have pledged allegiance to the Islamic State (IS) group, and are based throughout Mindanao.

Duterte's declaration fulfilled an often-repeated promise to impose martial law to combat the IS-linked militants, whom he has said are a growing threat to national security.

But he has said many times that martial law may be needed to solve many other problems, including illegal drugs.

Who are the militants?

Authorities said they were battling members of two of the best-known groups to have declared allegiance to IS, the Abu Sayyaf and Maute organizations.

The military said it was hunting Isnilon Hapilon, an Abu Sayyaf leader who has been named the Philippine head of IS. The US government is offering a \$5-million bounty for his capture.

The Abu Sayyaf is infamous for kidnapping foreigners and killing them if ransoms are not paid. It is also blamed for the nation's worst terror attacks, including the 2004 bombing of a ferry in Manila Bay that claimed more than 100 lives.

The Jakarta-based Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict said last year that deepening cooperation among the Maute gang, the Abu Sayyaf and other pro-IS groups meant more deadly violence was "a matter of when, not if".

Is martial law necessary?

Duterte had repeatedly said the growing influence of Islamic State was one of the nation's top security concerns, and martial law was necessary to stop it.

However Islamist militancy is not new to the southern Philippines, where a decades-long Muslim separatist insurgency claimed more than 120,000 lives.

Muslim rebels orchestrated a siege in the southern city of Zamboanga in 2013 that left more than 200 people dead, but the government of then-president Benigno Aquino did not declare martial law.

Aquino also said he had considered imposing martial law just before standing down last year in Sulu, island strongholds of the Abu Sayyaf in the far south of Mindanao. But Aquino said he decided against it partly because military rule could spark resentment among local people.

What will happen under martial law?

Martial law allows the president to "call out the armed forces to prevent or suppress lawless violence, invasion or rebellion", according to the constitution.

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said security forces would be able to arrest suspected militants and hold them for three days without charge.

Critics fear martial law will give security forces cover to carry out human rights abuses, citing the experience under dictator Ferdinand Marcos a generation ago.

During the nine years of martial law under Marcos, police and troops tortured, abducted and killed thousands of people who were critical of the dictatorship, according to rights groups and historians.

Duterte said Wednesday his version of martial law would be "harsh" and similar to that under Marcos.

What happens next?

The constitution limits martial law to 60 days unless congress agrees to extend it.

Duterte warned Wednesday it could last for a year.

The post-Marcos constitution imposed safeguards on martial law, including the requirement for congress to approve its imposition and extension. The Supreme Court can also rule on its legality.

However Duterte said in January he would ignore the constitutional safeguards if necessary, and may impose martial law across the nation.

"I don't care about the Supreme Court... because the right to preserve one's life and my nation, my country transcends everything else," he said.

Soldier killed, 8 others wounded in clashes with Abus, Maute in Marawi

By: Frances Mangosing - Reporter / @FMangosingINQ

INQUIRER.net / 07:30 PM May 23, 2017

One soldier was killed and eight others were injured as police and military clashed with members of the Maute and terrorist groups in Marawi City, Lanao del Sur on Tuesday.

The clashes happened in Brgy. Basak Malulut around 2 p.m. and is still ongoing as of posting time, said Lt. Col. Jo-Ar Herrera, spokesperson of the Army's 1st Infantry Division said.

The group of armed men was believed to be led by Abu Sayyaf Group leader Isnilon Hapilon, who was previously based in Basilan. The military has previously reported that Hapilon was badly hurt in one of its airstrikes early this year.

A separate spot military report said that the Marawi-Iligan road is temporarily closed. The Department of National Defense earlier said that Hapilon left Basilan province to establish a province or "wilayat" of the Islamic State in Lanao del Sur.

There were also circulating reports that terrorists raised their black flag at the Amai Pakpak Medical Center and attacked the city's police station, but Herrera said they are still validating the information.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines said that the operation in Marawi was initiated by combined state forces contrary to other reports.

"We received reliable info on Hapilon and a number of his cohorts. Updates to follow as the operation is still ongoing. Please do not believe propaganda from other groups," AFP spokesperson Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla said.

A staff member from the Marawi City local government said that they have activated a city crisis committee and peace and order council to pacify the situation.

Marawi City is nearby Butig town, where the Maute had previously established its presence. The Maute group is one of less than a dozen new armed Muslim groups that have pledged allegiance to the Islamic State group and formed a loose alliance in the southern Philippines in recent years.

It has been blamed for a bomb attack that killed 15 people in southern Davao city, President Rodrigo Duterte's hometown, last September and a number of attacks on government forces in Lanao, although it has faced setbacks from a series of military offensives.

In April, troops backed by airstrikes killed dozens of Maute militants and captured their jungle camp near Lanao del Sur's Piagapo town.

Troops found homemade bombs, grenades, combat uniforms and passports of suspected Indonesian militants in the camp.

Residents took to Twitter about the clashes, reporting of gunfire, raising of black flags, and air strikes. *JE/rga/AP*

WE'RE NOT OK: Marawi mayor, residents confirm fires in city, blackout, gunfire

Armed groups set fires in city jail, local college

By: Edwin O. Fernandez - @inquire dot net
Inquirer Mindanao / 12:25 AM May 24, 2017

COTABATO CITY – Marawi City Mayor Majul Usman Gandamra confirmed on Tuesday night that the city jail and the Dansalan College were on fire shortly before 10 p.m. Tuesday.

He declined further interview as he was receiving briefings from security officials.

"Hindi po kami okay dito (We are not okay here.) May nasusunog sa town (There are buildings on fire in the town) and we are not hearing any fire truck sirens or what. And now lights are out and we are hearing gunshots again. #PrayforMarawi," a Marawi City resident posted on his Facebook as of 11 p.m.

Majeed Andong of Kabalikat Civicom, a non-government radio communications group, said that at 11 p.m. "power and communication lines were shut down and all exits and entry points to Marawi City are heavily guarded by the elements police and military for possible exit of extremists group."

He said Dansalan College and St. Mary's Church were on fire.

"There is chaos inside the city, people remain in their homes and the armed men continue firing their guns," Andong said. **SFM**

DND Statement on the Situation in Marawi City

Posted by Alvin Santiago on May 24, 2017 at 5:37 PM

In light of what is happening in Marawi City, we call on our fellow Filipinos in Mindanao to be security conscious at all times and remain vigilant in your day to day activities. Rest assured that the situation in Marawi City is already contained. With the deployment of additional forces, it is only a matter of time before we take all these evil doers down. Secretary Delfin Lorenzana is on his way back from Russia with the President to personally oversee the situation.

The imposition of martial law in Mindanao is a necessary step in order for government security forces to stop the threat that these terrorists pose, who are mostly not originally from Marawi. As part of our operations, additional troops will be deployed to Marawi City to augment the forces already there.

The President's verbal declaration is valid, and as such Martial Law has been in effect since 10 PM last night. We emphasize, however, that Martial Law does not suspend the Constitution but authorizes the Armed Forces of the Philippines to take over law enforcement operations from the Philippine National Police, and conduct arrests and searches in accordance with the rule of law and human rights.

Lastly, we appeal to the public to help our troops on the ground and counter the misinformation campaign from terrorist supporters by being very selective and responsible in sharing critical information on new media and other platforms. It is better to report any suspicious activities in your areas directly to the proper authorities.

What is happening in the city of Marawi and Mindanao is another challenge that we can overcome together. We must stand united against a common enemy—terrorists and the fear they want to sow among the innocent.

RELEASED | TSg Paredes Finally Freed by the NPA

Posted by Alvin Santiago on May 24, 2017 at 6:20 PM

CAMP OSITO D. BAHIAN, Bukidnon (DWDD) – TSg Joseph T Paredes, a member of the 4th Infantry Division, Philippine Army who was abducted by the NPA rebels last May 5, 2017 was already turned over to Hon Azucena P Huervas, City Mayor, Valencia City, Bukidnon at her residence in Brgy Catumbalon, Valencia City, Bukidnon on May 23, 2017 at around 9:30 pm.

After relentless calls from the civilian sector denouncing the abduction and series of military offensives conducted by the personnel of 403rd Infantry Brigade against the perpetrators to pressure them to free TSg Paredes, the NPA Custodial Unit finally turned over the latter to the City Mayor of Valencia City in her residence on the evening of May 23, 2017. From there, said soldier was sent to Valencia City Police Station before turning him over to his family together with the military. TSg Paredes will undergo series of medical checkups to determine if he is currently in a fine shape.

TSg Paredes, together with his wife was unarmed when the NPA rebels pretended to be police officials who at that time raided a security agency in Valencia City flagged him down in a road blockade and eventually abducted him on May 5, 2017. Said atrocity is a clear manifestation of the blatant insincerity and noncooperation of the rebels to the continuing efforts of the government in instituting peace talks between these insurgents and the government to achieve a lasting peace most especially that the ongoing peace negotiations is almost on its fifth round already.

Colonel Eric C Vinoya, Commander of the 403rd Infantry (Peacemaker) Brigade, commends the soldiers involved in the operations for their efforts to physically pressure the NPA which eventually led to the release of TSg Paredes. He also denounced the terroristic acts of the rebels who he labeled as treacherous for conducting successive acts of violence despite of ongoing peace talks with the government. *"I commend the civilian sector and my troops for tremendous social and physical pressures they have exerted against the NPA. There is no doubt that these pressures coming from the people and our troops on the ground have compelled the NPA to release the abducted soldier unconditionally. By this time, he is already with his family after medical checkups. I am deeply dismayed by the fact however, that there are still groups like NPA which commit crimes against humanity for some ill reasons. This NPA action is an apparent violation against TSg Paredes' rights for he is illegally seized for almost a month. We call upon these NPA leaders to end their atrocities if you are truly sincere with the government's endeavor of attaining peace."* – says Colonel Vinoya. 403IBde / MCAG

DEMORALIZED | 11 NPA rebels surrender in Sultan Kudarat

Posted by Alvin Santiago on May 24, 2017 at 11:35 AM

SENATOR NINYO AQUINO, Sultan Kudarat (DWDD) – Eleven members of the New People's Army surrendered to the Philippine Army in Midtungok village.

1st Lt John Austin Jamora, the Commanding Officer of the Alpha Company, 33rd Infantry (Makabayan) Battalion, said that the surrenderees handed over 8 high-powered rifles, including 5 M16 rifles, 2 M1 Garand Rifles, and 1 AK 47 Rifle. He said that all of the surrenderees are Manobo tribe residents of the hinterland village of Midtungok.

Among them are: Ayob Mopac, Benjamin Kalay, Samuel Badak, Mel Pandi, Kang Mopac, Tiin Mooac, Usad Mopac, Long Oding, Sebio Masandag, Gabriel Mopac, and Nonoy Lapi.

Col Bismarck Soliba, the Commander of the 1st Mechanized Infantry Brigade, said that the NPA in Sultan Kudarat is losing members due to demoralization in the ranks. "The lumads are disgruntled over the unfulfilled promises of the NPA leaders. The members are dying in the encounters but the 'Supamil' (family support) for their followers was not provided," he said.

MGen Arnel Dela Vega, the Commander of the 6th Infantry Division has commended the units who are involved in the surrender negotiations.

"This is a combined effort of the 33rd Infantry Battalion and the 57th Infantry Battalion under Ltc Enrique Clemente. The surrender of NPA members reflect the waning influence of the communist movement in the countryside," said Dela Vega. "I am glad that these rebels have realized the futility of the armed struggle.

Mayor Randy Eciija Jr of Sen Ninoy Aquino town has shown to them that the LGU is ready to address the social issues in their town," he added. **6DPAO / MCAG**

ARRIVAL CEREMONY | BRP Gregorio del Pilar after completing voyage from Singapore

Posted by Alvin Santiago on May 24, 2017 at 10:52 AM

SASA WHARF, Panacan, Davao City (DWDD) – The Philippine Navy will tender an arrival ceremony for BRP Gregorio Del Pilar FF15 in connection with the completion of its voyage from Singapore after participating in the Republic of Singapore Navy's (RSN) 50th Anniversary Celebration themed as "RSN50: Maritime Nation, Maritime Force" from May 11 – 19, 2017.

According to Capt Donn Anthony L Miraflor PN (GSC), Commander, Naval Task Group 80.5, Davao City Mayor Sarah Duterte – Carpio will be the Guest of Honor and Lieutenant Gen. Rey Leonardo B Guerrero AFP, Commander Eastern Mindanao Command (EASTMINCOM) will preside over the Arrival Ceremony for the 236 members of the Philippine Navy's contingent to the RSN Golden Jubilee celebration.

The PN contingent successfully completed its mission in Singapore which include among others, its participation in the International Maritime Defense Exhibition (IMDEX) Asia 2017. IMDEX Asia is a premier maritime defense show serving the Asia-Pacific region and beyond comprising four inter-related events; Exhibition, Conference, VIP Delegations' Programme and Warship Display. As the 11th in its series of exhibitions, IMDEX Asia has established a reputation within the maritime defense industry that such exhibit is a must-attend show. **NTG 80.5 / MCAG**

ENCOUNTER | Soldiers engaged NPA attackers in Series of Firefights

Posted by Alvin Santiago on May 24, 2017 at 7:51 AM

CGMTY, MAWAB, Compostela Valley Province (DWDD) – Troops pursuing the attackers of civilian establishments in Davao and Panabo Cities clashed with the remnants of the New People's Army (NPA) in series of firefights in Davao City, Davao del Sur and Davao Occidental from May 6 to 11.

According to Major Ezra Balagtey, spokesman, Eastern Mindanao Command, two bodies of dead rebels, a cal .38 revolver, an M14 Rifle and various war materiel were recovered by the troops.

More wounded and dead rebels were carried by the fleeing rebels as seen and reported by the people in the area. One soldier was killed in action while nine others were wounded and already evacuated to hospitals in Davao City in the May 10 armed clash between troops of 3rd Infantry Battalion and NPA rebels belonging to Pulang Bagani Company (PBC) 1 in Barangay Dalagdag, Calinan District, Davao City.

Troops from 3IB were involved in nine encounters from May 6 to 10 while troops from 73IB were involved in three firefights on May 7, 9 and 11.

Troops from 3IB engaged in six firefights with the NPA's PBC 1 in Brgy Dominga, Calinan District, Davao City from May 6 to 9. Another group of soldiers engaged the same NPA group twice in Barangay Sumimao, Calinan District on May 9 where the retreating rebels left behind a dead body of their comrade with a caliber .38 pistol. The dead NPA was identified as Jojo Dagahoya, a member of PBC1 from Sitio Balinanao, Brgy Fatima, Paquibato District, Davao City

Another group of soldiers engaged the fleeing NPA band at around 1 a.m. on May 10 at Barangay Dalagdag which resulted to one soldier killed and nine others hurt. The body of a dead NPA and several war materiel were left behind by the fleeing CTs. The dead body was identified as Eleazar Templado alias Chin, a political instructor of PBC1 from Calinan Proper, Davao City. Templado is believed to be a former UCCP Pastor in Davao City, a convenor of Kontra Daya last May 2013 elections, convenor of Church Labor Solidarity Network (CLSN) and former spokesperson of (PCPR) Promotion of Church and Peoples Response, Southern Mindanao Region. Names of the casualties are being withheld pending notification of their next of kin.

Meanwhile, troops from 73rd Infantry Battalion engaged in a firefight 20 NPA rebels belonging to Guerilla Front 71 on 7:30 a.m. of May 7 at Sitio Kidalagan, Brgy Danwata, Malita, Davao Occidental. The same troops caught up with the fleeing rebels and another firefight occurred on 6:30 a.m. of May 9 at the same barangay.

Another group of 73IB troops engaged 20 NPA rebels in a firefight on 7:30 a.m. of May 11 at Sitio Lawisa, Brgy Sibulan, Santa Cruz, Davao del Sur which resulted to the recovery of one M14 rifle

left by the CTs. No soldier was hurt on these three encounters. Strengthened security measures together with the police are being undertaken to block the fleeing rebels from escaping the area.

Major General Rafael Valencia, the 10ID Commander and concurrently the Joint Task Force Haribon (JTFH) commander, expressed grief on the death of the soldier who was killed-in-action (KIA) and prayed for the fast recovery of the wounded soldiers. "We shall relentlessly pursue the anti-peace and anti-development nuisance propaganda army (NPA) of the communists who only make the lives of the Filipinos miserable," MGen Valencia said. **10DPAO / MCAG**

13 Maute group members killed in ongoing clearing operations in Marawi City — AFP

By Priam F. Nepomuceno May 24, 2017

MANILA, May 24 — Ongoing clearing operations has so far resulted in the death of 13 Maute Group members, allied with Abu Sayyaf leader Isnilon Hapilon, who clashed with military units in Marawi City, Lanao Del Sur on Tuesday.

This was confirmed by Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) public affairs office chief Col. Edgard Arevalo in briefing Wednesday night.

Of the 13 Maute members killed by government troops, two bodies were recovered and being identified.

On the part of the military, Arevalo said five died in action and 31 were wounded as of this posting.

He said the AFP has already cleared the Amai Pakpak Hospital, Marawi City Hall and Mindanao State University compounds of Maute Group presence.

Arevalo said he has no specific information on the remaining areas still to be cleared.

He said that Western Mindanao Command chief, Lt. Gen. Carlito Galvez, announced that it needs two to three days to completely clear Marawi City of snipers and improvised explosive devices placed by the lawless group.

"We need to be very cautious in dealing with such threats," he said.

Arevalo said the AFP has estimated the number of Maute Group members involved in the Marawi City incident between 50 to 80.

The clash between Maute Group members started around 2:00 p.m. Tuesday at Barangay Basak, Malutlut when government security forces learned of the presence of Hapilon and his cohorts.

Hapilon was reported severely wounded in the series of military operations in Lanao Del Sur in early January.

The former is reportedly the representative of the ISIS terror group in the Philippines. (PNA)

'Hello Garci' general, 25 others get CA nod

MANILA, May 24 — The Commission on Appointments (CA) on Wednesday confirmed the appointment of 25 generals and senior officers of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), including a general involved in the controversial "Hello Garci" scandal during the 2004 presidential elections.

Before he was confirmed, Brig. Gen. Pedro Sumayo answered several questions on his involvement in the scandal particularly on wiretapping the phones of then-President and now Pampanga Rep. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and former Commission on Elections (Comelec) Commissioner Virgilo Garcillano.

It may be recalled that the scandal involved a conversation between Arroyo and Garcillano where election results were rigged in Arroyo's favor.

Grilling came mostly from Senators Panfilo Lascon and Gringo Honasan who questioned the intention of wiretapping and reprimanded him, who was lieutenant colonel for the AFP's Intelligence Service that time, for allowing it to happen.

Sumayo said that he was aware of alleged wiretapping, which he said, was not part of their operations that time.

He further said that a military probe on the wiretapping incident was conducted but he did not know the results because he had moved to another unit.

The general, meanwhile, vowed to the CA that wiretapping will never happen again.

"I assure sir that that will never happen again sir. my job now is to defend the network and the infrastructure of the Armed Forces of the Philippines," Sumayo said.

Below is the list of officers confirmed by the Commission on Appointments:

1. Carlito Galvez Jr. to the rank of Lieutenant General
2. Danilo Rodelas to the rank of Rear Admiral
3. Allan Ferdinand Cusi to the rank of Rear Admiral
4. Arnel Dela Vega to the rank of Major General
5. Jess Estoesta to the rank of Brigadier General
6. Perfecto Rimando Jr. to the rank of Brigadier General
7. Francisco Mendoza Jr. to the rank of Brigadier General
8. Arnulfo Matanguihan to the rank of Brigadier General
9. Melquides Ordiales to the rank of Brigadier General
10. Manolo Samarita to the rank of Brigadier General

11. Emmanuel Salamat to the rank of Major General
12. Glorivine Dida to the rank of Brigadier General
13. Ramiro Manuel Rey to the rank of Brigadier General
14. Nixon Fortes to the rank of Brigadier General
15. Raniel Ramiro to the rank of Brigadier General
16. Robert Empedrad to the rank of Rear Admiral
17. Felipe Beljar to the rank of Brigadier General
18. Pedro Sumayo to the rank of Brigadier General
19. Ronnie Evangelista to the rank of Major General
20. Felicisimo Budiongan to the rank of Brigadier General
21. Henrico Rennaldo Macalalad to the rank of Brigadier General
22. Jose Faustino Jr. to the rank of Brigadier General
23. Lope Dagoy to the rank of Brigadier General
24. Erickson Gloria to the rank of Brigadier General
25. Ernesto Lopena to the rank of Brigadier General
26. Pelagio Valenzuela to the rank of Brigadier General. (Azer N. Parrocha/PNA)

KEY POSTS | PA Installs New Chiefs of Offices

Posted by Alvin Santiago on May 24, 2017 at 6:39 AM

FORT ANDRES BONIFACIO, Metro Manila (DWDD) – The Philippine Army has installed new leaders to the Office of the Army Internal Auditor, Assistant Chief of Staff for Personnel, G1, and Army Adjutant during the Joint Change of Chiefs of Office ceremony held here on Monday, May 22, 2017.

The new chiefs of office are Brig. Gen. Gavin D. Edjawan replacing Col. Edgar P. Nigos who served as the Acting Chief Army Internal Auditor; Col. Ramil M. Bitong who replaced Col. Ernesto C. Torres Jr as the Assistant Chief of Staff for Personnel, G1; and lastly, Col. Albert G. Baybayan who replaced Col. Luis Vincent A. Tacderas as the Army Adjutant.

Edjawan is a member of PMA "Sinagtala" Class of 1986. He served as the Commanding Officer of 51st Infantry Battalion in 2006; Commanding Officer of the 37th Infantry Battalion, 6th Infantry Division, PA in 2008; Chief of the Army Resource Management Office in 2013; and the Assistant Division Commander of 9th Infantry Division, PA in 2016. He was also the Deputy Director of Army Modernization and Project Management in 2010. He is not new to the tasks of the Army Internal Auditor because of his experience in auditing and resource management.

Bitong is a member of the PMA "Makatao" Class of 1989. His military career began when he became the Platoon Leader of Charlie Company, 52nd Infantry Battalion, 8th Infantry Division, PA in 1990. Later on, he took higher posts such as the Chief of Staff of Defense Intelligence Security Group, Department of National Defense in 2005; Commanding Officer of 11th Infantry Battalion, 3rd Infantry Division, PA in 2010; and Deputy Commander of the 301st Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, PA early this year.

Lastly, Baybayan entered the military service in 1985 and has acquired his Masters in Education from Harvardian Colleges in 2006. He has been designated several notable positions such as the Department Head of Adjutant General Service Department, Combat Service Support School, Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), PA in 2003; and Commanding Officer of Headquarters and Headquarters Support Group, Southern Luzon Command, Armed Forces of the Philippines in 2013. He also served as the Executive Officer of Office of the Army Adjutant, PA in 2014 making him suitable to his current post.

On the other hand, the outgoing chiefs of office were also assigned to new posts. Nigos resumed his post as the Deputy Army Internal Auditor. Tacderas is the new Chief, Armed Forces of the Philippines Pension and Gratuity Management Center and Torres is the Commander of the Army's 1003rd Brigade, 10th Infantry Division. OACPA / MCAG

PATH TOWARDS PEACE | Three (3) NPAs Surrenders to 8IB in Impasugong

Posted by Alvin Santiago on May 24, 2017 at 5:02 AM

BUKIDNON (DWDD) – Three member of the NPA surrenders to the 8th Infantry Battalion as its Headquarters in Impasugong today.

According to 1LT Erwin P Bugarin, CMO Officer, 8th Infantry Battalion, in the morning of 22 May 2017, three members of the New People's Army surrendered themselves bringing along with them assorted firearms. Former rebels who previously surrendered facilitated the return of their comrades back to the government by taking initiative in making them understand to choose a peaceful path.

The Philippine Army welcomes all those who embrace the path towards peace and development. This is the product of us working together and helping those who got lost find their way back to their community. Armed Struggle will never be a solution to resolve issues nor will it be a way to achieving just and lasting peace.

By now, growing awareness spreads fast and their members now question the ideals of the organization which they are still a member of. It is never too late to give peace a chance. **8IB**
CMO / MCAg