

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



TEAM ARMY

Serving the people. Securing the land.

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OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

NEWS CLIPPINGS

01 November 2017

Wednesday

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

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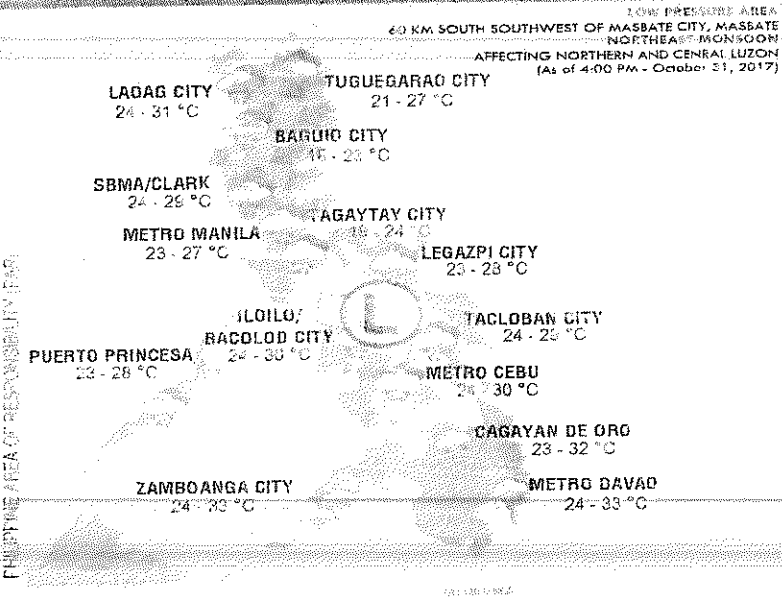







BALANCED NEWS - TEARLESS VIEWS

TODAY'S WEATHER FORECAST | NOVEMBER 1, 2017 | WEDNESDAY

LOW PRESSURE AREA
60 KM SOUTH SOUTHWEST OF MASBATE CITY, MASBATE
NORTHEAST MONSOON
AFFECTING NORTHERN AND CENTRAL LUZON
(As of 4:00 PM - October 31, 2017)



PHILIPPINE AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY (PAR)

SUNRISE 5:51 AM

SUNSET 6:28 PM

MOONRISE 3:23 PM

MOONSET 2:49 AM

FIRST QUARTER OCT 31 8:22 AM

FULL MOON NOV 4 1:23 PM

LOW TIDE 2:22 PM

HIGH TIDE 6:79 AM



MANILA COAST HARBOR

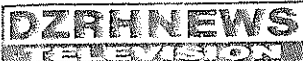
Partly cloudy in afternoon with rain showers.

Partly cloudy in afternoon with rain showers and thunderstorms.


Cloudy skies with rain showers and thunderstorms.

Light rain.

METRO MANILA	24 - 31 °C	25 - 31 °C	TAGAYTAY	21 - 29 °C	21 - 29 °C	TACLOBAN	24 - 31 °C	24 - 32 °C
TUGUEGARAO	23 - 32 °C	22 - 31 °C	LEGAZPI	25 - 33 °C	25 - 32 °C	CAGAYAN DE ORO	24 - 33 °C	25 - 32 °C
LAOAG	25 - 32 °C	24 - 31 °C	PUERTO PRINCESA	25 - 32 °C	25 - 32 °C	METRO DAVAO	25 - 33 °C	25 - 33 °C
BAGUIO	16 - 26 °C	16 - 24 °C	ILOILO/BACLOD	25 - 32 °C	25 - 32 °C	ZAMBOANGA	24 - 33 °C	25 - 33 °C
SBMA/CLARK	24 - 32 °C	24 - 32 °C	METRO CEBU	25 - 32 °C	25 - 33 °C	 		



MONDAY - FRIDAY
11AM & 5PM



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

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THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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Golden age of partnership

Japan pledges 'maximum support' for Marawi rehab, \$1 B for infra projects

By ARGYLL CYRUS B. GEDUCOS

TOKYO, Japan - The Philippines and Japan are now entering a "golden age of strategic partnership" after the world super power pledged to extend "maximum support" for the rehabilitation of the war-torn city of Marawi City.

This was disclosed by Duterte after meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe at the Kantei, or the Prime Minister's office here, Monday evening. That same night, President Duterte and Prime Minister Abe witnessed the signing of the exchange notes on the provision of a yen loan of over US\$1 billion for three infrastructure projects in the Philippines.

The President said in a joint press conference with Abe that the Japanese leader had a full understanding of the challenges the Philippines faced while Marawi City was under siege by the Daesh-inspired terrorists.

"(Abe) conveyed ready support for our efforts to address the problem of terrorism and violent extremism. And, he offered timely assistance for the affected communities and residents," Duterte said.

The President said it was only right that he travelled to Japan for his first official visit after addressing the threat of terrorism in Marawi City. He also thanked Japan for its continuing efforts in bringing peace in Mindanao.

"It is, therefore, fitting and ►4

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Golden age of...

proper that after the liberation of Marawi City from the grip of Maute terrorists, my first official visit overseas takes place in Japan – a true friend which has stood squarely behind the Philippines in my country's onward advance [to] greater peace, progress and prosperity," Duterte said.

"I thanked Japan for its full support for our efforts to bring just and lasting peace in Mindanao. Apart from its involvement in the peace process, Japan is already on the ground as we proceed with reconstructing Marawi and rebuilding the lives of those affected," he added.

"Our commitment and resolve show the desire to further expand cooperative ties. I dare say that, considering what we have accomplished and achieved, the Philippines and Japan are building a golden age [for] our strategic partnership," he continued.

According to Duterte, the commitment between the two allied countries, founded on democratic values, will stand the test of time.

"Working together, we should have much to show and to be proud of in the years to come," he added.

Japan has long been providing assistance for peace and development in Mindanao. Since 2006, Japan has been providing concentrated assistance for community development, human resource development, institutional building and sustainable economic development under the Japan-Bangsamoro Initiatives for Reconstruction and Development (J-BIRD).

In his statement, Abe recognized the importance the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Marawi City for his "dear and cherished friend" President Duterte, and for the affected Marawi citizens, and vowed to extend his government's utmost support.

"We will provide maximum support for the restoration and reconstruction of Marawi City and we will strengthen support for Mindanao and toward the establishment of an autonomous government, we will respond to the progress of processing," he said.

Abe also commended Duterte on how he was able to handle the threat of the Islamic State (IS) in Mindanao and vowed to support his objective to establish stability and development of the island.

"I'd like to express my heartfelt respect for the leadership exerted by His Excellency President Duterte going forward in his efforts to fight terrorism and also for the stability in Mindanao and the development; and in his attempts to ensure this, we would like to provide full support to President Duterte's approaches," he said.

In a briefer of Abe's statement provided to members of the Japanese and Philippine media, Japan is set to send equipment for the rehabilitation and

reconstruction of Marawi City and its surrounding areas.

Japan is also considering providing further assistance, including possible support for road construction and improvement once the Philippine government's post-conflict needs assessment on the war-torn city is completed.

Japanese commitments

Before the joint press statement of the two leaders, the exchange of notes on yen loan for over US\$1 billion for three infrastructure projects in the Philippines was signed by Foreign Affairs Secretary Alan Peter Cayetano and Japanese Foreign Affairs Minister Taro Kono.

According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) in Japan, one of the three projects is the Cavite Industrial Area Flood Risk Management Project with a loan provision of up to ¥15.928 billion or roughly ₱7.3 billion.

The project aims to reduce flood damage in Cavite by implementing measures to counter flooding in the province. It is also expected to help overcome vulnerability and contribute to sustainable economic growth in the Philippines.

The loan has an interest rate of 0.3 percent per annum, while rate of interest of the consulting services will be 0.01 percent per annum. It is payable for 30 years after the 10-year grace period.

Abe also pledged the provision of a yen loan of up to ¥104.53, or roughly ₱47.6 billion, for the Metro Manila Subway Project (Phase 1) I.

According to the MOFA, this project will contribute to relieving serious traffic congestion in Metro Manila by seeking to meet growing transportation demand. It will also ease atmospheric pollution and climate change through the development of a subway in Metro Manila.

The implementation of this project is expected to contribute to sustainable growth by promoting investment in the Philippines.

The Subway project yen loan has an interest rate of 0.1 percent per annum (0.01 percent per annum for consulting services), and is payable for 28 years after a grace period of 12 years.

Abe also pledged a yen loan of up to ¥9,399 billion, or up to ₱4.3 billion, for the Arterial Road Bypass Project (Phase IID) in Plaridel, Bulacan.

According to the MOFA, the project will contribute to relieving traffic congestion and improving transportation capacity and efficiency in Plaridel City by constructing a bypass road along the Philippines-Japan Friendship Highway.

The Philippines-Japan Friendship Highway is an important general arterial highway that directly connects Metro-Manila with Central Luzon, in the vicinity of the city.

The Road Bypass Project yen loan

has an interest rate of 1.5 percent per annum (0.01 percent per annum for consulting services), and is payable for 20 years after the 10-year grace period.

In his statement, Abe said the Japanese government will speedily promote the building of the Metro Manila Subway Project, improve projects for the North South Commuter Rail, and enhance disaster reduction-oriented quality infrastructure cooperation.

Abe said the Philippines and Japan will further promote bilateral cooperation in the areas of energy, employment creation, information and communications technology, environment, agriculture and disaster reduction.

"I would like to work hand-in-hand with my close friend President Duterte to further deepen the bonds of friendship between our two countries and we'll cooperate towards peace and prosperity of the region and international community," he said.

Duterte, on the other hand, thanked Abe for the warm reception and excellent arrangements accorded to him during his second visit to Japan.

The President also said that, as strategic partners, cooperation between the Philippines and Japan was now expansive and multi-dimensional.

"Our discussions today were very warm, open, and comprehensive. Both sides recognized today that there is still ample room for even more significant growth in all areas of mutual concern," Duterte said.

Japan's ¥1-T assistance

Duterte also thanked Japan for its commitment to extended government assistance to the Philippines worth ¥1 trillion, or roughly ₱430 billion, for the next five years.

"I am pleased with Japan's reiteration that it is fully committed to the 1 trillion yen pledge (of assistance to the Philippines," he said.

"This covers huge impact and high value infrastructure projects that my country needs to sustain and spur our economic growth. There will be some of the most ambitious and groundbreaking projects, including the Metro Manila Subway project, and major developments in the regions and provinces," he added.

Support to Duterte

Abe also expressed support to Duterte as chairman of this year's Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

"This year, President Duterte is serving as Chair of the ASEAN which is celebrating his 50th Anniversary. We will provide full support to ASEAN's attempts to strengthen unity and centrality and its attempts to develop as a free and open community," he said.

"Two weeks from now, there will be a series of summit meetings of the ASEAN. And so that these meetings will be a success, we will provide our maximum support to President Duterte who will be serving as Chair," he added.

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Army Headquarters, Pasay City, Philippines



GINUGUNITANG KABAYANIHAN
Nagtirik ng watawat ng Pilipinas ang Boy Scout sa isang puntod sa Libingan ng mga Bayani sa Taguig City kahapon, bisperas ng Undas.
ALI VICOY

November 2017

The Manila Times

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LAGS FOR HEROES Boy scouts plant flags beside crosses marking the burial places of soldiers at the Libingan ng mga Bayani in guig City on Tuesday as part of activities to mark All Saints' Day. PHOTO BY RUSSEL PALMA

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PEACE AND ORDER — Two platoons from the Philippine Army prepare for deployment yesterday in the vicinity of cemeteries in Dagupan City, Pangasinan, just as soldiers in other parts of the country have been assigned to peace and order duties during today's revered holiday of visiting the dead. (Jojo Riñoza)

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ARMY

Pahina. 7



Nagtirik ng flaglets ang mga sundalo at boy scouts sa puntod ng mga tinaguriang bayani ng bayan sa Libingan ng mga Bayani sa bisperas ng Undas o All Saints' Day sa Taguig City kahapon. (Kuha ni Edd Gumban)

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New AFP chief warns IS still in PH

ZAMBOANGA CITY -- The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) has alerted all military units to monitor the presence of Islamic State (IS)-inspired groups in their respective areas of jurisdiction.

This was disclosed on Monday by Lt. Gen. Rey Leonardo Guerrero, newly installed AFP chief-of-staff, citing terror threat still exists in the country.

Guerrero was here for his first command visit after he assumed as the new and 49th AFP chief-of-staff on Thursday, October 26.

"Before the Marawi (fighting broke out), we have already monitored that they are moving around the country," Guerrero disclosed.

"It is highly possible that they have been able to go around to other areas as well," he added.

He said they are working with all concerned stake holders to prevent and counter violent extremism and to ensure IS ideology is not being spread to the other parts of the Philippines.

"Not for now. But we are not discounting the possibility," he replied

when as about terrorists' threat to attack other areas in the country.

Lt. Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr., Western Mindanao Command (Westmincom) chief, said religious leaders and local government units have joined forces to prevent the infiltration of terrorists in their respective localities.

"They don't want to experience similar to what happened in Marawi City," Galvez added.

Guerrero was given honors upon his arrival at Camp Basilio Navarro that houses the Westmincom head-

quarters in this city.

He met in a closed-door command conference with the unit commanders of Westmincom to be abreast of the prevailing situation in the region.

He relayed to the troops the programs of President Rodrigo Roa Duterte for the AFP during the "talk to the men" activity that followed the conference.

Guerrero, accompanied by other AFP officials, later partook of a boodle fight lunch with the officers, men and civilians employees of Westmincom.

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INQUIRIES

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NEW AFP CHIEF AND THE FIGHT AGAINST COMMUNISTS

Is a brighter future not just for the Armed Force of the Philippines (AFP) but for the whole country – particularly on the part of its national youth? Chief of the AFP, Lt. Gen. Leonardo Rodriguez, the newly appointed AFP chief, has the same inclination toward fighting against the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) which did nothing but sow terror and violence just like its terrorist counterparts (i.e. the defeated Japanese, the pro-Filipino group Abu Sayyaf, and the Burmese Islamic Freedom Fighters).

Time and again the CPP and its political wing, the National Democratic Front (NDF) over that peace talks and negotiations are just one aspect of the “approach” in order to resolve the long-standing armed conflict. Accordingly, there has to be an actual effort on the part of the government for the true realization of social and economic reforms which the communist movement is allegedly “fighting for”.

In all fairness, the government is continuously reaching out to these rebels by preparing the channels only by the resumption of peace talks and by encouraging peaceful surrender among the members of its armed wing, the New People's Army (NPA). These concessions or forbearance, notwithstanding, the AFP has been adamant in instructing its NPA to put up more resistance against government troops and other state forces, to the detriment of nationwide development and betterment of Filipino communities.

If CPP is willing and ready to tackle the root causes of the Philippines' current social and economic problems and issues as well as formulate lasting social

and economic reforms with the government, how come there are not even a single occasion to exemplify such a conduct? In fact, what Filipino have witnessed throughout the years are the constant and persistent of their use of terrorism and violence in order to put pressure on the government, and for the latter to yield to its mostly unreasonable, unorthodox, and grand demands.

From an ideological viewpoint, that the business in the peace talks and negotiations is attributable not to the government but to the CPP/NPA/NDF. What these militants want is a so-called four in that seeks to cripple and deprive the government of its fundamental and constitutionally mandated powers and authority. Then if they don't get what they want, they resort to manipulating innocent and vulnerable Filipinos to take up their unlawful objectives and causes and to sow terror and violence among peace-loving citizens and communities.

I support the government's firmness in its exercise of a monopoly and authority over the island. If CPP/NPA members have no intention to surrender and work sincerely with the government, the latter, by which the powers of our sovereignty are upheld, must perform such acts necessary to quell the communist's stubborn resistance, unyieldingness, and ruthlessness.

Despite his short term and tenure as AFP chief, new Chief Rodriguez is able to lay down an effective continuity of existing campaign against violence and terrorism which the CPP/NPA, among others, has been guilty of committing against the Filipino people.

RAMON SOTILONG
inquirer.inquirer@outlook.com

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The Manila Times

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Army officer, 5 others charged for looting

AN Army officer and five of his men were charged by the military for allegedly looting houses in Marawi City, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) confirmed on Tuesday.

Col. Romeo Brawner Jr., deputy commander of Task Group Ranao, said administrative charges have been filed against the soldiers.

"We caught this Army officer with five enlisted personnel...we are not denying that there were incidents like these but we are dealing with these cases and we do not tolerate such actions," Brawner said in a news conference in Marawi City.

He said when military troopers arrived in the main battle area in May, the houses in the Islamic city were "open" and in a "topsy turvy" state.

"Because we believe that members of the Maute-ISIS group really went inside these houses because they wanted to acquire ammunition, firearms, cash and jewelry and this has been proven by a lot of accounts of hostages because some of these hostages were forced to do such too," Brawner said.

He admitted that they received complaints about soldiers looting.

But he clarified that photos in social media showing items such as satellite dishes and motorcycles loaded on military trucks are the property of the Philippine Army.

"Soldiers and their companies also have their own materials. They are purchasing their own materials that can also be used while in the middle of the fighting," Brawner said.

He added that soldiers also bring laptops and printers to be able to submit reports to their respective unit heads.

Brawner urged the public not to criticize or judge soldiers based merely on photos uploaded on social media.

"We have reminded the soldiers upon their return to their mother units to not bring home any materials that they do not own. That's why before they left for their respective units, we had a showdown inspection conducted by some of our officers and third party military officers to inspect the personal and unit properties of our soldiers and even those materials loaded in [army] trucks," Brawner explained.

DEMPSEY REYES

(1)

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Abu 'financier' nabbed in QC

By EMMANUEL TUPAS

A suspected financier of the terror group Abu Sayyaf was arrested in Quezon City last week, the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) said yesterday.

Abdulpatta Abubakar was apprehended by members of the CIDG's National Capital Region office and other units on Oct. 26, CIDG-NCR director Senior Superintendent Wilson Asueta said.

Though Abubakar was tagged in the kidnapping of foreign tourists on Sipadan island in Malaysia in 2000, he was apprehended based

on an arrest warrant for another case of kidnapping and serious illegal detention, he added.

Asueta said Abubakar is a financier of the Abu Sayyaf, based on intelligence reports.

There were reports he also financed the Maute terror group, whose leaders were responsible for the five-month siege in Marawi City that left

hundreds of people dead.

Abubakar was intercepted at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport last Sept. 26 upon his arrival from Jeddah, Saudi Arabia after he appeared on the Bureau of Immigration's database of suspected terrorists.

However, he was later released as his identity was not clearly substantiated in the amended-complaint related to the kidnapping in Sipadan.

An investigation is ongoing to determine the purpose of Abubakar's stay in Metro Manila, Asueta said.



Abubakar

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Pahina. 1

Financier ng Maute at Abu Sayyaf Group, tiklo

Naaresto ng mga otoridad ang isang financier ng Abu Sayyaf Group na si Abulpatta Abubakar sa isinagawang operasyon ng piragsanib na elemento ng

Criminal Investigation and Detection Group-National Capital Region (CIDG-NCR) at Military Intelligence Group (MIG) sa Quezon City.

Ayon kay CIDG-NCR Director P/Sr. Supt. Wilson Asueta na bagaman nilo pang Oktubre 26 nasakote ang suspek bandang alas -4:00 ng hapon sa isang lugar sa Quezon City ay kabapon lamang nila ito isinapubliko dahilang kailangan pa itong isailalim sa masusing tactical interrogation.

Nabatid na ang suspect ay sangkot at tumulong din sa pagpopondo para tustusan ang paghasik ng terorismo ng mga bandidong Abu Sayyaf na nakabase sa Sulu at hinihinala ring ito ang isa sa mga financier ng Marawi City siege na tumagal ng limang buwan.

Ang suspek ay inaresto sa hisa ng warrant of arrest na inisyu ng korte sa kasong kidnapping at serious illegal detention dahil sangkot ito sa pag-

bihag sa 20 mga banyaga na karamihan ay mga Europeans at isang Pinoy sa Sipadan Beach Resort sa Sipadan, Malaysia noong Abril 23, 2000.

Ang suspect ay datinang pinigilan ng mga ahente ng Bureau of Immigration at Aviation Security Group ng PNP sa Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) pero noong una ay hindi pa napagtibay sa kaso ng kidnapping for ransom sa samutsaring asunto na kinaharap nito. *Joy Cantos-*

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Abu Sayyaf financier arrested in QC lair

By **AARON B. RECUENCO**

Police and military intelligence operatives have arrested a suspected financier of the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) in a raid in his alleged lair in Quezon City.

But Abdulpatta Abubakar who was arrested by the joint police and military operatives is the same person who was arrested at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport two months ago after arriving from Saudi Arabia.

He was collared after his name appeared on the Bureau of Immigration

list of suspected terrorists. He was later turned over to the PNP.

The Criminal Investigation and Detection Group confirmed that Abubakar was indeed the one held by BI but it explained that he was later released.

“He was released in court due to his identity not having been clearly substantiated in the amended complaint and information,” the police report read.

The information refers to the Sipadan kidnapping case in April 2000 where Abubakar was said to be among those charged with kidnapping and serious illegal detention.

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[Handwritten signature]

Pahina. 7

Maute straggler todas sa encounter

Napaslang ng mga sundalo ang isang Maute straggler sa naganap na engkuwentro sa battle area sa Marawi City kahapon ng umaga.

Sinabi ni Col Romeo Brawner Jr., deputy commander ng Joint Task Force Lanao, isa sa mga straggler ng Maute ang napatay sa nasabing lugar.

Bandang alas-6 ng umaga habang nagsasagawa ng clearing operations ang tropa ng militar laban sa mga bomba na posible pang nakatanim sa battle zone sa kasagsagan ng krisis nang makasagupa ang isang Maute straggler.

Nagkaroon lamang ng maikling putukan bago namatay ang nasabing straggler ng teroristang grupo.

Noong Oktubre 17 ay idineklara ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte na malaya na laban sa mga teroristang Maute-ISIS ang Marawi City isang araw matapos namang mapaslang ang dalawang lider ng grupo na sina Isnilon Hapilon, itinalagang Emir ng ISIS sa Southeast Asia at Omar Maute.

Samantalang noong Oktubre 23 ay inianunsyo naman ni Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana na tapos na ang giyera at wala ng combat operations sa Marawi City matapos na malipol na ang lahat ng

terorista na naghasik ng terorismo sa nasabing lugar.

Magugunita na sumiklab ang krisis sa Marawi City noong Mayo 23, 2017 na tumagal ng 154 araw.

Ang bakbakan ay nagresulta sa pagkamatay ng 920 Maute-ISIS terrorists,

47 sibilyang hostage habang 165 naman sa panig ng security forces.

Sa kasalukuyan ang buong rehiyon ng Mindanao ay nasa ilalim ng martial law na tatagal hanggang Disyembre 31, 2017. **Joy Cantos**

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INQUIRER

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TERROR LAIR

GOVT PURSUES PROBE OF OWNERS OF HOUSE WHERE HAPILON STAYED

MARAWI CITY—The government is continuing its investigation of the owners of the apartment unit where Isnulon Hapilon, one of the leaders of the terror group that attacked this city, stayed before fighting broke out on May 23, a military official said.

"The investigation will be handled by the police. But we will ensure their rights will not be violated," said Col. Romeo Brawner Jr., deputy commander of Joint Task Group Ranao.

Supt. Ebra Moxir, city police chief, said the owners of the three-story apartment building, whom he declined to identify, went to the police to clear their names.

"They told our investigators they had no idea Hapilon was there. I advised them to also clear their names with the military," Moxir said.

Police said Hapilon stayed in the apartment unit in Barangay Malutlut for three months before the group led by Hapilon, a leader of the bandit group Abu Sayyaf, and the Maute brothers laid siege to Marawi.

Police said the building was owned by a Bureau of Internal Revenue employee assigned in Cotabato City.

A member of the police's Special Action Force, who asked not to be identified, told the Inquirer that he was staying two

houses away from the apartment building but was unaware that Hapilon was living nearby.

"I really didn't have an idea that he was near," he said, adding that when fighting erupted, he was trapped for two days before he was able to get out of the city.

Amenola Gandaw, a village council member, said Hapilon's wife and 6-year-old son were the first casualties when the fighting between government troops and terrorists erupted.

The clashes flared up when a team of soldiers and policemen moved to arrest Hapilon. However, they were met by gunmen composed of members of the Maute and Abu Sayyaf groups, backed by an undetermined number of foreign fighters.

Gandaw said before the siege, village officials noticed "a lot of people coming in and out of those two units."

"But we had no idea that he (Hapilon) was there," he said.

Some residents have been allowed to return to their homes in Barangay Malutlut but the apartment building where the war started remained abandoned, its walls full of bullet holes.

It was a mess inside as bandoliers, bullet cartridges, fatigue uniforms, casings and even toy guns were left as reminders of the terror that hit Marawi. —JEFFREY MAITEM INQ

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INQUIRY

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MOPPING UP IN MARAWI

MAUTE STRAGGLER SLAIN

Troops on Tuesday killed a pro-Islamic State (IS) gunman in Marawi, eight days after the government declared the end of hostilities, a military official said.

Soldiers have focused on securing Marawi against surviving militant fighters since ending five months of operations against IS-inspired militants who seized control of parts of the city in May, in a bid to win a foothold in the region.

The conflict displaced about 350,000 residents and killed more than 1,100 people, mostly militants, stirring concern that the southern Philippines is becoming IS' hub in Southeast Asia.

The military engaged in a gunfight with one of the suspected remaining gunmen in the main battle area, after foiling his bid to escape, army spokesperson

Col. Romeo Brawner said.

"We still have to put in troops, because there's a possibility for stragglers," Brawner told a news conference in Marawi. "In the main battle area, there are many possible hiding spots."

Indonesians, Malaysians and Middle Easterners were among the fighters who flocked to Marawi to support the IS' emirate in Southeast Asia.

Thousands of Marawi residents have started returning home, only for some to find dwellings ransacked. Brawner said an army official and five more personnel were detained in barracks after being charged with looting.

The main battle area in downtown Marawi remains off limits, pending the removal of booby traps and unexploded ordnance. --REUTERS

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Naiwan sa Marawi

MAUTE MEMBER TODAS SA SUNDALO

NAPATAY kahapon ng puwersa ng pamahalaan ang isang hinihinalang miyembro ng Maute-ISIS Group sa Marawi City matapos umanong manlaban.

Kinumpirma ni Army Colonel Romeo Brawner, ang pagkakapatay sa suspek kasunod ng nangyaring sagupaan bandang alas-6:00 ng umaga.

Gayunman, hindi pa idinatala ni Brawner ang insidente at kung may pagkakakilanlan ang suspek. Nangyari ang engkwentro ilang araw matapos itigil ng Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) ang combat operations nito

sa Marawi City matapos ideklara ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte ang kalayaan ng lungsod mula sa teroristang grupo.

Sainantala, tinataya ng Lanao del Norte Crisis Management Committee na maaaring umabot ng limandaan ang riarerekober na mga bangkay sa lugar na naging sentro ng sagupaan laban sa Maute Terrorist Group.

Karamihan umano sa mga bangkay na posibleng makuha pa ay ang mga bandidong napatay sa limang buwang griyera sa lungsod. *(Hym Reyes)*

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Pahina 3

Putukan sa Marawi sumiklab uli

Muling sumiklab ang putukan sa loob ng Marawi City kahapon ng umaga.

Sa ulat ni Joint Task Group Ranao Col. Romeo Brawner, nagkaroon ng sunod-sunod na putok bandang alas-6:15 ng umaga nang makarating ng panibagong putukan mula sa main battle zone area ang mga residente at mamamahayag na nasa city hall naman ng lungsod.

Habang nagpuputukan ay isang sundalo ang lumapit sa mga media at residente at sinabing lumayo sa lugar para hindi madamay.

Napag-alaman kay Brawner na base sa report ay may na-monitor na resistance kaya nagkaroon ng putukan pero tumanggi naman ito magbigay ng karagdagang detalye.

Pero paliwanag ng militar na ang mga narinig na mga putok ay bunsood ng isinasagawang clearing operations sa lugar. (Betchai Julian)

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Pahina. 3

Hero's welcome sa Marawi troops

Isang mainit na pag-salubong o hero's welcome ang ibinigay ng Philippine Navy dito sa mga sundalong bumalik mula sa limang buwan sagupaan sa ISIS sa Marawi City.

Maging ang mga sibilyan at pamilya ng mga sundalo ay nagtungo pa sa Zamboanga upang makita ang kanilang mga mahal sa buhay.

Pinaragalan rin nina Rear Admiral Rene Medina, hepe ng Naval Forces Western Mindanao, at Colonel Ariel Caculitan, commander ng Combat Service Support Battalion, ang mga tropa dahil sa kanilang katapangan at pagpupursige na maibalik ang kapayapaan sa Marawi na nilusob ng ISIS noon Mayo 23.

Ang mga sundalo ay pawang mga miyembro ng 61st at 64th Marine Company ng Marine Special Operations Group, Armor Assault Battalion, Field Artillery Battalion, Shore Patrol Unit ng Naval Forces Western Mindanao at Civil Military Operations Unit-Western Mindanao. (Al Jacinto)

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Wala nang bangis ang NPA

AYON SA POLICE MILITAR INTEL

NI MIKE U. CRISMUNDO

BUTUANCITY—Inihayag kahapon ng police at military intelligence community na mahina na ang natitirang puwersa ng New People's Army (NPA), ang armadong sangay ng Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), at sa katunayan ay nagsasagawa na lang ng mga krimen ang ilang kasapi nito.

Sa hiwalay na declassified assessment report na nakuhang Balaita mula sa intelligence community ng pulisya at militar, nabatid na ang natitirang guerilla front ng CPP-NPA northeastern, north-central at northern Mindanao Regional Committee ay kakaunti na lang umano, dahil mas marami na ang sumusuko at nagbabalik-loob sa pamahalaan dahil na rin sa mahitap na pamumuhay sa kabundukan.

"Some of them already turned into bandits while other remaining guerilla fronts also engaged in their force extortion activities," sabi ng isang police intelligence officer na tumanggap pangalanan dahil hindi siya awtorisadong magsalita sa media.

Aniya, naging basehan ng assessment nilang ito ang pagdakip sa anim na miyembro ng NPA sa San Luis, Agusan del Sur noong nakaraang linggo, nang

ilang matataas na kalibre ng armas at mga gamit sa paggawa ng bomba ang nasamsam sa mga suspek, kabilang ang watawat ng NPA.

Sa pagsasanib-puwersa ng militar at pulisya, naaresto ang anim na rebelde sa bisa ng mga search warrant na inisyu ng lokal na korte sa Agusan del Sur, at nakumpirma ang sitwasyon ng kilusan sa isinagawang paunang tactical interrogation, ayon pa rin sa source.

"I can say that (CPP-NPA is weak) because of the documents seized during recent separate gunbattles in San Luis, Agusan del Sur and in upper far-flung

areas in Butuan City," sinabi kahapon ng isa pang Army intelligence officer na ayaw magpabanggit ng pangalan.

Aniya, batay sa testimonya ng ilang rebeldeng sumuko sa Bukidnon at sa ilang bahagi ng Caraga region, nabatid na patuloy na nababawasan ang puwersa ng NPA dahil na rin sa hirap ng buhay sa kabundukan.

Nitong nakaraang linggo lang ay nagdagdag ang Philippine Army ng dalawang combat maneuvering battalion na ipakakalat sa mga lalawigan sa Agusan at Surigao upang tuluyan nang pulbusin ang NPA.

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Troops kill Maute straggler in Marawi

Government forces yesterday killed a pro-Islamic State (IS) gunman in Marawi, a military official said, eight days after the hostilities were declared over.

Soldiers have focused on securing the city against surviving militant fighters since ending five months of operations against IS-inspired militants who seized control of parts of the country's main Islamic city in May, in a bid to win a foothold in the region.

The conflict displaced about 350,000 residents and killed more than 1,100 people, mostly militants, stirring concern that Marawi is becoming an IS hub in Southeast Asia.

Yesterday, the military engaged in a gunfight with one of the suspected remaining gunmen in the main battle area, after foiling his bid to escape, army spokesman Col. Romeo Brawner said.

"We still have to put in troops, because there's a possibility of stragglers," Brawner told a news conference in Marawi. "In the main battle area, there are many possible hiding spots."

Indonesians, Malaysians and Middle Easterners were among the fighters who flocked to Marawi to support the IS's emirate in Southeast Asia.

The main battle area in downtown Marawi remains off limits, pending the removal of booby traps and unexploded ordnance.

Lt. Col. Emmanuel Garcia, commander of the 4th Civil Relations Group of the Western Mindanao Command (Westmincom), said the fight occurred at around 6 a.m. in an area adjacent to the city hall

compound, which has already been cleared of terrorists.

Although the bulk of soldiers and policemen deployed in Marawi were pulled out after five months of urban fighting, a number of Army battalions have been retained to address possible security concerns posed by either terrorist stragglers or their sympathizers.

Other security officials described the threat as "already insignificant" as authorities were able to restore at least 50 percent of the city's power supply yesterday.

Normal operations at the Marawi city hall also resumed Monday, a week after the government declared the city as liberated from the clutches of terrorists.

Westmincom chief Lt. Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr. said the neutralization of key terrorist figures created a vacuum of leadership in the IS operating in Southeast Asia.

The deaths of Abu Sayyaf leader and IS emir Isnilon Hapilon, the Maute brothers as well as their foreign counterparts have also affected the communication with other IS factions in foreign countries, he added.

Hapilon and Omarhayan Maute, one of the architects in the Marawi siege, were killed by a composite of army cavalry and scout ranger units last Oct. 16. The other key elements - Malaysian university lecturer and IS financier and recruiter Mahmud Ahmad and Amin Baco - were also killed in the late stage of the operations, the general pointed out.

"I believed they have no contact now here in the Philippines," Galvez said, adding that relentless

operations are ongoing to neutralize elusive Basilan-based Abu Sayyaf leader Furuji Indama, who is known for kidnappings.

He recalled that other rising Sulu-based Abu Sayyaf leaders liked Muamar Askali alias Abu Rami and Alhabsy Misaya were killed in separate military operations in Bohol and Sulu in April.

Looting

Thousands of Marawi residents have started returning home, only for some to find dwellings ransacked. Brawner said an Army official and five personnel were detained in barracks after being charged with looting.

Although he described it as "old hat," he said they received a lot of complaints about looting "even before the start of the siege."

"That's why when we deployed our troops, they were warned not to loot because we know that this will be a problem. In fact, we were able to apprehend some soldiers and they are now facing charges," Brawner, also the deputy commander of Joint Task Force Ranao, said in a statement yesterday.

He confirmed that one Army team was apprehended.

"I don't know their exact number, but we are not denying it because they are now facing charges," the officer said.

Reports said a lieutenant colonel and five enlisted personnel were among those slapped with administrative charges before the military court.

Brawner clarified that the alleged looting incident happened shortly after the fighting started

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and when the IS-inspired militants had ravaged most of the city's houses and establishments.

"When the Army entered Marawi, they arrived when most of the houses have already been forcibly opened by the terrorists apparently in search for cash,

jewelry and guns. These accounts were validated by the rescued hostages," Brawner said.

He added that although the AFP leadership reminded the troops to refrain from taking anything from abandoned houses, some soldiers were apparently lured into "salvaging" something from the looted residences.

The officer also clarified some photos showing military trucks loaded with satellite dishes that have been circulating on social media.

"This is routine in all major operations because these are military properties," Brawner said, pointing out that each Army company in Marawi was issued a satellite dish, along with other electronic gear, as part of supplies and logistics.

Even in combat, he added, soldiers are issued laptops and printers because they used these gadgets to make the required reports.

The motorcycles shown driven by soldiers in Marawi are also military property and were used for intelligence gathering and intelligence-driven operations, he said.

"Soldiers have also personal belongings. But just the same all military units who are being pulled from Marawi are subjected to an inspection," Brawner said.

Westmincom's Garcia said looting concerns were being addressed by the military's built-in disciplinary action.

However, he stressed that while the fighting continued, civilians were also looting the houses and that at least 22 "professional looters," some of them coming from as far as Iligan City, were arrested.

"After the first incident, we haven't any report of any soldier engaging in looting activities. What I know is that we have apprehended 22 professional looters in June, August and July," he added.

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New AFP assets

On top of sophisticated surveillance planes provided by the US

and Australia governments, newly acquired air and naval assets of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) played critical roles in the city's liberation, said Navy chief Vice Admiral Ronald Joseph Mercado.

Within the five-month campaign, the military used FA50 lead-in supersonic fighter jets and a fleet of brand-new, rocket-firing helicopters to hit terrorist positions hard.

Mercado also noted the steady flow of Marawi-bound troops, including elite forces with armored fighting vehicles (AFV) and logistics from various locations ferried by the Navy's newly acquired landing dock ships *BRP Tarlac* and *BRP Davao del Sur*.

Complementing these efforts, he added, are the P3 Orion surveillance and intelligence aircraft provided by the US and Australia.

"We were able to expeditiously complete our missions transporting much-needed equipment (to the main battle area) from combat vehicles, artillery, munitions and ground troops as a result of our modernization program," the Navy chief said following the recent disembarkation of Navy and Marine forces from *BRP Tarlac* after their five-month deployment in Marawi.

He added that the two landing dock ships also transported relief goods for affected and displaced residents who were then staying in various evacuation centers in Iligan City and nearby towns.

Unlike before when troops needed to wait for days, transporting troops from Luzon and the Visayas was quicker using the Philippine Air Force's five C-130 heavy lift and three C-290 medium lift transport aircraft.

The C-290 aircraft are brand new planes while the C-130s, despite being procured secondhand, continue to live up to their role as the country's main cargo and troop transport aircraft, the way most militaries use them around the globe. - Jaime Laude, Roel Pareño, Reuters

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CPP-NPA now a weak group, gov't intelligence officials claim

BUTUAN CITY – The police and military intelligence community on Tuesday claimed that the remaining strength of the New People's Army (NPA), armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), was already weak, and had already turned to banditry to survive.

In a declassified assessment report obtained by The Manila Bulletin from police and military intelligence sources, it was disclosed that the remaining guerrilla fronts of the CPP-NPA north-eastern north-central and northern Mindanao Regional Committees were already dwindling in numbers, as more are returning to the fold of the law due to hardship in the mountains.

"Some of them already turned into

banditry while other remaining guerrilla fronts also engaged in their force extortion activities," said a police intelligence officer who requested anonymity as he was not authorized to issue any statement to media.

He said the basis of their assessment was the capture of six NPA rebels in San Luis, Agusan del Sur last week, where several high-powered weapons and bomb-making materials were seized from them including an NPA flag.

With the combined efforts of the police and Army, the six NPAs were arrested through search warrants issued by a local court in Agusan del Sur province and their fate was revealed during the initial tactical interrogation,

the police intelligence officer added.

"I can say that (CPP-NPA is weak) because of the documents seized during recent separate gunbattles in San Luis, Agusan del Sur and in upper far-flung areas in Butuan City," another Army intelligence officer who also requested anonymity when asked by The Manila Bulletin on Tuesday.

He said that based on the testimonies of some surrenderers in Bukidnon, and in some parts in Caraga region, the strength of the NPA fighting force was already decreasing due to hardship of trying to survive in the mountains.

Last week, a ranking military officer in the region suggested to create or add two more Army combat maneuvering battalions to be deployed in Agusan and Surigao provinces to help the existing fighting force of the AFP and PNP in the region to completely crush the remaining insurgents. (Mike U. Crismundo)

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Mom still grieves over death of Marawi hero

By EMILY BUGARIN

It's been more than four months now since First Lieutenant John Frederick "Jeff" Savellano died along with 12 fellow Marines in Marawi City, but the pain of losing him still lingers in the heart of his family, most especially his mother.

"The most painful feeling is to see your child's name inscribed on a tombstone, said Mercy Savellano, mother of the "Marawi Hero".

The family is visiting Jeff or "Borgy" at Libingan ng mga Bayani today to pray and celebrate the life of the clan's "pride."

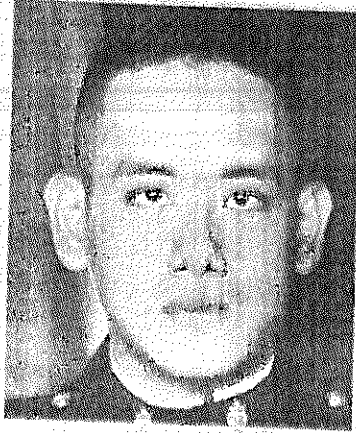
Mercy could not contain her grief as she remembered last year's All Saints' Day when the usual "jolly" Jeff was with them physically, joining other members of the clan in the annual visit to their lola's grave in San Pedro, Laguna.

Losing a good son, she said, is so hard to accept, even if the people revered him as a "Hero of Marawi".

"Paano ba ang hindi masaktan dahil ang anak mo ay namatay na isang bayani? Paano ba ang maging masaya dahil ang anak mo ay isang bayani? Yan ang lagi kong tanong sa sarili," Mercy said during an interview.

She said the benefits they received from the government and the enormous tributes and recognitions accorded to her son by various institutions somehow served as consolations, but these are also piercing her heart.

"Masakit kapag naiisip ko eto ang kapalit ng buhay ng anak ko. Ano ba ang mensahe ni God bakit maagang kinuha sa amin si Jeff?" said Mercy whose family has been an active member of the Couples For Christ community.



JEFF Savellano

The mother recalled that she almost fainted when President Duterte handed her the "Kalasag Medal" for her son during National Heroes Day rites at the Libingan ng Mga Bayani.

Mercy said the idea of Jeff's early death in battle did not come to the mind of the Savellano family when he, then commander of the 37th Marine Company, Marine Battalion Landing Team 7, and his team left Manila for the Marawi mission because they strongly believed in his capability and expertise as a military officer.

"Alam ko babalik ang anak kong buhay dahil magaling, matapang at intelligent siya," she shared.

Testament to 1LT Savellano's mettle and integrity was when he led his team in recovering P52.2

million in cash and P27 million worth of checks from a house that the terrorists used as a machine-gun post in Marawi on June 5.

Mercy believes that Jeff himself did not see his death coming after the team's major achievement in Marawi.

He had texted his siblings, saying he was looking forward to a family bonding upon his return from war. He even wanted to catch up with the movie "Wonder Woman", according to Mercy.

But shock came to the family on the night of June 9 when they were informed that 1LT Savellano died along with his men during a 14-hour intense battle with the rebels in Marawi.

She initially refused to believe the news because earlier that day, Jeff had texted her, saying "Don't Worry Mama, I'm okay."

Mercy later learned that Jeff and his men were hit by the rebels' bomb while trying to rescue 10 soldiers trapped in a burning building.

The severely wounded Jeff was the last Marine to be extracted from the encounter site. He was seen biting his hand which, Mercy said, was an indication that her son, who was also a licensed nurse, was fighting for his life. "Ibig sabihin may willingness pa siyang mabuhay kahit na sugatan," she said.

Mercy added she begged off from hearing further the complete details of her son's final hours. "Ayokong malaman kung paano namatay ang anak ko. Gusto kong isipin na nasa operation lang siya."

When Jeff first informed her about the recovered money, she told him not to do anything that would tarnish his military career. Jeff, in turn, replied, telling her that doing the right thing is not just about his career but it spells his whole being.

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OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS – Email add: oacpa.army2012@gmail.com – Tel no. (02) 845-9555 Local: 5285, 5295

Mom... (From page 2)

"Buong pagkatao ko ang nakasalalay dito Ma," Jeff told his mother.

The money was completely intact when Jeff's team turned over it to their battalion commander, an act that has changed the public perception on Filipino soldiers.

"Nang dumalaw kami ni Fred sa kampo, sinasabi ng mga Marines sa amin 'nagpapasalamat kami kay Sir Jeff dahil itinaas niya ang kasundalohan sa mata ng mga tao,'" she said.

Jeff himself was proud of his team's achievement.

On his Facebook page, Jeff wrote, "Thank you lord for not letting me and our platoon be blinded by the sight of money!

The LORD is truly our refuge and our strength. Hurra marines! My mom and dad guided me well and I thank the lord for surrounding me with good people and best warfighters during this operation. Hurrah."

On June 17, a hero's burial was accorded to Jeff, who, according to his mother, initially planned to pursue priesthood before he decided to enter the military which he had served with utmost dedication for seven years.

"Sana huwag malimutan ng tao ang ginawa niya Jeff" she said.

Today, the Savellano family is asking the public to pray for the eternal repose of the souls of Jeff and all other fallen soldiers who sacrificed their lives to liberate Marawi City from the terrorists.

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

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Marcos family to hold mass at Libingan today

The family of former president Ferdinand Marcos will hold a mass at his grave at the Libingan ng mga Bayani today, an official said yesterday.

Col. Edmundo Suficiencia, commanding officer at the Libingan, said the Marcoses are scheduled to visit and hold a mass this morning.

Just like when the late strongman's remains were buried in November last year, the Marcoses' observance of All Saints' Day will be private, sources close to the family said.

Neither former senator Ferdinand Marcos Jr. nor Il-

cos Norte Rep. Imee Marcos posted any comment about today's event on their social media accounts.

Aside from Marcos, former presidents Elpidio Quirino, Carlos Garcia and Diosdado Macapagal are buried in Libingan.

Except for Marcos, the former presidents' graves had flowers sent from Malacñang, radio station *dzMM* reported.

It is not known if the flowers will be sent today, according to the report.

– Perseus Echeminada

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MAUTE GROUP IS 'UN-ISLAMIC'?

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INQUIRER

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...eter in Moro activist Macabangkit. Lanto is up to his old tricks in telling Mujahid leaders the actions of dead Islamists – Jamil Hapilon and Omar Maute – are “un-Islamic” because they were not killed in a “defensive war” under Islam. For the sake of Allah.

...the even more heinous observation, Lanto’s in-fidelity is to his Islamic religion. His real agenda is sugar-coating Islam to make it seem less sinister and dangerous than it actually is.

...in labeling dead Maute leaders “un-Islamic,” Lanto either doesn’t know his own religion, or is lying.

...Islam divides the world into Dar al-Islam (house of submission) and Dar al-Harb (house of war). Muslims are in a perpetual state of war with the inhabitants of Dar al-Harb until they all submit to Islam or are killed. Is a Muslim (or refusing to do so) a blasphemer, an aggressive action a Muslim might undertake against non-Muslims “defensive”?

...in the Philippines, Islam has already been “pre-emptively” attacked. We conveniently forgot that the peaceful Malay tribes of the Philippine archipelago were first rained on for slaves, then forcibly colonized by 15th century Muslim invaders who brutally murdered thousands to force sword-point conversions to Islam. Once domi-

nant Muslims eradicated local cultures and their Buddhist, Hindu, and animist religious beliefs in order to impose an alien culture that was Arabic and Islamic.

...Islam holds that once a place has been ruled by Muslims, it is “Islamic land” forever. Mindanao, Sulu, Mindoro, Cebu, and Central Luzon as far as the “Kingdom of Manila” had fallen to Muslim invaders over the two centuries or so before the Spanish arrived and drove them out.

Right believing Muslims, thus, have a holy duty to reconquer these lands to Muslim rule, as Quran 2:191-192 makes clear: “And kill them (non-Muslims) wherever you find them, and turn them out from where they have turned you out.

And fight them until there is no more *fitnah* (disbelief and worshipping of others apart from Allah) and worship is for Allah alone.”

Within this theological context, it can not be disputed that the actions of the Maute group were undertaken in “defense” of Islam. Those killed fighting government troops are, to a right believing Muslim, *shuhada* (martyrs).

Why do Lanto and other Moro apologists repeatedly tell us otherwise?

Their apparent condemnation of Maute jihadists is temporary and tactical. When

ever Muslims fear for their safety at the hands of non-Muslims, they are permitted to feign peaceful intentions and goodwill toward them outwardly, but never inwardly. Since 62 percent of Filipinos are Christian and only around 1.6 percent Muslim, Moros might well consider it imprudent to openly state their religion and mandate perpetual warfare against non-Muslims.

Muslims lie when it is in their interest to do so. A lie in defense of Islam is approved, even applauded, in Islamic scripture. This is called *taqiyya*, or “holy deception.”

Every right believing Muslim must hold that Allah’s religion will one day supplant all other religions, and that Allah’s Sharia law will one day supplant all man-made systems of law and governance. I challenge Lanto to tell readers whether this is indeed his own belief.

If his answer is affirmative, history shows mass-scale conversions to Islam have only ever occurred at sword point. Given that hundreds of millions worldwide prefer to follow other religions or no religion, perhaps Lanto might also explain just how he expects all these people to be brought to Islam?

KHIDMAT WARRIEF
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ANG HANAP NG MGA BAYANI NG REPUBLIKA



**PANANAW
NI MANNY V
Manny Villar**

IDI NEKLARA ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte noong Oktubre 17 ang paglaya ng Lungsod ng Marawi sa impluwensiya ng mga terorista. Ang deklarasyon ay kasuod ng balitang napatay ng hukbong sandatahan ang dalawang pinakamataas na pinuno ng Maute Group, na nakikipag-alyansa sa Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS).

Nais kong ituon ang pitak na ito sa mga bayani ng Marawi Siege. Ayon sa Amerikanong heneral na si Norman Schwarzkopf, mga bayani lamang ang sumusuong sa digmaan. Nararapat lamang na kilalanin natin bilang mga bayani ang mga

Mga bayani ng Republika

babae at lalaking sundalo at pulis na nagpakita ng katapangan sa paglatanggol sa Republika laban sa mga kaaway.

Ayon sa pinakahuling tala na aking natunghayan, may kabuuang 155 sundalo ang namatay sa digmaan. Sila at ang mga sundalong nasugalan ay dapat kilalanin bilang mga bayani dahil sa sakripisyo para sa bayan.

Ang sentimiyentong ito ay ipinahayag ni Lt. Gen. Carlito Galvez, Jr., commander ng Western Mindanao Command, nang sabihin niya na dapat bigyan ng parangal ang mga kawal na namatay habang tinutupad ang kanilang tungkulin sa bayan. Ayon sa heneral, habambuhay ilong tatanawin bilang utang na loob ng bansa.

Huwag din nating kalimutan

ang mga pamilya ng mga kawal – mga ama at ina na nanumpa rin upang ipagtaggol ang kanilang mga anak, ngunit nauuila dahil sa paglatanggol sa bayan.

Nagsakripisyo rin ang mga pamilya ng mga kawal. Hindi masusukat ang sakit na kanilang nadama nang makita ang bangkay ng kanilang mga mahal sa buhay dahil sa digmaan.

Bilang pagtanaw ng utang na loob sa mga kawal at sa kanilang mga pamilya, nararapat lamang na bigyan ng magandang kinabukasan ang mga nauuila.

Nangako si Pangulong Duterte na dodoblehin ang suweldo ng mga sundalo simula sa Enero 2018. Ito ay karagdagan sa pabahay at edukasyon para sa mga pamilya ng

mga sundalo.

Nangako rin ang administrasyon na bibigyan ng mas mahusay at makabagong kagamitan ang mga tropa. Lubhang mahalaga ito dahil kahit na natapos ang Marawi Siege ay alam natin na magpapalitoy ang banta ng terorismo.

Bilang karagdagan, kailangan ding isailalim sa mas maigting na pagsasanay ang mga puwersa ng pamahalaan upang maging handa sa pagharap sa iba't ibang istratexiya na ginagamit ng mga terorista. Ang mga terorista ngayon ay may kakayahang maglunsad ng pag-atake sa mga lungsod, at kailangan dito ang ibang uri ng pagresponde.

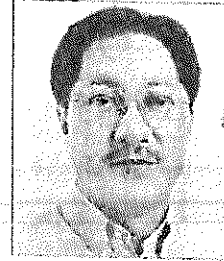
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GOTCHA JARIUS BONDOC



Soldiers' deeds worth immortalizing in film

Stories of grit in the Battle for Marawi should be immortalized. Countless were the displays of valor and selflessness by our fighting men to repel the five-month terrorist siege. Movie and TV producers can mine a wealth of material from the Armed Forces and the National Police.

Among those are the accomplishments of Army Capt. Jeffrey Buada and police commando Junates Acacio. Buada, of the elite Scout Rangers, had exposed himself to the enemy unarmed and unarmored to rescue child and female hostages. It was nearing the end of the siege, and Buada's 15th Company men, assigned to mop up the remnant terrorists, wanted to complete the mission alive then go home. In the middle of a firefight, Staff Sergeant Allan Sumalpong pointed to Buada a wounded hostage limping over to their side. Giving cover fire as Sumalpong aided the civilian, Buada spotted weak, hungry children and women outside the building where the enemy was holed in. He saw in the children's faces his own two pre-teenage daughters. At once he put down his rifle,

enemy positions based on coordinates radioed by spotters. The shelling had to be precise, for a foul shot could hit hostages or alert the enemy to flee. A licensed teacher, Bagasol, 26, saved her comrades at the frontline several times with her timely shots from behind. Pvt. Anjanette Mayang, 23, is also a mortar gunner. When not firing 81- or 60-mm shells, she was busy evacuating civilians to safety.

The Navy Special Operations Group patrolled Lake Lanao day and night during the entire siege to prevent the terrorists from retreating, and reinforcements from penetrating Marawi. Aside from that, the unit also gathered intelligence and rescued hostages. One of the rescues was of two brothers and a companion who were in construction work when the siege began. The wife of one of the three had been able to keep in touch with them, and for two months kept assuring them that help would come when opportune. The time came one night for a daring dash across two bridges onto the wharf. It took the sailors weeks to plan and carry out the rescue with no casualty.

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Acts of selfless heroism need to be retold for future generations to emulate.

removed his helmet and bulletproof vest, and walked slowly towards them. Buada ignored his men's pleas to take cover and the other side's demands to draw no closer. But Buada proceeded and reached out to the hostages, who ran into his arms. Some of his men too emerged unarmed from the covers to help. Warily watching, the terrorists asked for some water and food; Buada handed them drinks and biscuits as his men accompanied the hostages to safety. When the last hostage was out of sight, the enemy resumed fire. Buada and men jumped back to their positions to continue the battle to the end.

Senior Police Officer-1 Acacio was the first fighting woman assigned to the front early when the siege began and among the last to be pulled out. Her 5th Special Action Force Battalion was among the units that assaulted and cleared the buildings held by the heavily armed enemy. Barging into doors or windows to flush out the terrorists and defuse booby traps was the forte of Acacio and fellow-commandos. In one particular assault, the enemy was able to cut them off from other units and encircled them. For three hours Acacio and wounded comrades fought their way out of the pincer to link up with the main force.

There are other female soldiers. First Lt. Sarah Jane Bagasol is one of seven battle-support women of the Army's First Infantry Division. Her duty is to fire mortars accurately at

Not last nor least was First Lt. Frederick Savellano, head of the 37th Marine Company of the Marine Battalion Landing Team-7. Savellano had led the unit that, early in the siege, captured a building that apparently was the terrorists' finance center. After a daylong assault they were able to wipe out a machinegun nest and several snipers. On clearing the entrances of wired explosives they discovered P52 million in cash wrapped in plastic bundles and P200,000 in two envelopes. In a separate pile were P27 million worth of encashed checks, indications of the terrorists' financial dealings. Savellano and men secured the cash, for consequent turnover to civilian authorities. Four days later Savellano's unit again led the assault on a clutch of buildings held by the terrorists. A 16-hour firefight raged. On entering one of the structures Savellano was killed by a bomb detonated by the enemy.

One hundred sixty-five fighting men gave up their lives in the Marawi action. One hundred twenty-two were Army troopers, 36 were Navy sailors and Marines, and seven were policemen.

* * *
Catch *Sapol* radio show, Saturdays, 8-10 a.m., DWIZ (882-AM).

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COMMONSENSE

MARICHU A. VILLANUEVA

'Drugs funding terrorism'

Even as they find their homes destroyed and ransacked, Marawi folks were still grateful to President Rodrigo Duterte for the liberation of their beloved city from the clutches of Islamic State (IS)-inspired Maute and Abu Sayyaf terrorists. Residents of Marawi City are now slowly returning to their respective homes. Many of them could only thank and pray that they are still alive and able to get back on their feet.



Following the confirmed slay by government troopers of IS-inspired leaders Isnilon Hapilon and Omar Maute, President Duterte declared on Oct. 17 the liberation of besieged Marawi City from terrorists. The Commander-in-Chief flew for the nth time in the main battle area in Marawi to personally announce the government's victory over terrorists.

The successful operations to regain control of Marawi City came on the 148th day into the crisis. The siege first erupted on May 23 a few hours after President Duterte flew to Moscow for his state visit to Russia.

Cutting short this trip, the President declared martial law all over Mindanao, a move that caught everyone by surprise, including members of his Cabinet and leaders of Congress. But more so, the top echelons of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Philippine National Police (PNP) did not see it coming sooner -- the President taking the martial law option.

Under Article VII, Section 18 of the country's 1987 Constitution, it provides: "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

Despite the liberation of Marawi City, President Duterte strongly hinted he is not about to lift martial law anytime sooner.

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any part thereof under martial law. Within forty-eight hours from the proclamation of martial law or the suspension of the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus, 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. Upon the initiative of the President, the Congress may, in the same manner, extend such proclamation or suspension for a period to be determined by the Congress, if the invasion or rebellion shall persist and public safety requires it.

All these prescriptions by the Constitution were complied with, including the subsequent extension of martial law. In special sessions of the 17th Congress on July 22, or on the day the 60-day martial law period was to lapse, both chambers of Congress granted the President's request to extend martial law until end of this year, or on Dec. 31, to fully contain the Maute siege. He also suspended the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus in the entire Mindanao and prevented a spillover to other provinces in the region.

Despite the liberation of Marawi City, President Duterte strongly hinted he is not about to lift martial law anytime sooner.

At every opportunity of his extemporaneous speeches, President Duterte candidly admitted he dreaded to read every night the daily update on the government operations to retake Marawi City, especially on the number of casualties. The Maute terrorists put up so much resistance and seemingly had their supply of ammunitions endless. To flush them out, government forces resorted to air strikes and heavy bombardment of Maute strongholds atop buildings and secret underground passages.

Latest data showed a total of 47 civilians, 165 soldiers and police officers, and 920 Maute members have been killed in the firefight in Marawi City since May 23. The AFP reported about 827 firearms were, so far, recovered and 1,771 hostages were rescued while 1,000 soldiers and cops were wounded in action.

A group of residents and concerned citizens have earlier announced plans to file a class suit for damages against the government for the destruction of Marawi that left the city in a state of ruins. More than 20,000 people of Marawi were displaced after they were forcibly evacuated lest they be held as hostages and used as human shields by terrorists.

In a pre-departure talk with media before he left for an official visit to Tokyo last Sunday night, President Duterte accepted full responsibility for the resulting ruins and deaths in the Marawi siege. "But let me answer you here and now, that I declared martial law to answer the challenges of the moment and I take full legal, criminal, and civil liability. *Ako 'yun* (That's on me)," the President averred.

The President pointed out it is within the rights of individuals, groups or organizations to file such charges even in the International Criminal Court if they fear the Philippine courts could be prejudiced or biased in his favor.

That was not the first time I heard this from President Duterte. During a dinner I attended with several fellow newspaper columnists at Malacañang Palace last Oct. 3, President Duterte forthrightly told it to us. After he presided a joint command conference of the AFP and the PNP before he sat down with us, the President requested it to be off-the-record at that time. They were able to confirm from the grounds about the intelligence reports on "illegal drugs" trade involving local and police officials provided much of the funding of the Maute attack.

"I've said it in public, the flashpoint and the Army knows it, they're cooking shabu in Marawi City," the President bared to us. "But since I am the Commander-in-Chief, I take full responsibility, *solohin ko na*. I'm responsible for the future of my country. So I declared martial law in Marawi," the President explained.

With drugs funding terrorism plots of Mautes and the Abu Sayyaf, Marawi City was easy picking.

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A LAW EACH DAY [Keeps Trouble Away]

JOSE C. SISON

Remedy against human rights abuses

On Oct. 24, 2007, the Supreme Court promulgated the rule on the writ of Amparo intended to address the intractable problem of extralegal killings and enforced disappearances. Extralegal killings are killings committed without due process of law, i.e. without legal safeguards or judicial proceedings. Enforced disappearances consist of the arrest, detention or abduction of a person by a government official or organized groups or private individuals acting with the direct or indirect acquiescence of the government; the refusal of the State to disclose the fate or whereabouts of the person concerned or refusal to acknowledge the deprivation of liberty placing such persons outside the protection of the law. This is illustrated in the case of the brothers Manny and Raffy.



Manny and Raffy are residents of a Barangay in a province of Luzon where several NPA members are actively operating. In fact they have another brother Ka Rody who is a known NPA leader and has incurred the ire of the people in their place particularly the victims of summary execution.

One time, at past noon, while Manny was sleeping in their house, six soldiers in white shirts, fatigue pants and army boots led by M/Sgt. Roland and Pfc Diego barged in and roused Manny. Mistaking him to be Ka Rody. Despite his mother Edna's disavowal that he was not Rody but Manny, Sgt Roland still handcuffed and brought him to the rear of the house where other soldiers started torturing and beating him up. Afterwards, he was brought near the road. He asked his mother to follow him but three soldiers stopped her and told her to stay.

Among the men who took him were brothers Leo, Cardo, Pablo and Ric who are members of the CAFGU and who acted as look-out with the help of two other brothers Romy and Doming. The men then blindfolded Manny and forced him into a white van

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driven by Sgt. Roland. After a short drive, the van stopped to pick up another blindfolded person. Both were beaten up along the way and later on, Manny recognized the man beside him as Raffy, his brother. They were abducted on suspicion that they were members or sympathizers of the NPAs because of their brother Ka Rody.

For one year and six months, Manny and Raffy were continuously detained in different safehouses where they were tortured, beaten, humiliated, threatened and intimidated. Even the Major General who headed the infantry battalion which abducted, detained and tortured them was aware of, tolerated and encouraged their abduction as well as other civilians without due process of law and without probable cause.

So when Manny and Raffy saw the opportunity to escape as their guards got drunk, they did so and succeeded in fleeing after 18 months of detention. Then they filed a petition in court which was later on amended to a petition for a writ of Amparo against the Secretary of National Defense (DND) and the Armed Forces (AFP) Chief, which the Supreme Court referred to the Court of Appeals (CA) for hearing.

After hearing, the CA ruled in favor of Manny and Raffy and granted the privilege of the writ of Amparo requiring the DND Secretary and the AFP Chief of Staff to submit to the court any official and unofficial reports of the investigation in connection with their case; to confirm in writing the present places of assignment of M/Sgt Roland and Diego; and to cause to be produced before the court the medical reports, records and charts of any treatment or recommended medicines given to them as well as the list of army medical personnel who attended to them.

The DND Secretary and the AFP Chief appealed this decision to the SC. They contended that the evidence presented consisting merely of the incredible, uncorroborated, contradictory and self-serving testimony of Manny does not satisfy the degree of proof required to grant the writ. They also argued that since the enforced disappearance of Manny and Raffy has now passed as they have escaped and no longer in detention, the writ is no longer available.

But the SC still upheld the CA decision. The SC ruled that under the Philippine experience on human rights abuses, the writ of Amparo offers a better preventive and curative remedy to extralegal killings and enforced disappearance and threats thereof. It provided a rapid judicial relief as it partakes of a summary proceeding that requires only substantial evidence or such relevant evidence that a reasonable mind might accept as adequate to support a conclusion.

In this case, the abduction, torture and escape of Manny and Raffy were narrated by Manny in a clear and convincing manner. His account is dotted with countless candid details of their harrowing experience and tenacious will to escape, captured through different senses and etched in his memory, from the time he was roused from sleep, blindfolded and forced into a van together with his brother Raffy, beaten and tortured in different safehouses until they were able to escape 18 months later. Manny's affidavit and testimony were corroborated by Raffy's affidavit and the testimony and medical reports of the forensic specialist as well as by the pictures of the scars left by the physical injuries inflicted on them.

And even if they are already physically free, the people who have abducted and detained them are still at large and have not been accountable in any way. They are directly connected with the armed forces and are thus in a position to threaten Manny and Raffy's rights to life, liberty and violate their right to security or the freedom from fear, guarantee of physical and psychological integrity or right against torture and guarantee of protection of their rights by the government. (The Secretary of the DND and Chief of Staff, AFP vs. Manalo and Manalo, G.R. 180906, October 7, 2008)

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Toss out rotten eggs

Several soldiers who battled Maute terrorists in Marawi

EDITORIAL

are under investigation on accusations of engaging in looting in the besieged city. The story mars the heroic image of those who risked and gave up their lives to rid Marawi of the infestation of Islamic State-inspired terrorists.

The upside of this story, however, is that it was disclosed by the Armed Forces of the Philippines itself, which vowed to impose appropriate sanctions on those found guilty of the looting. The AFP even presented stolen items recovered from the suspected culprits.

Every organization has rotten eggs, and the AFP is showing the best way to deal with them in a democratic setting. Instead of being in denial or sweeping the story under the rug, the accusation is confronted head-on. A thorough, fair investigation is then conducted so that when guilt is established and punishment imposed, it is based on incontrovertible evidence. Reforms are then implemented to prevent a repeat of the abuses or illegal actions.

The Philippine National Police can take some pointers on the way the AFP handles such incidents. Instead of raging at critics, imputing malice on accusers and generally being in denial about wrongdoing involving

its members, the PNP leadership should re-assure the public that

there is constant cleansing of the ranks in an organization where members are prone to abuse and criminal behavior. The public also needs reassurance that everything will be done to get rid of rotten eggs.

For example, the PNP leadership can move to block the return to the service of the officers on trial for the massacre of 13 people in Atimonan, Quezon, led by Superintendent Hansel Marantan. PNP chief Ronald dela Rosa, who's dreaming of becoming president, has said he has no choice but to implement the reinstatement order issued by the National Police Commission. But the impression is that this is really what the PNP wants, and it is welcoming back the massacre suspects with arms wide open. The Napolcom is chaired ex-officio by the secretary of the interior and local government, who is currently serving as an officer-in-charge. Will the nation have to wait for retired AFP chief Eduardo Año, when he becomes the interior secretary, to seek a reversal of the reinstatement?

The nation is not lacking in individuals who can bring honor to the police uniform. Like the AFP, the PNP must take every opportunity to ensure that all the rotten eggs are tossed out.

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THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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PAGBAIBAGO

Rebuilding Marawi as a model city of peace



By FLORANGEL ROSARIO BRAID

TODAY, we remember our loved ones who had gone to the great beyond. Let me share this quotation I found online – a reminder that we really never lose our loved ones. Thus, as we make the trek to the cemetery or memorial park, or while honoring and remembering them in other places, we are comforted by the thought that as author Paulo Coelho said: “They accompany us, they don’t disappear from our lives. We are merely in different rooms.”

And let us also remember the more than a thousand who perished during the 154-day war in Marawi, and hundreds of thousands who have survived but who now have to struggle to keep themselves alive. We could hardly believe what we saw after the ceasefire,

but the pictures tell more than what appear before our eyes. These and more tales of courage and hope by the survivors, most of them evacuees who had survived some of the most trying experiences, will be part of the narrative that will be captured by planners in the rebuilding of the city. Some of the stories will come from friends and colleagues like former Ambassador Mac Lanto, a son of Marawi, who wrote insightful pieces about his own observations; Samira Gutoc who moved around the evacuation centers and wrote about what she had observed; columnist Antonio Montalvan who shared noteworthy perceptions about the “people of the lake” – the Maranaos, and martial law in Mindanao. His observation about the behavior of the military in a recent piece – how they “ensured psychosocial support to heal the traumatized...and that the

Philippine military had evolved into a professional army, shedding off its repressive image under Marcos” – gives us hope. And of course, from the residents and their children, who are expected to share their own stories, and to play an important role in the rebuilding process.

The story started May 23 when the Maute fighters, led by Isnilon Hapilon and Omar Maute, with the help of foreign terrorists, thought they could set up an ISIS-inspired “caliphate.” Since most of the Mautes grew up in Marawi and the nearby towns, they were quite familiar with the terrain. They were then able to build rat holes and mazes through adjoining building and were able to move around in the sewers with their snipers nested in tall structures. This prompted the military to use air raids despite criticism from several quarters. Scores were killed

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to those who are in heaven but are not recognized in the list of the saints by the Church.

All Saints' Day was officially started by Pope Boniface IV, who consecrated the Pantheon, the temple of Agrippa in Rome, to the Virgin Mary and all the Martyrs on May 13 in the year 609 AD. Boniface IV also established All Souls' Day, which follows All Saints Day. The day of all saints is also observed by members of the Eastern Orthodox Church as well as some Protestant churches, such as Anglican, Lutheran, and Anglican churches.

Saints are no extraordinary individuals. They are simple persons like us who endeavored to live a life of holiness in the ordinary situations of life. They too experienced hardships and pain; they endured suffering and disappointments. Yet in the midst of all these events, they remained faithful to their Christian calling and followed Jesus until the last breath of their lives. Jesus' Sermon on the Mount speaks about how they responded to God's call to blessedness. They are blessed for being pure of heart, for being agents of mercy, and instruments of peace. They are blessed for enduring persecution for the sake of the kingdom. Blessed are they who have kept the Word of God in their lives

while showing the happiness that they are now enjoying, shows, too, the road that they followed. The Church, through the Second Vatican Council encourages us to walk in their footsteps: "We must follow in His footsteps and conform ourselves to His image seeking the will of the Father in all things. We must devote ourselves with all our being to the glory of God and the service of our neighbor. In this way, the holiness of the People of God will grow into an abundant harvest of good, as is admirably shown by the life of so many saints in Church history." (Lumen Gentium, 40)

Our celebration today must inspire all men and women who follow Jesus to be ardent in faith and zealous in our love for God and neighbor. The lives of the countless holy men and women throughout the more than two millennium of the existence of Christianity must serve as guide and motivation for Christians in the here and now to faithfully heed the call of Christ and respond to his invitation to blessedness.

The path to holiness and blessedness is not an easy path but it is not an impassable route. The Saints in heaven have proven that it is possible to be holy no matter what the circumstances are. May the saints in heaven always intercede for us as we continue our earthly journey!

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INQUIRER

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Avenging Marawi

COMMENTARY

MACABANGKIT B. LANTO

A distraught Maranaw *bakwit*, her disheveled hair not covered by a *kombong* or veil (deemed a sin in Islam), was caught on TV saying something to the effect that the deaths of Omarkhayyam Maute and Isnilon Hapilon amounted to poetic justice. Other Maranaw aired the wish that the two men would rot in *Jahannam* (hell).

These expressions of rage summed up the collective feelings of the residents of Marawi City. The killing of the two men would not sate the residents' wrath and cry for vengeance.

The overriding instinct of the warrior Maranaw, descendants of Datu Amai Pakpak who died *shaheed* fighting two wars against Spanish conquistadores, is to avenge the destruction of their beloved city. The overpowering urge is to declare *rido* on the whole Maute clan (in *rido*, vengeance extends to distant relatives of warring families). But how should vengeance be exacted?

The tragedy has resulted in the clustering of the Maranaw into three separate groups of professionals, topnotch lawyers, religious and cultural leaders, bonded by the common desire to avenge and seek retribution for the pillage of Marawi. The first is a shadowy group identified as the "third force." It claims no affiliation with and no sympathy for either the rebels or the government forces, and is motivated by the sole purpose of promoting the interest of Marawi. Its members profess willingness to put their lives on the line, including jihad, boasting of sufficient arms to pursue their goal. Their anonymity is their weakness.

The second group is the Bangsa Maranaw Congress, which held a conference in Iligan City on Sept. 30 chaired by lawyer Firdausi Abbas to discuss strategies in addressing the Marawi tragedy. It is said to have issued a resolution to bring the case of Marawi to the International Court of Justice, to seek justice and compensation, but its chair has allegedly come out with a disclaimer. It made for good PR copy and has indeed caught the imagination of the Maranaw, but it's a long shot—literally "shooting for the moon"—given the international and domestic laws on state immunity from suit.

The third group, which was formed before the Marawi siege started in May, has campaigned for the resurgence of the moribund Maranaw nationalism vis-à-vis other tribes. Its members call themselves Ranao Federal State Movement (RFSM), in anticipation of the Charter change being pursued aggressively by the government. With lawyer Bayan Balt, former president of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines, Lanao Sur-Marawi Chapter as lead convener, the RFSM held its first consultative assembly also in Iligan on the same day as the Bangsa Maranaw Congress. (I was invited as one of the speakers but had to beg off.) One of the topics discussed was the war in Marawi.

Perhaps the best way to avenge Marawi is

to take the bull by the horns, so to speak, by engaging Maute's Dawlah Islamiyyah preachers and telling them to their faces that their ideology is errant. The Maranaw should, in no uncertain terms and at every turn, denounce as fake the kind of Islam they profess—in homes, schools or *madaris*, mosques, and forums. They should do exactly the opposite of what the jihadists are preaching, like hatred and death to Christians, by waging a counter-campaign of love toward Christians and embracing them as brothers and sisters in faith before Prophet Abraham (Ibrahim to Muslims), the father of the Islam and Christian religions. Let's not give them the satisfaction of seeing their teaching gaining traction among the Maranaw.

The government, through the National Commission for Muslim Filipinos, should mobilize its imam-supported program by fielding preachers to deradicalize Maute recruits and wage a counterpropaganda campaign.

We could avenge Marawi by helping in the arrest and prosecution of those persons who had a hand in the siege of the city but are now masquerading as supporters of President Duterte to evade culpability.

And to the Maranaw: What do you think is the best way to avenge Marawi?

Macabangkit B. Lanto (amb_mac_lanto@yahoo.com), UP Law 1967, was a Fulbright fellow in New York University for his postgraduate studies. He has served the government as congressman, ambassador, and undersecretary, among other positions.

ONLINE NEWS

01 NOVEMBER 2017

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Undas 'doubly meaningful' for families of fallen gov't troops: AFP

By Priam Nepomuceno | October 31, 2017, 5:03 pm

MANILA -- This year's observance of All Saints' Day is more significant for the families of the 165 uniformed personnel who perished in the successful military campaign to free Marawi City from the clutches of Maute Group terrorists, the spokesperson of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) said.

In a message issued Tuesday, Maj. Gen. Restituto Padilla said the commemoration of All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day this year is "doubly significant for the widows, orphans and families of 158 AFP and seven PNP (Philippine National Police) warrior heroes who died in Marawi during the siege of the city by Daesh-inspired rebels."

Daesh is another name for the Islamic State.

The conflict, which raged from May 23 to Oct. 23, is by far the longest armed conflict situation in post-World War II Philippine history.

"The Marawi siege left a once peaceful and economically vibrant city in ruins and utter economic decay. The local armed conflict raged for more than five months and paralyzed the whole city and turned the lives of thousands of residents of the city and nearby municipalities in limbo," Padilla said.

He noted the many stories of gallantry and heroism that were witnessed in the conflict that "showed the true courage and dedication of our soldiers to protect the lives not only of the Filipino people and their loved ones, but even their comrades."

Padilla cited the example of Capt. Rommel Sandoval, commander of the 11th Scout Ranger Company of the 4th Scout Ranger Battalion, 1st Scout Ranger Regiment, Special Operations Command.

"(He) fought with the promise he would not let any of his men die. While on a mission to retake a five-story building, one of his troops got wounded and was trapped in the middle of the crossfire. Sandoval was determined to rescue the soldier. When he saw an opportunity, without hesitation he went to get the wounded soldier and bring him to safety but in the process got hit by enemy fire," he said.

"Until his last breath, Sandoval kept his promise to keep his men alive. Using his body, he covered the soldier from the overwhelming enemy fire, preventing the bullets from further injuring his troop," he added.

Padilla said Sandoval left behind a wife who was anxiously waiting for a long-overdue vacation abroad with her husband.



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"She will instead stand vigil at the Libingan Ng Mga Bayani [his Undas]," he said.

Another soldier who paid the ultimate sacrifice is 2nd Lt. Harold Mark Juan of the Army's Special Forces Regiment (Airborne), Special Operations Command.

"He already got wounded in action, but chose to return to the main battle area to fight the terrorists. As the Marawi siege neared its end, the fighting remained to be a difficult feat. Juan was killed by sniper fire, leaving his fiancé behind whom he promised to marry once he goes back from Marawi," Padilla said (PNA)

www.pna.gov.ph

Navy needs more urban warfare training

By Priam Nepomuceno | [October 19, 2017, 11:11 am](#)

MANILA - An official of the Philippine Navy sees the need for Navy force units, especially those involved in ground assault missions, to get more training and exposure in urban warfare.

In an interview, Philippine Navy flag-officer-in-command Vice Admiral Ronald Joseph Mercado said subsequent debriefings after the liberation of Marawi City indicated there is a need for the force to train more on urban warfare.

"We have to improve our military operations in urban terrain. We need to improve that... I guess this is the first time we undertook combat in an urban terrain with reinforced and concrete buildings so those are the things that we need to look into, improve both our trainings, doctrines and all our equipment."

Mercado said during the sidelights of the homecoming ceremonies for the returning Fleet-Marine contingent in Pier 13, Manila South Harbor on Monday.

Despite the lack of training in urban warfare, the Navy units, especially those from the Philippine Marine Corps, were instrumental in the eventual liberation of Marawi City from terrorists, Mercado added.

The Marines recaptured three important bridges in the city - Mapandi, Banggolo, and Masiu. He said regaining control of these bridges allowed the government to deploy more troops and combat vehicles in the main battle area.

Around 920 Maule Group terrorists were killed in the five-month campaign that started last May 23 when government troops tried to arrest Abu Sayyaf leader Isnilon Hapilon and his cohorts.

In the fierce fighting that followed, around 165 government troops were killed, including 35 Marine soldiers (PNA)

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