

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



TEAM ARMY
Serving the people. Securing the land.

oacpa.army2012@gmail.com
OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

NEWS CLIPPINGS

19 September 2017

Tuesday

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

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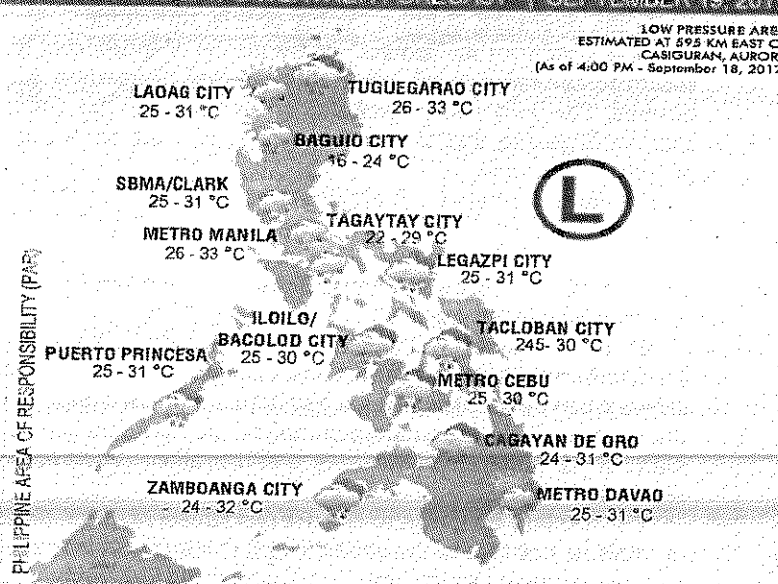
PANAHOON TV
www.panahon.tv /PanahonTV



PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS - FEARLESS VIEWS

TODAY'S WEATHER FORECAST | SEPTEMBER 19, 2017

LOW PRESSURE AREA
ESTIMATED AT 595 KM EAST OF
CASIGURAN, AURORA
(As of 4:00 PM - September 18, 2017)



TUESDAY

SUNRISE 5:45 AM	SUNSET 5:55 PM
MOONRISE 4:39 AM	MOONSET 5:21 PM
LAST QUARTER SEP 13 3:25 PM	NEW MOON SEP 20 1:30 PM
LOW TIDE 4:27 PM 0.12 Meter	HIGH TIDE 6:55 AM 1.16 Meter

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

	SEP 19	SEP 20	SEP 21	SEP 22	SEP 23
METRO MANILA	25 - 32 °C	26 - 32 °C			
TAGAYTAY	22 - 30 °C	22 - 29 °C			
TACLOBAN	24 - 30 °C	24 - 31 °C			
TUGUEGARAO	25 - 33 °C	24 - 32 °C			
LEGAZPI	25 - 30 °C	25 - 30 °C			
CAGAYAN DE ORO	24 - 32 °C	24 - 32 °C			
LAOAG	25 - 31 °C	25 - 30 °C			
PUERTO PRINCESA	25 - 31 °C	25 - 30 °C			
METRO DAVAO	25 - 32 °C	25 - 33 °C			
BAGUIO	16 - 24 °C	16 - 23 °C			
ILOILO/ BACOLOD	25 - 30 °C	26 - 30 °C			
ZAMBOANGA	24 - 32 °C	25 - 33 °C			
SBMA/ CLARK	25 - 31 °C	25 - 30 °C			
METRO CEBU	25 - 30 °C	25 - 31 °C			

DZRH NEWS TELEVISION

MONDAY - FRIDAY
11 AM & 5 PM

PILIPINAS HD

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

19 September 2017

INQUIRER

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DU30: PRIEST RESCUED IN SPECIAL OPS

STORY BY PHILIP C. TUBEZA, NIKKO DIZON, JULIE M. AURELIO AND EDWIN O. FERNANDEZ

The President denies Father Soganub was released after back-channel talks with the terrorists holed up in Marawi. He says the military operation will not end until the 'last terrorist is taken out.'

A2

FROM A1

By Philip C. Tubeza,
Nikko Dizon,
Julie M. Aurelio
and Edwin O. Fernandez
@Team_Inquirer

President Duterte on Monday dismissed suggestions that Fr. Teresito "Chito" Soganub, the vicar general of Marawi, was released by his captors after back-channel talks with the Islamic State (IS)-inspired terrorists.

"Impossible, impossible. I will not even agree to look at them," Mr. Duterte told reporters in Caloocan City.

"Father Soganub was not released. He was liberated through a special operation. They really focused on him because they (the hostages) were held separately," he said.

"That means the Special Forces of the Rangers crawled to get him," he added.

Another hostage, Lordbin Noblesa Acopio, was also rescued by the troops.

They had been held by the terrorists for 117 days.

Mr. Duterte said that once Soganub was presented to him, he would ask the priest if it was true that terrorists repeatedly raped their female hostages.

"The first questions would be not about the war [but] how the women were treated there.

All of those who escaped—and this I got from the media, the newspapers—said they (the women) were being repeatedly raped every night,” he said.

“That’s a gross violation of the rights of a human being, an affront to the dignity of the women of the Philippines,” he said.

Mr. Duterte said the military operation would “not end until the last terrorist is taken out.”

“[T]hat is my order to the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the police,” he said.

Soganub, 51, was flown to Manila on Monday, accompanied by the Lanao del Sur provincial government spokesperson, Zia Alonto Adiong, and Col. Romeo Brawnner Jr., deputy commander of the Joint Task Force Marawi battling the terrorists.

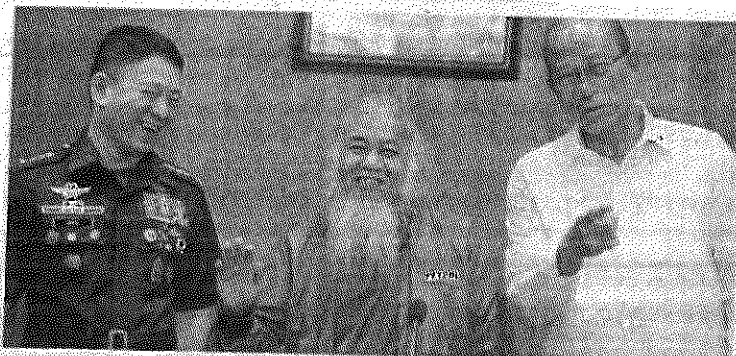
Mosque retaken

The priest, flanked by Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana and AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Eduardo Año, appeared to be in good health and high spirits when he was presented to reporters in military headquarters at Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon City.

Soganub expressed his thanks but gave no statement.

“God bless you all. Pray for me, for my healing and recovery,” Soganub said.

Lorenzana said the rescue of Soganub and Acopio came as government troops pressed an



MEDIA PRESENTATION Fr. Teresito “Chito” Soganub, flanked by Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Eduardo Año and Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana, is presented to reporters at Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon City. —GRIG C. MONTEGRANDE

attack to retake the Bato Ali mosque, which the terrorists used as command center.

“[O]ur troops gained the upper hand, the terrorists were forced to withdraw to nearby structures at the periphery of the mosque,” Lorenzana said.

“As the intensity of the armed confrontation continued to escalate in favor of our troops and while the terrorists were busy repelling the attack, the troops had the opportunity to snatch Father Chito and Mr. Acopio,” he added.

The troops also captured the Jamaitul Philippine al-Islamiyah, another stronghold of the terrorists.

Lorenzana commended the troops for the “excellent job.”

Año said Soganub had yet to undergo tactical debriefing.

“He underwent harsh conditions. We want him to rest and

adjust after his medical check-up,” Año said.

Long rest

The Prelature of Marawi is preparing a “healing and reintegration program” for Soganub and Acopio.

Duyog Marawi, the prelatore’s social action arm, said in a statement on Monday that the program had been ordered by Marawi Bishop Edwin de la Peña, who was in Abu Dhabi when he heard Soganub and Acopio had been rescued.

The program, Duyog Marawi said, includes general medical check-up and hospital confinement, to be followed by a long period of rest and trauma therapy.

During that period, Soganub’s duties at Mindanao State University—including his chaplaincy, education, interfaith and peacemaking pro-

grams—will be temporarily assumed by other priests and lay missionaries, the group said.

Soganub's family in Noralalah, South Cotabato province, is rejoicing.

"Our prayers were answered. God is good all the time," said Marilyn Soganub, the priest's elder sister.

Soganub and dozens of other civilians were snatched by the terrorists as they rampaged across Marawi and laid siege to the predominantly Muslim city on May 23.

Terror groups

The terrorists are from a faction of the Abu Sayyaf bandit group led by Isnilon Hapilon and the terror group led by brothers Omarkhayam and Abdullah Maute, whose family in Lanao del Sur has deep connections in the lakeside city and surrounding areas.

Hapilon has pledged allegiance to the IS group, which has reportedly named him "emir" in Southeast Asia.

Together with the Maute gunmen and some foreign fighters, mostly Indonesians, Hapilon's band seized parts of Marawi to establish an IS enclave in Southeast Asia.

As of Monday, more than 800 people have been killed in the fighting: 673 terrorists, 149 soldiers and police, and 47 civilians.

Hapilon is among those still fighting but several of the Maute

brothers are likely dead, Año said, citing information provided by civilians who escaped and some captured terrorists.

"Based on the debriefing of those captured and surrendered, Omar Maute is the only one left. Abdullah, Madi and Otto, they're all dead," Año said.

He said about 10 foreigners—Malaysians and Indonesian—were still in the battle among some 50-60 Maute and Abu Sayyaf terrorists, who were holding 45-80 hostages.

Speaking to reporters in Malacañang, Maj. Gen. Restituto Padilla Jr., spokesperson for the military, gave slightly different figures, saying the terrorists were still holding 40 to 60 hostages, some of whom they had pressed into the battle, boosting their force from 60 to 80.

"The enemy's strength, per the last validation, seemed to have increased from 60 to 80 news and information... indicated that perhaps some of the hostages previously held have forced to join the [terrorists'] ranks," Padilla said. —WITH A RE-

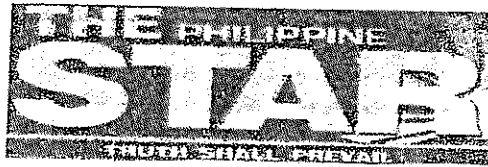
PORT FROM REUTERS INQ



WATCH VIDEO: Military captures key pro-IS base in Marawi City

<http://inq.news/MauteBaseCaptured>

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UST law freshman dies in frat hazing

Aegis Juris members suspended

By GHIO ONG

He went to a “welcome ceremony” of a law fraternity he hoped to join. Early Sunday morning, the freshman law student of the University of Santo Tomas was found dead on a sidewalk in Manila, wrapped in a blanket and bearing injuries believed to be from hazing.

The body of Horacio Tomas Topacio Castillo III of San Lorenzo Village in Makati was found at the corner of H. Lopez Blvd. and Infanta Street in Balut, Tondo at around 7:50 a.m., according to the Manila Police District.

The 22-year-old law student, who had hoped to become a senator, was clad in a white shirt with “Political Science University of Santo Tomas” printed on it. He was in blue jersey shorts and had no footwear.

John Paul Sarte Solano, 27, a medical technologist of San Lazaro Hospital, found Castillo on the sidewalk.

Turn to Page 10

OFFICE OF THE

Police said a passing Strada pickup pulled over to help Solano and some bystanders take Castillo to the Chinese General Hospital where Dr. Clarisse Cledera declared him dead on arrival at 9:21 a.m.

The victim, the MPD report noted, had hematoma on his upper arms as well as bruises and marks of candle drippings in different parts of his body.

The MPD added it is "collecting pieces of evidence at the crime scene and gathering CCTV within the vicinity to obtain information in the incident."

Police said they are coordinating with the victim's family and with UST officials to obtain leads regarding the last "whereabouts of the victim."

MPD spokesman Supt. Erwin Margarejo said Castillo apparently died of "massive heart attack" due to his injuries.

"Usually when there are traumatic injuries it would lead to cardiac or respiratory arrest," Margarejo said.

"Based on the testimony given by the mother, the injuries sustained by the victim and the circumstantial facts concerning his activities pointing to the initiation rites... it's more likely hazing," MPD director Chief Supt. Joel Napoleon Coronel said in a statement.

Castillo's parents showed up at the MPD's homicide section, but did not speak to media, who were barred from entering the office.

In a statement, UST condemned the hazing death of Castillo with its law dean ordering the suspension of officials and members of the Aegis Juris fraternity.

"We condemn in no uncertain terms hazing in any form or manner. Violence has no place in an academic institution, particularly in the University of Santo Tomas that values and promotes charity and compassion," UST said.

"We will leave no stone unturned to ensure that the perpetrators be meted the appropriate sanctions and brought to justice," it added.

It said it would launch its own investigation "to ferret out the truth, determine liability and institute the necessary legal actions."

"Investigation will be immediately conducted to determine culpability so that appropriate sanctions may be imposed," it added.

Frat suspended

Faculty of Civil Law dean Nilo Divina issued a memorandum imposing preventive suspension on all officers and members of the Aegis Juris fraternity to ensure "unobstructed investigation" of the incident. Divina is an official of Aegis Juris.

"Members of this group therefore would not be allowed to enter the campus of the Faculty of Civil Law or attend classes until further orders," read the memorandum.

The university said it was saddened by the incident and offered its sympathy and prayers to the family of Castillo.

"No words can describe our sadness for this unfortunate incident. We express our profound sympathy and offer our prayers to his family for their pain and anguish—a pain that we share seeing that the life of our very own student, with all of its aspirations and potentials, taken away because of a senseless act," said UST.

As a royal and pontifical school, the 406-year-old university said it is committed to propagating and preserving Christian values and ideals.

In an earlier message sent to *philstar.com*, Divina said the "welcome ceremony" supposedly attended by Castillo was not coordinated with the university.

"We are not aware of such event. We do not involve ourselves in activities of any fraternity," Divina said.

The UST Civil Law Student Council scheduled a prayer vigil for Castillo at 6 p.m. yesterday as it condemned the incident.

Meanwhile, the UST Central

Student Council (CSC) urged the university administration to thoroughly investigate the incident.

"The UST CSC demands a rigorous investigation on the people and the fraternity involved in the death of Horacio Tomas Castillo III. May he get the justice he deserves," the student council said.

"Fraternities deal with brotherhood, but violence should not be its currency," it added.

Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines-Episcopal Commission on Youth (CBCP-ECY) Fr. Conegundo Garganta said fraternity members involved in Castillo's death "stained their hands with the blood of their kind."

"It is with sadness and pity—sadness for the loss of another life, sadness for the family of the hazing casualty, it will be layers and layers of pain for losing a loved one, pains to meet justice," Garganta said.

"Pity that many young males and their elders continue to ignore the painful lessons of past incidences of death due to hazing activities. Prayers and condolences to the family. The fraternity involved should clear their group about this incident. May justice be served to all," he added.

NBI, CHED probe

Justice Secretary Vitaliano Aguirre II last night ordered the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) to conduct its own probe on Castillo's death.

"The Department of Justice condemns any act of senseless violence committed against our youth and against any innocent person for that matter," he said in a statement.

Aguirre also condoled with the Castillo family and offered assistance to them.

"As a parent myself, I feel their loss and anguish. We will endeavor to see to it that those who are responsible will be held accountable to the full extent of the law," the DOJ chief said.

Aguirre himself is member of a fraternity, Lex Talionis, of San Beda College law school, along with President Duterte.

The Commission on Higher

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Education (CHED) also announced its own investigation on the incident.

"CHED chair Patricia Licuanan instructed National Capital Region director Nida Calagui to conduct a formal investigation on the matter," the commission said in a statement sent to **The STAR** yesterday.

"The chair raised it at the national directorate which is happening (this week)," it added.

Violent hazing or initiation rites of fraternities are criminal offenses based on Republic Act 8049 or the anti-hazing law.

More outrage

Castillo's hazing death also sparked condemnation from senators.

"Another victim of hazing violence. Doesn't make you less/more of a man to have undergone violent initiation. Brotherhood has better tests," Sen. Sonny Angara said in his Twitter account.

Sen. Sherwin Gatchalian called on the leadership of UST to take the lead in seeking justice for Castillo.

"The fact that the fraternity being implicated in this hazing death is recognized by the university itself as a legitimate student organization means that UST cannot pull the same tricks used by other schools in the past to evade responsibility for the criminal actions of their students," Gatchalian said.

"UST has an even greater obligation than ever to uncover the truth of this incident and hold Atyo's killers accountable for their sick crimes," he said.

New hazing law

He also renewed his call for the passage of legislation replacing the Anti-Hazing Law of 1995.

Gatchalian's measure, Senate Bill 199, seeks to repeal RA 8049 and replace it with a more comprehensive and improved anti-hazing law.

Sen. Joseph Victor Ejercito reminded fraternities to conduct themselves in accordance with the law and good morals.

"We will not allow fraternities promoting mafia-like practices and rituals to resurface

again. Thus, I call on the police to investigate this thoroughly, hunt and arrest the killers at the quickest possible time," Ejercito said.

At the House of Representatives, lawmakers called on the NBI to investigate the latest hazing death.

"I urge the Department of Justice and the NBI to immediately investigate and criminally charge everyone responsible for the death of Horacio Castillo III," Rep. Bernadette Herrera-Dy of party-list Bagong Henerasyon said.

She lamented that despite the hazing deaths of several young students from various universities, the UST fraternity "has not learned the tragic and painful lessons of previous fatal hazing incidents."

"While no words can express our deep sorrow about the tragedy, I can say that his death and his memory will spur me and my colleagues into even faster and diligent action on our bills on hazing," she said.

Quezon City Rep. Alfred Vargas decried the loss of another promising citizen due to hazing. "Life is very precious. And our youth, as we always say, will be the next generation of leaders. We cannot afford to have incidents like this," he said.

Herrera-Dy said an improved anti-hazing proposal contained in House Bill 3467 carries with it "lessons learned from the hazing deaths of Marvin Reglos and Lenny Villa, including suggestions from the Supreme Court to address gaps current laws do not cover."

Herrera-Dy said that instead of regulating hazing, HB 3467 seeks to ban the practice altogether unless done in the presence of school representatives during initiation rites.

"This way, there cannot be any secret initiation. The school representative is duty-bound to make sure no harm is inflicted upon the recruit, neophyte or applicant," Herrera-Dy said in a statement.

With Janvic Mateo, Helen Flores, Paolo Romero, Delon Porcalla, Edu Punay, Evelyn Macairan, Rainier Allan Ronda

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WHISTLE-BLOWER TALE

ARMY UNIT PROBES DISBURSEMENT MESS

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—
The commander of the Army's 7th Infantry Division (ID) on Monday ordered a review of the financial records of the unit following allegation of anomalies in 2014 in Fort Magsaysay in Nueva Ecija province, where it is based.

Maj. Gen. Angelito de Leon said he also asked Camp Aguinaldo, the Armed Forces of the Philippines headquarters, to undertake a parallel investigation to prove or disprove the claims of whistle-blower, Cpl. Melvin Alfonso, who had gone into hiding.

According to De Leon, Alfonso was a member of the division's service battalion until last year when he sought transfer to Camp Aguinaldo.

De Leon learned of the supposed corruption through a story in the Inquirer. He said he had not read the whistle-blower's report to President Duterte.

It was not clear who was the division commander when Alfonso supposedly discovered the irregularities involving funds called return to sender (RTS).

RTS refers to portions of operational funds allocated to the 7th ID which are allegedly withdrawn and diverted to senior officers.

Maj. Gen. Hernando Iriberry served as 7th ID commander from July 23, 2013, to Feb. 7, 2014; Brig. Gen. Vic Castro from Feb. 7 to April 2, 2014; and Maj. Gen. Glorioso Miranda from April 2, 2014, to Oct. 15, 2015.

Iriberry and Castro have retired while Miranda is the cur-



**Irregularities
are not tolerated
by our institution**

Maj. Gen. Angelito de Leon
Commander, 7th ID

rent Army chief.

Former Armed Forces chief of staff, Gen. Gregorio Pio Cata-pang Jr., had said his predecessor, Emmanuel Bautista, had put in place anticorruption measures in the organization and its operational systems.

De Leon, who assumed command on Oct. 15, 2015, said the present system at the division had "very strict" fiscal and control measures.

Asked to confirm the existence of RTS funds through which soldiers allegedly get between P5,000 and P10,000, De Leon said, "None."

"There should be a basis for releasing money," he said, adding that salaries of soldiers were released through ATM (automated teller machines).

The division handles maintenance and other operating expenses (MOOE) released by the national headquarters.

"Irregularities are not tolerated by our institution," De Leon said. —TONETTE OREJAS INQ

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MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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2 MILF fighters killed in ops vs IS-linked group

By **ZEAC C. CAPISTRANO**
and **AARON RECUECO**

DAVAO CITY – The military yesterday confirmed reports that two members of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) members were killed in its own operation against Islamic State (IS)-inspired militants in Maguindanao province on Sunday, September 17.

In an interview with Capt. Arvin Encinas, public affairs chief of the Sixth Infantry Division, he said they received reports that an encounter between the MILF and the IS-inspired militants belonging to the Abu Turaibe faction of the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) occurred around 9:30 am on Sunday in Barangay Tee, Datu Salibo town.

He said two MILF fighters were reportedly killed.

A separate report from the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) Regional Police Office identified the slain MILF members as Mustapa Musa and Muhamad Kafil.

The police report also said four other MILF fighters were wounded, and named two of them as Suranni Abelusa and Taha Sabpa.

Encinas added that the gunfight between the ISIS-inspired faction and the MILF have been raging since Friday, September 15.

He said they received reports that six were killed and 14 were wounded on the side of Abu Turaibe's faction. The military, he added was still validating these reports.

The MILF's operation against the

ISIS-linked faction of the BIFF started last August 2.

The BIFF was established by an MILF commander based in Maguindanao and Cotabato area in protest to the peace talks between the government and the MILF in the past administration.

The group of Ameril Umbra Kato wanted total freedom for Moros in Mindanao by establishing their own government and a separate state.

The BIFF had been responsible for attacks against the government since then, but was nearly wiped out after an all-out offensive a few months after the controversial Mamasapano clash wherein 44 police commandos died.

The government said it found new life after aligning itself with the Maute Group and IS.

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MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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Teenage boy killed as NPAs fire at soldiers fixing day care center

By **DANNY J. ESTACIO**

CAMP G. NAKAR, Lucena City — The military's Southern Luzon Command (SOLCOM) reported yesterday that a 15-year-old boy was killed in the attack of New People's Army (NPA) rebels on soldiers repairing a day care center in Barangay Libertad, Cawayan, Masbate.

Captain Alvin Mark Banayao of the 2nd Infantry Battalion of the Philippine Army identified the fatality in Saturday's NPA attack as Vincent Pekiro, a student and resident of Barangay Libertad.

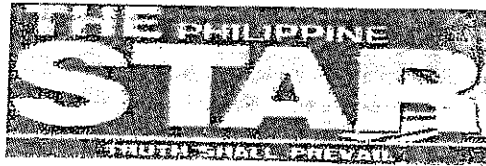
Banayao said members of Alpha Company of the 2IB were helping in the repairs of the day care center as

part of the army's Community Support Program (CSP) at 4:30 p.m. when they were fired upon by the rebels positioned 300 meters away.

The soldiers were able to immediately secure the people in the vicinity as the rebels opened fire, but the 15-year-old was hit and killed on the spot, said Banayao.

Major General Benjamin R. Madrigal Jr., SOLCOM chief, condemned the said attack as an act of terrorism. "This is another clear violation of the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL) which provides that civilian shall be protected and spared from any kind of violence and shall not be the object of attack," he said.

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6 militants, 2 MILF men killed in clash

By JOHN UNSON

MAGUINDANAO – Six militants and two Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) guerrillas were killed in another encounter in Salibotown in this province on Sunday.

The fatalities from the militants' side were identified only as Salem, Nasrullah, Sidik, Minandang, Musa and Asraf. Village leaders said four other militants were wounded.

Chief Superintendent Reuben Theodore Sindac, Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao police director, identified the slain MILF guerrillas as Mustapha Musa, 24, and Muhammad Kadil, 40, of the 105th Base Command.

Surani Abilusa, 50, and Taha Sabpa, 30, also from the MILF, were wounded and taken to a hospital for treatment.

Led by Esmael Abdumalik, a former leader of the

Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters, the militants have been engaged in gunfights with MILF guerrillas at the border of Barangays Tee and Andavit since Aug. 1. At least 18 MILF men and 25 militants have been killed.

MILF guerrillas have been running after Abdulmalik and his men in line with the 1997 Agreement on General Cessation of Hostilities, which the MILF signed with the government. The accord enjoins the MILF to help the police and military to maintain peace and order in flashpoint areas where there are MILF forces.

MILF commanders reportedly failed to convince Abdulmalik to renounce his links with the Islamic State.

Personnel of the Army's 6th Infantry Division and Tactical Operations Group 12 of the Air Force have launched pursuit operations for the militants. –

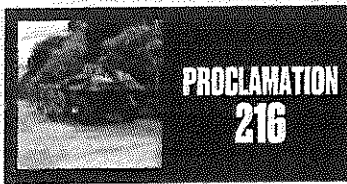
With Cecille Suerte Felipe

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Duterte's martial law: Mission accomplished, says military



**By Frinston Lim,
Julie S. Alipala
and Edwin O. Fernandez**
@inquirermindanao

DAVAO CITY—If there's one thing the military can claim about the gains of implementing martial law in Mindanao, it's preventing the violence in Marawi City from spilling to other areas.

With the intensified security operations, the military's Eastern Mindanao Command (Eastmincom) "was able to carry out its mission," Brig. Gen. Gilbert Gapay, assistant regional military commander, said in a statement.

"Business remains vibrant in the region through the security arrangements and the active interagency operations of the military and the police," said Gapay, who is also the spokesperson for the implementation of martial law in Mindanao.

Marawi crisis

President Duterte placed the entire Mindanao under military rule following the attack of Islamic State-inspired terrorists on Marawi City on May 23.

The fighting for control of the city has left more than 800 people dead and displaced more than 400,000 people.

Gapay said the security situation in areas under Eastmincom, particularly Davao, Caraga and parts of Northern Mindanao and Cotabato regions had remained relatively stable.

"The Kadayawan Festival of Davao City, Higala-ay Festival in Cagayan de Oro City and other events held in the region were concluded peacefully," Gapay said.

He said troops under Eastmincom had conducted 50,979 checkpoint operations and carried out 36,169 security patrols "to protect areas of convergence, worship areas and other

public events.”

Eastmincom has the operational jurisdiction over troops under the Compostela Valley-based 10th Infantry Division and the 4th ID based in Cagayan de Oro City.

Gapay said the troops had succeeded in shielding the region from terrorists while protecting human rights and observing the rule of law.

Terror suspects captured

Eastmincom has set up a multisectoral advisory council, drawing representatives from different sectors, to check on rights abuses by security forces, he said.

Several terror suspects, including Cayamora Maute, the patriarch of the ringleaders behind the Marawi terror attack, have been captured by security forces in the region.

Brig. Gen. Cirilito Sobejana, commander of Joint Task Group Sulu, said declaration of martial law allowed the military to enhance its campaign against the

Abu Sayyaf and other lawless groups in the island province.

He said checkpoints were set up in strategic areas, while a curfew was imposed on the entire province.

“We strictly enforce the ID system here. Everyone is required to bring their ID. With these measures, we have arrested a number of Abu Sayyaf and recovered firearms. [The] crime rate also went down, that is according to [the] assessment of the police,” Sobejana said.

Ruth Guerrero, who teaches at Ateneo de Zamboanga University, agrees with the implementation of martial law in Mindanao.

Good for business

“For me, as far as Mindanao is concerned, it has imposed the message that we are mindful of our security and that both the military and police are also on their toes to ascertain that the strategies of these radical extremists are quelled or intercepted,” Guerrero said.

Local officials have also ex-

pressed support for the implementation of martial law and its extension up to the end of the year, saying the stable peace and order is good for business.

Maguindanao Rep. Zajid Mangudadatu said his province had “become peaceful [with the implementation of] martial law because many lawless elements were arrested, including those who have connections with [the] Maute and [the] Abu Sayyaf [groups].”

Davao del Norte Gov. Antonio Rafael del Rosario said the extension of martial law “would allow the government to solve the problem of insurgency and terrorism for good.”

Trade Secretary Ramon Lopez said martial rule had not dampened business in the region, citing what he described as the successful holding of the Davao Investment Conference in July, with hundreds of local and foreign traders attending.

While the military maintains it has ensured respect for human rights in conducting its duties,

rights groups have accused security forces of committing rampant abuses against civilians.

In Southern Mindanao alone, at least 46 cases of alleged summary killings perpetrated by military agents have been documented since the imposition of martial law, according to Cristina Palabay, Karapatan secretary general.

These political killings, Karapatan said, have victimized peasants, activists and even lumad youth, as in the case of 18-year-old Ata-Manobo Obillo Bay-ao, who was shot dead by suspected progovernment militiamen in Talaingod town, Davao del Norte over a week ago.

Militarist order

For Mags Maglana, coconvener of antimartial law group Konsensya Dabaw, extending martial law would not solve the problem of violent extremism “but institutionalize a militarist order that would jeopardize civilian rule, affect the exercise of rights and socioeconomic ac-

tivities, and encourage collusion with the political and economic elite" instead.

source of national pride

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Maglana, who also writes a column for a local daily, drew parallels between the military rule imposed by the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos, some 45 years ago, with Mr. Duterte's Proclamation No. 216, with the two draconian measures using the "state of lawlessness" in the southern Philippine region as cause for the imposition.

"Marcos' martial law created the conditions that intensified human rights abuses, exploitation and underdevelopment in Mindanao. Instead of putting a stop to the conditions described in Proclamation 1081, martial law under Marcos became a self-fulfilling prophecy," she said.

Mr. Duterte's military rule cited "violent acts" by the jihadis in Marawi City and nearby areas in Lanao del Sur as justification for the proclamation, Maglana said.

"Nearly four months later, (Duterte's martial law) has not vanquished the violent extremist fighters in Marawi. Instead, airstrikes and sustained artillery attacks have done so much damage to the city that years from now its destruction might get cited as an example of yet another historical injustice and trigger more resistance," Maglana said.

"[M]ilitary rule has managed to tap into the sense of fear of many urban Mindanaoans, convincing them that it takes no less than military supremacy to ensure stability and order," she said.

Even as the specter of a nationwide martial law looms, Maglana has joined a growing number of voices calling for the lifting of military rule in Mindanao.

"It is not yet too late for President Duterte to lift martial law so that it does not meld with other factors that would make Proclamation 216 a self-fulfilling prophecy of terror, death and damage the way Proclamation 1081 ended up becoming. Violent extremism poses a complex set of challenges that cannot be met by a failed 45-year old formula," he said. INQ

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Three Marawi siege leaders slain

By FRANCIS T. WAKEFIELD

Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Chief of Staff General Eduardo Año on Monday confirmed the death of three Maute brothers as a result of fierce clashes inside war-torn Marawi City.

In a press briefing at Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City, Año said that based on the debriefing of captured and surrendered members of the Islamic State-inspired Maute Group, Maute brothers Abdullah, Madi, and Otto, are already dead.

With this latest development, the only remaining leader of the group is Omar Maute.

Abu Sayyaf leader Isnilon Hapilon, who joined the group, is still in the Main Battle Area (MBA) based on intelligence reports the military has been receiving.

“Based on the custodial debriefing

of those captured and who surrendered, si Omar Maute na lang ang nabubuhay (Omar Maute is the only one alive),” Año said.

“Si Abdullah, si Madi, at saka si Otto ay patay na raw ito lahat. May mga sibling din doon na hindi naman prominente na dalawang Maute din (Abdullah, Madi, and Otto are all reported dead. There are two Maute siblings there who are not that prominent) but we feel that they are not significant,” Año said.

Aside from those who surrendered, Año said they have sources inside the MBA confirming the death of the three Maute brothers.

For him that's already validated information.

Asked if there are still foreign fighters inside Marawi, Año said there are about 10 of them, mostly Indone- ▶ 6

Three Marawi siege...

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sians and Malaysians.

Regarding the number of remaining hostages, Año said there are still about 45 to 50 of them, while there are about 50 to 60 remaining Maute fighters still in Marawi.

12 remain captive

Año said in the Bato mosque where Father Teresito “Chito” Soganub was rescued by government forces last Saturday, there remain 12 hostages there.

The news that Fr. Soganub was finally free after 117 days of captivity by the Maute Group was greeted with great rejoicing here on Monday.

Church leaders led by Marawi Bishop Edwin dela Peña welcomed the news on the rescue of Soganub and other hostages.

“Our joy couldn’t be complete if the good news received will not be shared,” Iligan City Vice Mayor Msgr. Jernar Vera Cruz said, despite the request of Fr. Soganub that he not tell anyone about his release in the meantime, in a cellular phone conversation on Monday.

“Dili masulod sa kalibutan ang gibating

dakong kalipay” Vera Cruz said over the phone in an interview with DXIC-RMN.

He said Fr. Soganub is thankful for all the prayers for his safe release and to St. Michael de Archangel for protecting him.

Fr. Soganub, who was presented to media at Camp Aquinaldo, Quezon City on Monday, thanked the people for praying for him following his safe rescue from the Main Battle Area (MBA) in Marawi City.

In a brief speech, Fr. Soganub assured that he is in good condition and only need some rest following his almost four-month captivity from the hands of the Daesh-inspired Maute terrorist group.

Fr. Soganub, it was recalled, was taken by the Maute Group on May 23, 2017 shortly after the terrorist group occupied Marawi City.

Bishop Stephen L. Villaester, pastor of 3J2 Bible Center Anglican Church, also said he is grateful to God for the release of Fr. Soganub. “Thank you, Lord Jesus. This is indeed great news. I cannot wait to see him. He is my friend, my brother, and a counterpart at the Interfaith Council for

Peace,” he said.

Healing, re-integration

Fr. Soganub, along with the other hostages of the Maute Group in Marawi City, will undergo a healing and reintegration program. Duyog Marawi, the social action center of the Prelature of Marawi, said on Facebook.

Bishop Dela Peña has a plan for the released hostages’ healing and reintegration. It includes a general medical check-up and hospital confinement, a long period of rest and recovery, together with trauma therapy.

While Fr. Soganub is going through a healing process, his chaplaincy, education, interfaith, and peace building programs and services at the Mindanao State University will be assumed by a combination of priests and lay missionaries from the Redemptorist Missionaries in the Philippines, Caritas Cebu, and the Capiz Archdiocesan Social Action Center in Roxas City.

The priest is the vicar general of the Marawi prelature, chaplain of MSU, and acting rector of St. Mary’s Cathedral. (With reports from Bonita L. Ermac and Leslie Ann G. Aquino)

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The Filipino News

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Maute leader dead, says AFP chief

**BY VICTOR REYES
and JOCELYN MONTEMAYOR**

ARMED Forces chief Gen. Eduardo Año yesterday confirmed the death of Abdullah Maute, a leader of the Maute Group that attacked Marawi City in May, and two of his brothers.

The confirmation was made at a press conference in Camp Aguinaldo where rescued Maute hostage Fr. Teresito "Chito" Suganob was presented.

The 51-year-old Suganob was vicar general of the prelate of St. Mary's Cathedral in Marawi City when he was taken hostage by the Maute along with numerous other Marawi residents. He was rescued Saturday night during a firefight with the terrorists. The cathedral had been desecrated.

Clad in a blue jacket, Suganob gave a brief statement before being ushered out of a conference room. "To all, thank you and I pray for you. God bless you all. Pray for me, for my healing, recovery."

Asked how he was doing, the priest said, "Physically strong, handsome."

President Duterte said Suganob "was liberated through a special operation" and no negotiation with the Maute was conducted for the priest's freedom.

He also said that when he gets the chance to talk to Suganob, he would ask how the Maute treated the hostages, especially the women.

He noted media reports quoting the women hostages who have escaped as saying they were abused and raped every day.

"That's a gross violation of the rights of a human being, affront of the dignity of the women of the Philippines," he said.

Armed Forces spokesman Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla said there are about 60 to 80 hostages still held by the Maute which attacked Marawi on May 23.

Año said confirmation on the death of brothers Abdullah, Maddie, and Otto Maute came from various sources, including accounts from one Maute member who has surrendered and three other terrorists who have been captured.

Año did not say the circumstances of their deaths but previous reports said Abdullah died in an air strike in the conflict area.

"Based on the custodial debriefing of those captured and who surrendered, it's only Omar who is alive. Abdullah, Maddie and Otto are reported dead. There are other Maute siblings who are not that prominent inside (Marawi City) but we feel they are not significant," said Año.

Pressed if the death of the three Maute

MAUTE

brothers is already validated, Año said: “Yes, I believe.”

“There are two main groups now left (in Marawi). One is led by Hapilon and mostly this is composed of those who came from Basilan and the group led by Omar Maute,” he said.

Omar Maute is among those believed to have attacked Marawi. Isnilon Hapilon is a senior leader of the Abu Sayyaf, who has reportedly been named Southeast Asia leader of the Islamic State to which both Abu Sayyaf and the Maute have pledged allegiance.

Recent military estimates said there are about 50 Maute remnants. Año said remnants include about 10 foreign fighters, mostly Malaysians and Indonesians.

Since the fighting broke out last May 23, 673 Maute men have been killed, together with 149 soldiers and policemen and 47 civilians.

FATE ACCEPTED

Año, who presented Suganob together with Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana, said the priest thought he would die in captivity.

“There was an instance when

we told Father, ‘Father, we’ll get you out’ but the Father said, ‘No, let me die here, I already accepted my fate.’ That’s why he couldn’t (believe) when he was rescued last Saturday,” said Año.

Suganob and teacher Lordbin Noblesa Acopio were rescued by soldiers during fierce gun battle with Maute members at the Bato Mosque at around 11:40 p.m. Saturday. Acopio was not presented to media and remained in Marawi.

“As the intensity of the armed confrontation continues to escalate in favor of our troops and while the terrorists were busy repelling the attack, the troops had the opportunity to snatch Fr. Chito and Mr. Acopio during the melee,” said Lorenzana.

Año said Suganob’s rescue was actually an intelligence project supported by combat operations. He said the military had planned to extricate Suganob as early as September 13 before assaulting the mosque where he and other hostages were kept.

“But on September 13, September 14 and September 15, there was a change in how the enemy was guarding so we were not able to rescue Fr. Suganob,” said Año.

“I gave the go signal to assault the Bato Mosque so we can imple-

ment the extraction of Fr. Sogano while there is fighting. Everything materialized because on Saturday, we were able to gain a foothold in Bato Mosque and extricated Fr. Sogano on the night of September 16,” he said.

Lorenzana said: “Our troops gained the upper hand. The terrorists were forced to withdraw to nearby structures on the periphery of the mosque ... Troops had opportunity to snatch Father Chito...”

Año said intelligence information indicated that Suganob was with 25 other hostages at the mosque though the priest said he only saw 12 hostages in the area.

Año said the military delayed the announcement of the rescue because of ongoing efforts to the rescue the other hostages but “public clamor” prompted them to confirm the rescue.

“Under the mosque are an intricate tunnels and secret chambers so we are actually clearing those chambers and there are hostages still there... We have an effort to rescue them also and the other hostages in the other buildings. We will try to do our best to rescue them alive,” said Año.

He said about 45 to 50 hostages remain with the Maute, including the 12 in the mosque’s secret chambers.

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Hapilon, Omar Maute next AFP targets – Año

By Mario J. Mallari



Free again Rescued Catholic priest Father Teresito Suganob waves to journalists as he is presented during a press conference at the military headquarters in Manila yesterday, following his September 16 rescue by the military. He was kidnapped by Islamic State supporters when they occupied parts of a southern Philippine city nearly four months ago smited and called for prayers after escaping. AFP

Almost three months after laying siege to Marawi City, Isnilon Hapilon and Omar Maute are believed to be still in the city to coordinate the Islamic State-inspired terror operations and in putting up resistance against advancing government troops while keeping around 50 captives.

Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Gen. Eduardo Año said he does not want Hapilon, the designated emir or leader of the Islamic State (IS) in Southeast Asia, to leave the main battle area alive.

“He (Hapilon) is still inside the main battle area, based on our

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intelligence, he is considering other options but we will make sure that all of his options are addressed," said Ano.

"As much as possible we don't want Hapilon to leave the main battle area alive," he added during a press conference yesterday in camp Aguinaldo where he and Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana presented Fr. Teresito "Chito" Suganob to the media.

Ano said Hapilon and Omar Maute are now leading the two main terrorist groups still putting up resistance in Marawi City.

He said the killing of three other Maute brothers, namely, Abdullah, Maddie and Otto have been validated by the military through various sources.

At least 10 foreign jihadists are still with the IS-inspired terrorists.

Ano said that most of the foreigners are Malaysians and Indonesians.

He also said that 45 to 50 hostages are still being held by the terrorists and now the subjects of ongoing military operations.

"There are two main groups now left - one is led by Hapilon and mostly from Basilan and the group led by Omar Maute," said Ano.

The AFP chief expressed hopes that the military would be able to rescue more hostages in the

coming days.

"Actually, they wanted to use Father (Suganob and other hostages) as insurance to get out alive, human shield and at the same time for bargaining," said Ano.

Suganob and Lordbin Acopio, 29, a teacher at the Dansalan College, were rescued by government security forces on Saturday night from the Bato Mosque in Barangay Sangcay.

The two were among the hostages taken by IS-inspired terrorists immediately after launching the siege last May 23.

"To all thank you, I pray for God to bless you all. Pray for me for my healing recovery.

"I am physically strong, handsome," said Suganob in a brief appearance during a press conference.

As of yesterday, a total of 673 terrorists, 47 civilians and 149 government troops have been killed since the siege started last May.

The rescue of Suganob and Acopio brought to 1,730 the number of rescued civilians.

For his part, Lorenzana said that President Duterte had been informed of the successful rescue operation and instructed the military to continue the operations against the IS-inspired terrorists.

Suganob rescued – Rody

Suganob's freedom from IS bandits that held him for more than

three months is not due to backdoor negotiations with the IS-inspired terrorists, President Duterte insisted yesterday.

Talking to reporters in Caloocan City, the Chief Executive said that the government will never ever deal with terrorists to rescue and save civilians.

"Father Soganub was not released by the terrorists. He was liberated through a special operation," Duterte said.

"If you ask me that his rescue was a result of any backdoor negotiations with the Maute. No. Impossible, impossible. I will not even agree to look at them," he added.

Suganob was brought to Manila and presented to the media yesterday at Camp Aguinaldo in a press conference with top defense and military officials leading the government's bid to recover Marawi City.

The Catholic priest was secured by soldiers at around 11 p.m. on Saturday near the Bato mosque inside the war zone.

The said mosque is the second stronghold then held by the IS fanatic bandits that has been finally secured by government forces.

Government forces were also able to clear seven buildings in the last 24 hours and 28 buildings the day prior.

"In fact, the street-to-street

fighting is ongoing as of this moment and our forces are focused and determined to push the envelope so that soon we can say that Marawi is totally liberated," AFP spokesman Brigadier-General Restituto Padilla said in a Palace briefing yesterday morning.

Padilla also made an assurance that enemies who want to surrender could turn themselves in and they will be treated fairly.

Hundreds of gunmen rampaged through Marawi, the main Muslim city in the mostly Catholic Philippines, on May 23 and then occupied key districts in what authorities said was an attempt to establish a Southeast Asian base for IS in the Philippines.

More than 850 people have been killed and large parts of Marawi destroyed in the ensuing fighting, which has seen the gunmen defy a US-backed military campaign that has included heavy bombing.

President Duterte imposed martial law across Mindanao in response to the crisis.

One escaped hostage later told authorities that Suganob had been forced to serve as a cook for the militants, according to the then-military spokesman Lieutenant Colonel Jo-ar Herrera in early July.

This was one of many reports that the militants were forcing their hostages to work as slaves.

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Maute forcing hostages to join fight, military claims

SOME hostages of the Islamic State-linked Maute terrorist group have been forced to join the fight against government troops in Marawi City, a military official said on Monday.

During the "Mindanao Hour" news briefing in Malacañang on Monday, Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) spokesman Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla Jr. said the Maute ranks have been reinforced by civilian hostages.

"The enemy's strength per the last validation seemed to have increased from 60 to 80...because of news and information that indicated that perhaps some of the hostages previously held have been forced to join the ranks," Padilla told reporters.

The Maute group is still holding between 40 to 60 hostages, the military said, based on the latest report of Joint

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Maute forcing hostages to join fight, military claims

Task Force Marawi.

The military earlier said civilians had been forced to help the gunmen by carrying supplies and ammunition, carrying their wounded and even helping loot the city the country's Islamic capital.

Hundreds of gunmen rampaged through Marawi, the main Muslim city in the mostly Catholic Philippines, on May 23 and then occupied key districts in what authorities said was an attempt to establish a Southeast Asian base for the Islamic State in the Philippines.

President Rodrigo Duterte imposed martial law across Mindanao in response to the crisis.

More than 860 people have been killed in the fighting, including 147 soldiers and police, 47 civilians and 699 terrorists, as of September 17, Sunday.

Padilla said the military was verifying information that some Maute fighters have sent surrender feelers following military efforts to convince them to yield through public address systems, text messages and even social media.

"Yes, there was unofficial and raw information that came to the attention of Joint Task Force Marawi that indicated the desire of some armed elements of the Maute group to lay down their arms and surrender. The informa-

tion is part of those that are being verified by the Joint Task Force and subject to validation," he said.

On Saturday, government troops retook Bato mosque and the Amaitul Islamiya Marawi Foundation, two Maute strongholds.

The military said troops did not find hostages inside the Bato mosque, only the body of a Maute group member. They also found several improvised explosive devices as well as cell phones that can be used to trigger the bombs.

Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) chief Gen. Eduardo Año said in a statement on Saturday the retaking of the two Maute strongholds "further weakened" the terror group.

Freed priest calls for prayers

A Catholic priest kidnapped by the Maute when they seized parts of Marawi nearly four months ago smiled and declared himself "strong" Monday after escaping.

Fr. Teresito Suganob called for prayers at a press conference at military headquarters in Manila after he was rescued late on Saturday when the military said it overran the militants' control center inside a mosque in Marawi City.

"Thank you and I pray for you, God bless you all. Pray for me, for

my recovery," said Suganob, 51, as he smiled and waved to reporters.

In a jocular mood despite his ordeal, the heavily bearded but apparently well-fed Suganob declared: "I am physically strong and handsome. That's it for now."

Suganob, a parish priest in Marawi commonly known as "Father Chito," was taken hostage along with about 13 parishioners from a local cathedral on the first day of the fighting.

The militants later released a video showing themselves vandalizing the cathedral.

Another video released by his captors in late May showed Suganob standing in the rubble of buildings in Marawi asking President Duterte to withdraw troops and stop the military offensive.

'Prisoners of war'

Upon his arrival in Manila, Suganob was accompanied by Task Group Lanao Deputy Commander Col. Romeo Brawner and Marawi Crisis Management Committee spokesman Zia Alonto Adiong. The priest was taken to Camp Aguinaldo.

Suganob said at the time that the gunmen were holding 240 "prisoners of war," including teachers, carpenters and household workers. They were mostly Christians and local tribes people.

"We want to live another day. We want to live another month," Suganob said in the video as gunfire was heard in the distance.

One escaped hostage later told authorities that Suganob had been

forced to serve as a cook for the militants, according to the then-military spokesman Lt. Col. Jo-ar Herrera in early July.

This was one of many reports that the militants were forcing their hostages to work as slaves.

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana told reporters that Suganob and another hostage, 29-year-old male school teacher Lordin Noblesa Acopio, escaped on Saturday night as the militants led by Omar Maute pulled out of a mosque following hours of fighting.

"As the intensity of the armed confrontation continued to escalate in favor of our troops and as the terrorists were busy repelling the attack, our troops had the opportunity to snatch Father Chito and Mr. Acopio," Lorenzana said.

Año said the rescue of Suganob was a "very deliberate effort" and part of an "intelligence project supported by combat operations."

Lorenzana and military chiefs predicted an end to the crisis soon.

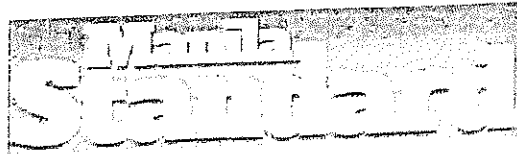
"It is close, our soldiers on the ground are saying that we are near to finishing," he said.

Nevertheless they conceded many obstacles remained, including improvised explosive devices and secret tunnels where the militants were hiding other hostages.

"The Bato mosque, underneath there are a lot of intricate tunnels and secret chambers so we are actually clearing those chambers and there are hostages in there," Año said.

CATHERINE S. VALENTE, DEMPSEY REYES AND AFP

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Sayyaf chief must die in Marawi—military

By Florante S. Solmerin and John Paolo Bencito

ISNILON Hapilon, the Abu Sayyaf leader reportedly designated the "emir" of the Islamic State in Southeast Asia, must die, Armed

Forces chief Eduardo Año said Monday.

"We don't want Isnilon to leave Marawi alive," Año said at a press briefing at Camp Aguinaldo.

Año said Hapilon was still alive in Marawi but separated from the remain-

ing Maute group terrorists, contradicting claims that the Abu Sayyaf leader had fled the battle zone through an underground tunnel, and that he had escaped to Basilan.

The Armed Forces chief said three terrorists who

surrendered said that of the Maute brothers, only Omar was still alive.

"There are two main groups. One is led by Hapilon, who came from Basilan, and there's the group led by Omar," Año said.

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The Catholic priest, Chito Suganod, told the military that he and dozens of hostages were captives of the Maute group, who were deployed in the Bato Mosque before a military assault on Saturday.

Suganod said up to 50 hostages were still in the hands of the Mautes.

President Rodrigo Duterte on Monday ruled out the possibility of negotiating with the remaining terrorists in Marawi, who were considering releasing the remaining hostages in exchange for their safe passage out of the city.

"Impossible. I will not even agree to look at them," the President said in a chance interview during the wake of a policeman slain in Caloocan City.

"This will not end until the last terrorist is taken out—that is my order to the Armed Forces and even the police," he added.

The President said he was particularly worried about the fate of the female hostages.

"There are reports that they were being repeatedly raped every night. That's a gross violation of the rights of a human being and an affront on the dignity of Filipina women," he said.

A military spokesman on Monday urged hostages in Marawi to just wave a white flag if they are being forced to fight on the side of the terrorists.

"Should they wave a white flag, the shooting will stop to give way for the verification of those who've waived their flags," military spokesman Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla said in a Palace news briefing.

"However, if they show signs of hostility, our soldiers have the right to defend themselves or neutralize the targets," he added.

Padilla said the military would take care of hostages that try to escape.

"We know the rules of engagement. We know the rules of war. And if there's a white flag flying out there for an individual, we will respect his right and he will be treated well," he added.

Padilla said there were still about 40 to 60 hostages.

Government troops have already captured the command center of Maute group, the Islamic State supporters who have besieged Marawi City for nearly four months.

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Rescued priest: Pray for my healing, recovery

By **MICHAEL PUNONGBAYAN**

More than 24 hours after his rescue from the hands of the terrorist Maute group in Marawi City, Catholic priest Rey Teresito Suganob was finally allowed to

make a public appearance at Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon City yesterday.

Father Chito thanked the military and the public as Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana, Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) chief of staff Gen. Eduardo Año and other ranking military officials presented him to the media.

"I'll pray for you. God bless you all. Pray for me for my healing and recovery. Thank you very much. God Bless you," said the priest, still sporting a long, white beard.

"I am physically strong and sound. *Yun lang* (that's all)," he added.

The 51-year-old priest waved and gave a flying kiss during his presentation. He was escorted out of the press briefing by a doctor and security personnel.

During his travel to Manila, Suganob expressed belief that Christians and Muslims are not at war in spite of the hardships and difficulties he went through for 117 days as captive of the Maute group.

"*Hindi pa rin tayo magkaaway. Magkaisa pa rin tayo* (We are not enemies. We are still united). We believe in one God," Suganob told Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao assemblyman Zia Alonto Adiong while they were on board a plane that brought them to Manila from Cagayan de Oro City.

Suganob was kidnapped by the Islamic State-inspired Maute group on May 23, the first day of the Marawi crisis and martial law in Mindanao.

A few days after his kidnapping, an online video surfaced showing the priest appealing to Duterte to stop the military operations in Marawi.

Lorenzana said Suganob and Lordbin Noblesa Acopio, 29, of Badiangan, Iloilo City were rescued at 11:45 p.m. on Saturday in Barangay Sangkay, Dansalan, Marawi City.

Government troops planned the rescue as early as Sept. 15 when Lorenzana gave the go-signal to assault the Bato mosque, which allowed soldiers to gain a foothold on Saturday and extricate the Catholic priest.

"While the terrorists were busy repelling the attack, the troops had the opportunity to snatch Father Chito and Mr. Acopio during the melee," the defense chief added.

He also said soldiers and other security forces fighting the Maute group did an "excellent job" in retaking Bato mosque – a "very significant gain" because it was

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used by the terrorists as their battle position, machine gun nest and sniper area.

The AFP said the area controlled by the Maute group is getting smaller each day as it now covers about 10 hectares or about one fourth of Camp Aguinaldo.

"I am confident that the soldiers, airmen, sailors, marines, policemen and coast guards will be able to accomplish their mission sooner than expected," Lorenzana said.

"Your government's security forces, the AFP, the PNP, the Coast Guard will remain strong, able and committed to defeat all threats to national security, and I mean all threats foreign or domestic.

"We will not allow any of them to get a foothold of even an inch of our sovereign territory. And every soldier, airman, sailor, marine, policeman and coast guard will be true to that commitment," he added.

Lorenzana said Suganob will have to undergo further medical and psychosocial examination and custodial debriefing to determine his actual state of health and get more information from him that would help soldiers determine how to proceed with operations against the Maute group.

"For now, we know that he underwent really harsh conditions, so I think what Father needs now is rest in order to adjust," he said.

Rody: Special ops, not backdoor talks

Meanwhile, President Duterte maintained yesterday that the freedom of Suganob was made possible by "special operations" of government forces and not by backdoor talks with militants.

Duterte said he would never negotiate with the Maute group, as he stressed that the offensives against the jihadists would continue "until the last terrorist is taken out."

"You know, Fr. Suganob, he was not released. He was liberated through special operation... that means, the Special Forces and Rangers maneuvered it," the President told reporters in Caloocan City.

Asked if backdoor negotiations were held to ensure the safe release of the Catholic priest, Duterte replied: "Impossible. I will not even agree to look at them. You understood what I said before, that this will not end until the last terrorist is taken out. – With Alexis Romero, Evelyn Macairan, Edith Regalado, AP

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Priest liberated by military, says DU30

By **EFREN MONTANO**

PRESIDENT Rodrigo Duterte yesterday bared that **Father Teresito "Chito" Soganub** was liberated by the military, pointing out the vicar general of Marawi City's Cathedral of Our Lady Help of Christians was not freed because of backdoor talks.

"You know, si Father Soganub, hindi ito m-release, he was liberated through a special operation. Talagang tinutukan siya kasi separate-separate iyan sila eh. Ibig sabihin ginapang siyang special forces o iyong mga Rangers," Duterte told reporters after visiting the wake of Police Officer 3 Junior Hilario in Calocan City.

Duterte even belied that Soganub's freedom was a result of a backdoor negotiation with the pro-ISIS Maute group.

"Impossible. I will not even agree to look at them. I said... this will not end until the last terrorist is taken out," he said.

Soganub and a number of parishioners were taken



Father Teresito Soganub

by the Maute group when it attacked Marawi City on May 23, prompting Duterte to place Mindanao under martial law.

Aside from Soganub, a Dansalan College teacher was also rescued by the military.

During the Mindanao Hour briefing in Malacañang, Armed Forces spokesperson Brigadier General Restituto Padilla Jr. said there were still around 40 to 60 hostages in Marawi City, but stressed the number is not an exact figure.

Soganub asked the public to pray for his recovery following his release after months of captivity by extremists in Marawi City.

"Sa lahat, salamat at

saka I pray for you, God bless you all. Pray for me, for trauma healing recovery. Thank you very much, God bless you all," he said after gesturing a sign of the cross.

Asked how he is, Soganub said he is "physically strong, handsome."

Soganub, the vicar general of Marawi territorial prelature, was abducted by Maute terrorists along with other civilians while at the compound of the Cathedral of St. Mary at the start of the siege.

Soganub said he and the other hostages ate mostly canned goods and instant noodles even as government forces worked hard to rescue them from the extremists.

"Usually sardines, tuna,

noodles, meat loaf, corned beef, canned goods. Marami. Pero nu'ng nasunog yung buildings dahil sa war, nagscarce na rin ang supply," Soganub added.

Soganub shared that although the terrorists didn't want to get food from buildings and houses, they had no choice because they also need to survive.

"Yung ISIS, hindi sila kukuha. Ipinagbabawal nila. Pero wala, no way to survive sila at kami, kukunin niyo 'yung andiyan," he said.

"Pero hindi kayo kukuha ng sobra at abuse. Pero walang choice. Dapat kukunin mo 'yung mga source ng rice, para ma-consume mo ng ilang araw, kasi a day 'yung kumakain, parang 100, 200," he added.

The captured priest said he missed eating vegetables and meat, which he was unable to eat while he was held hostage.

"I miss the vegetables, meat, chicken. I miss kasi wala 'yun," he said.

The priest and another civilian were rescued after government troops recovered the Bato mosque in Marawi City.

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'FIGHTING THE GOOD FIGHT'

WOMAN LOSES BOYFRIEND TO MARAWI WAR, THEN THEIR BABY

ILIGAN CITY—First, she lost her boyfriend. Three hours later, she lost their baby.

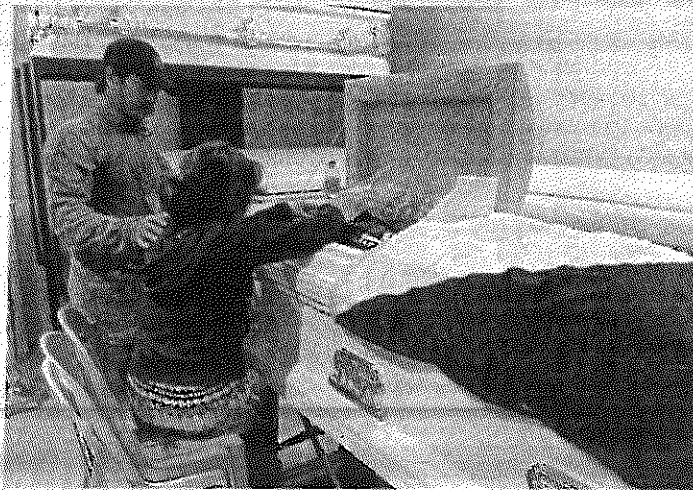
Anne (not her real name) collapsed upon learning that Cpl. Jaime Invento was killed while fighting Islamic State-inspired militants in Marawi City on Saturday. She was already in a hospital when she regained consciousness.

Anne, 28, was to give birth to their firstborn next month, but she underwent induced labor after she learned about her boyfriend's death.

Five minutes after Anne woke up, her baby girl died.

"I don't know why. She suddenly turned pale and was not moving. I don't know what happened next," Anne told the Inquirer.

On Saturday, government soldiers succeeded in recapturing the Bato Ali Mosque and the Jamiatu Marawi Islamia



A soldier grieves with the girlfriend of slain Cpl. Jaime Invento. —DIVINA M. SUSON

Foundation building.

Bato Ali Mosque was considered the command center of the militants.

The operation also led to the rescue of Marawi Vicar General Teresito Soganub and

another hostage.

The operation, however, left Invento dead and four others wounded.

During the interview with the Inquirer at St. Peter's chapel here on Sunday, Anne excused

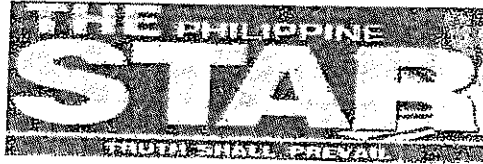
herself. She then went to her boyfriend's coffin and continued scribbling on a piece of paper—a farewell letter to Invento.

"You have fought a good fight. It pains me more seeing you like this, but I'm letting you go now. Have a safe journey, Daddy. Always remember that you will always be my best 'assaulter.' You know how much I love you and I know how much you love me," Anne said in her letter.

At the back of the paper is another letter for Invento written on June 29. She addressed the soldier as her "dearest superman" and wrote that she missed him.

"It's been 36 days, eight hours, 15 minutes and 36 seconds since you went away. I know you are already tired and weary. Hold on, Mahal, a little bit longer ... and I love you so," she said. —DIVINA SUSON INQ

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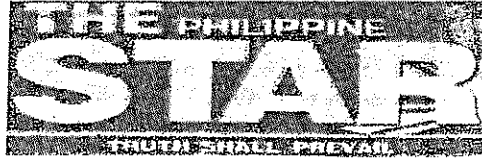


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Rescued Catholic priest Rev. Teresito Soganub waves to reporters as he is presented in a news conference at Camp Aguinaldo yesterday. Joining him are Armed Forces chief Gen. Eduardo Año (left) and Defense Secretary Defin Lorenzana. Story on Page 2. (02) 845-9555

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FIRST PERSON

ALEX MAGNO

Endgame

The rescue of Fr. Chito Soganub from his Maute captors over the weekend marks the beginning of the end for the terrorist group professing loyalty to the ISIS. The priest spent 117 days in captivity under the most grueling conditions. It is a miracle he survived.



This is a triumph for the careful, painstaking approach adopted by the military in pushing out the terrorists from the city. This approach put primacy on the safety of trapped civilians and hostages held by the terrorists. It might have prolonged the battle and caused the deaths of many soldiers, but most will agree that this approach kept collateral damage to the minimum imaginable.

Fr. Soganub was among those taken hostage when Maute terrorists decided to occupy parts of Marawi City last May 23. The decision was prompted by a police raid attempting to arrest an Abu Sayyaf leader holed up in the city.

In the four months of continuous battle, government forces were able to rescue over a thousand trapped civilians and hostages. The priest, said to be well-loved by the city he served, is the most prominent among them. The priest and another captive were able to escape while their erstwhile captors were engaging attacking troops in an intense gun battle.

On the day the priest was rescued, government forces regained control of what was described as the "command center" of the terrorist force. That denies the residual terrorist force the ability to effectively coordinate in resisting a determined government advance.

The remaining terrorist fighters are trapped. The lake, which is the only possible escape route, is tightly patrolled around the clock by the military. A small force of Maute reinforcements was intercepted some weeks ago and destroyed.

According to military spokesmen, the trapped terrorist groups have resorted to conscripting some of the captives to beef up their severely decimated fighting strength. Between 40 and 80 fighters remain in a small area with about 200 buildings to clear.

With over 670 enemy fighters killed, the remaining force is possibly too weak to stall a determined advance by government forces. They have been fighting for four months. They are low on ammunition and food.

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The body count tells us the enemy mustered a force of over 700 men to occupy Marawi and make it the regional seat for a province of the caliphate the ISIS imagines. The project took many years to prepare. Some of the captured fighters confess to being recruited by the Maute group while they were still boys. Preparations for the occupation of the city date back eight years.

It is not an easy feat moving 700 heavily armed men into a city undetected. A force of that size required moving huge amounts of armaments and ammunition, not to mention food stocks to survive a long siege. After the fighting is done, we will have to interview residents of the neighborhoods where Maute fighters deployed and ask them why no one noticed the presence of the terrorist force.

The fighters that occupied parts of Marawi appear primed to battle government forces for an extended period. They surely had training in urban warfare and the fabrication of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) to limit the movement of our troops.

The enemy fighters fought remarkably well, considering everything. They managed to resist the best fighting forces government could muster for four months. They took a painful toll of our troops. Over 150 soldiers and policemen were killed in action. Well over a thousand were wounded.

One wonders what the Maute group did with their wounded. There is no evidence they brought in a field hospital to treat their wounded fighters. Isnilon Hapilon himself was wounded in the gun battles. Did they, out of mercy, shoot their seriously wounded comrades to spare them the agony?

No doubt, we are now in the endgame of the battle to retake Marawi. The rescue of Soganub and the capture of the enemy's "command center" mark a critical development in this battle. The end is truly very near.

The military described this offensive as "the final push" to retake Marawi. We can only hope the ringleaders of this disastrous adventure do not escape the encirclement. They have much to pay for.

Our security forces, too, have some questions to deal with. In the first few days of the occupation, the enemy force was described as comprised of "40 to 60" men. That is clearly a gross underestimation. We have killed well over ten times that number and there are scores still fighting from besieged positions.

How many other armed groups are there in Mindanao capable of pulling the same stunt the Maute group did?

After the smoke of battle clears, we should elicit a reliable estimate from our security managers. The Maute group was preparing to occupy Marawi for years and their preparations appear to have been deliberately ignored by the previous administration - possibly wishing them to simply vanish and not disturb the Bangsamoro project so earnestly pursued by the Noynoy Aquino administration.

After the last bullet is fired in anger in Marawi, we will now have to begin the difficult and expensive task of reconstruction. The terrorists occupied the most built-up area of the city, the better to conduct urban warfare. That area is now basically rubble.

Government estimate of the reconstruction cost has been increased to P50 billion. That is truly costly. But Marawi deserves to be rebuilt, to be restored to life, as a mecca for our quest for peace.

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POSTSCRIPT

FEDERICO D. PASCUAL Jr.

Martial law: If not ready, don't do it

WHILE some disgruntled elements are girding for a protest rally on Sept. 21 to challenge the Duterte administration, a 10-year-old Filipino-American girl is determined to sing her way to the top of the "America's Got Talent" competition finale in Los Angeles tomorrow.



Our fearless forecast for the two contests on both sides of the Pacific:

> The competition is stiff, but Angelica Hale, a little girl with a powerful voice, may just romp off with the \$1-million top prize on her way to fame and fortune. Her mother Eva Bolando-Hale is from Iligan, while her father James, a financial accounting consultant, is reportedly half Pinoy. They reside in Georgia.

> The anti-Duterte rally, set tomorrow at the Rizal Park, promises to be inflammatory enough to spark martial law being declared. But based on what we know as of yesterday, President Duterte is not about to be provoked. His calling out the armed forces will be enough to suppress any lawless violence.

Still, speculation persists that Mr. Duterte has been laying the basis for martial law as part of an ulterior agenda.

The Commander-in-Chief has been going out of his way to secure the support of the armed forces and the police upon whom he would have to rely heavily under martial law. Even if he has to starve other agencies, he piles up funds and incentives for soldiers and policemen in a bid to cement their loyalty.

In the civilian sphere, Mr. Duterte has been consolidating power by assailing other branches of government, and intimidating key sectors and problem personalities. The media themselves have not been spared from pressure.

Media control would be crucial, but the government should be cautious about wading into the worldwide web to tame social media and regulate information flow. Ill-prepared to enter this area, it is risky dabbling in censorship under martial law.

As we who lived through the dark night of Marcosian military rule can attest, martial law is no picnic – even for the dictator himself. It is not as simple as issuing a proclamation, rounding up all those who resist, and padlocking media refusing to join the chorus.

It takes more than a year to prepare the martial law apparatus. Judging from insider information and remarks of Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana, the armed forces that would take the brunt of enforcing martial rule are not looking forward to such a crisis.

Will Mr. Duterte gloss over his limited experience in administering martial law in Mindanao and jump to a nationwide ML experiment? Will he insist on militarization despite the economy's not having been fattened enough to survive the shocks of martial law?

Mainly because his apparatus is not yet ready, I do not expect Mr. Duterte to respond to a massive multi-sectoral protest rally by declaring martial law. But it won't be surprising to see him bullying all sectors standing in the way to authoritarianism.

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MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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MEDIUM RARE

Martial law?

By JULLIE Y. DAZA

MARTIAL law in Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao, soon?

Short of going straight to Malacañang or Davao City for an answer -- even so, the President could prove evasive -- the person to consult was Juan Ponce Enrile, architect of Martial Law under Ferdinand Marcos, never mind that it was a happy occasion last Sunday when he was cornered in his house for his reading of Digong's intentions.

Will Mr. Duterte proclaim martial law? JPE: "He has a bigger problem (than Marcos did) NPA, ISIS, Mindanao-MNLF-BIFF-ASG, drugs. . . It was easier for us then, with the military and police under one department, which was under me."

"Every government uses its powers for survival. When you challenge the monopoly of the state to use guns and you resort to violence," disruption could ensue. Is martial law the answer? "It depends on the magnitude" of the disruption.

"Aren't you thankful that Duterte came by, raking up all these problems?"

Will you support him if he declares martial law? "Whether I support him or not, (if) we're under martial law. . ."



What would you do if you were president? "I will calibrate it."

"Ever heard of Cominter? Communist International Movement. North Korea is the prototype of the society that some people (here) espouse."

More worrisome than martial law, JPE sees war clouds looming over the horizon. China is putting up structures on the South China Sea, our West Philippine Sea, in anticipation of a shortage of fuel. Will China-Taiwan-Japan come together while North Korea continues to display its nuclear capabilities? Where will South Korea position itself? JPE: "We will be swept along."

The 93-year-old JPE and his Cristina, 13 years younger, marked their 60th wedding anniversary last Sunday at home, with their two children, eight grandchildren, four great-grandchildren, and friends who have stayed true over the years. At the presidential table, guests were a mix of friends and frenemies, former Presidents Arroyo and Estrada, Imelda Marcos, former VP Binay, Senators Honasan, Sotto, Jinggoy, Gordon.

But it was their daughter Katrina who declared the Marital Law of the day: "Like all marriages, my mom's and dad's marriage is not perfect, probably will never be, but the love between them is unique, and I honor this bond. I'm the happiest person here tonight."

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LGUs: frontline defense vs. Maute-IS

A skirmish between the Maute-IS forces and government troops weeks ago spoke volumes about the war against the extremists. The report was run in the inside pages of newspapers but its significance was not lost on the discerning public engrossed in the action-packed "Prohinsyano"-like *telenovela* ongoing in Marawi.

While fighting was intense in the city, a rebel group attacked Marantao, an adjacent town. The local government unit, with its limited resources and police forces, fought valiantly, held its ground, and managed to repel the attackers. After the dust of the battle had settled, the casualty count was two on the rebel side (only one was reported because the other body was carried away by the rebels when they retreated) and zero on the government side. The attack was made to divert attention from the Marawi front where the rebels were taking a beating from the daily land and air strikes.

Another fire fight of similar import occurred recently on the picturesque Lake Lanao, where special patrolling riverine units and maritime policemen quelled a rebel reinforcement force on its way to Marawi, killing 10. The military's victory was attributed to the intelligence shared by LGUs and residents.

These two "success stories" showed that government planners should harness the resources and ability of LGUs and their residents. Given ample support by the national

COMMENTARY

MACABANGKIT E. LANTO

government LGUs could do much even without brigades of soldiers and the aerial bombardment conducted in Marawi.

LGUs could be the frontline sentinels against marauding jihadists. Why? Because their lives and those of their loved ones are at stake. They have the advantage of familiarity with the terrain and could pinpoint strategic areas for combat maneuvers. They could map out a proactive strategy with help from the government's defense and security experts to preempt rebel attacks. (The siege of Marawi caught everyone figuratively with their pants down, but residents are swearing that they will put their lives on the line if something like it happens again.)

I posit this theory in the face of a controversial memorandum from the National Police Commission which defanged LGUs and put their peace-keeping mandate in jeopardy. The memo withdrew from local executives in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao the power of supervision over the police forces in their jurisdictions, and tacitly accused them of involvement in drug trafficking. It was met with uproar and protest from the LGUs, which assailed it as ill-advised, uncalled for, and a sweeping in-

dictment of local Moro officials.

In a conference called two months ago by Maranaw officials in the Cabinet, it was agreed that President Duterte would be requested to strengthen the Civilian Armed Forces Geographic Units (Cafgu) in Moro areas to help fight terrorism. But until now no word has been heard from Malacañang on this sensible suggestion which the President should ponder. The authorities lukewarm response to the request is understandable given the ghost of the past when Moro warlords like the Ampatuans transformed the Cafgu into their private army to perpetuate their political power. And bigots in Malacañang and other government offices continue to doubt the patriotism of Moros.

But as we have long pleaded, we cannot forever be slaves to this mindset. We have to move on and learn to trust each other, else our society will continue to languish in the quagmire of suspicion, mistrust, and decadence.

Lesson learned: Aerial bombardment and superiority in numbers, resources and war materiel do not always translate to easy victory. In our peculiar setting, harnessing the LGUs will be as effective in the war against terror.

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

19 SEPTEMBER 2017

www.dwdd.com.ph

SAFE AND SECURED | AFP presents rescued priest Fr Suganob

By Alvin Santiago

CAMP GEN EMILIO AGUINALDO, Quezon City (DWDD) – The Armed Forces of the Philippines presented to the latest rescued priest Fr. Teresito "Chito" Soganub, the Vicar General of Marawi who was taken hostage by Islamic State-inspired terrorists, during the first week of the siege.

Fr Soganob was held captive for 118 days .

The press briefing was led by Department of National Defense (DND) Sec. Delfin Lorenzana; together with Chief of Staff Armed Forces of the Philippines (CSAFP) Eduardo Año; J2 M/Gen. Felimon Santos Jr.; J5 M/Gen. Restituto Padilla Jr.; J7 M/Gen. Feliciano Melquiades; J3 B/Gen. Isidro Purisima; Deputy Commander Task Force Ranao Col. Romeo Brawner Jr.; CPAO Col. Edgard Arevalo; and Spokesperson Marawi Crisis Management Committee.

According to AFP Chief of Staff Gen Eduardo Año, Fr Chito revealed to them that Omar Maute is the only survivor among the Maute siblings, aside from ASG Leader Isnilon Hapilon.

He also saw ten (10) foreign terrorist among the group.

Father Soganub did not state if he's life was ever threatened or put in danger during his captivity in the hands of the Daesh-inspired Maute terror group. He did not also state if he was also forced to make Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs). Although he revealed that the terror group. AES /

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UPDATE | AFP Media Briefing on latest Marawi events

Review: [Armed Services](#)

CAMP GEN EMILIO AGUINALDO, Quezon City (DWDD) – All is set for the Media Briefing that will be conducted by the Armed Forces of the Philippines today at 1:30 PM at the General Headquarters, Camp Gen Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City

The AFP will be giving the latest update on recent events in Marawi, more specifically, the escape of Fr. Teresito Suganob, the vicar general of Marawi who was taken hostage by Islamic State-inspired terrorists, during the first week of the siege.



Fr. Teresito Chito Suganob

According to recently escaped hostages, Fr Suganob had been forced to gather the gunpowder from firecrackers, which the terrorists would use to make bombs and possibly, these explosives would be tied to the victim's bodies if worse comes to worst.

Some former hostages revealed that they had tried to convince Fr Suganob to join them in their escape, but he opted to stay as he did not want to leave behind the other captives. AES / ALS

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

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LECTURE SERIES | AFP Transformation Roadmap Governance Forum 03-17

Presented by Atty. Santiago

CAMP GEN EMILIO AGUINALDO, Quezon City (DWDD) – Armed Forces of the Philippines offices and units convened for the 3rd Quarter 2017 AFP Transformation Roadmap Governance Forum-Lecture Series at the AFP Commissioned Officers Club last September 12, 2017, with Atty. Alex L. Lacson, co-founder and partner at the MALCOLM Law, and the Chairman & Chief Executive Officer of their family food business, AmoyamieMendiola.

The Theme for the forum, "Caught by the Vision: Embracing Governance as a Shared Responsibility."

The lecture, a vital component of the AFP Transformation Roadmap, tackled Good Governance System in the AFP that allows the organization to realize the institutional vision, mission and goals in the most effective & efficient manner. PAF/PAO/AFP/MCAG

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