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NEWS CLIPPINGS

22 April 2018

Sunday



Honor. Patriotism. Duty

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www.panahon.tv /PanahonTV

BALANCED NEWS • FEARLESS VIEWS

TODAY'S WEATHER FORECAST | APRIL 22, 2018 | SUNDAY

PHILIPPINE AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY (PAR)

EASTERLIES AFFECTING THE COUNTRY as of 4:00 am - April 21, 2018

SUNRISE 5:38 AM	SUNSET 6:11 PM
MOONRISE 11:07 AM	MOONSET 12:00 AM
NEW MOON APR 18 9:57 AM	FIRST QUARTER APR 23 5:48 AM
LOW TIDE 11:03 PM -0.15 Meter	HIGH TIDE 1:46 PM 1.09 Meter

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

	APR 23	APR 24	APR 23	APR 24	APR 23	APR 24		
METRO MANILA	24-34°C	24-33°C	TAGAYTAY	21-31°C	21-30°C	TACLOBAN	24-33°C	24-32°C
TUGUEGARAO	23-35°C	22-35°C	LEGAZPI	25-33°C	25-33°C	CAGAYAN DE ORO	24-33°C	24-33°C
LAOAG	24-33°C	23-33°C	PUERTO PRINCESA	25-33°C	25-32°C	METRO DAVAO	25-32°C	25-33°C
BAGUIO	16-25°C	16-26°C	ILOILO/BACOLOD	26-32°C	26-32°C	ZAMBOANGA	24-33°C	24-32°C
SBMA/CLARK	25-34°C	24-34°C	METRO CEBU	25-33°C	25-33°C			

MONDAY - FRIDAY
11AM & 5PM

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



Honor. Patriotism. Duty.

22 April 2018

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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Chinese builders plot Marawi rehabilitation

FROM A1

By Arlyn Dela Cruz
@MsADelaCruzINQ

MARAWI CITY—A Chinese company engineer who visited what used to be the main battle zone in this Islamic city shook his head in disbelief at the devastation around him.

"I feel sorry for what happened here," said Lee Wang, an engineer from one of the Chinese companies being eyed to take part in the rehabilitation of Marawi.

Wang was one of the six technical specialists allowed by Task Force Bangon Marawi (TFBM) on Saturday to conduct a ground survey of the areas most affected by the five-month-long war last year.

The specialists, the third foreign group to visit Marawi, took pictures of the buildings destroyed in the fighting, measured roads and exchanged notes while soldiers stood guard.

"This is a lot of work and there is a specific target of completion but we are ready to help the Philippine government," said a senior Chinese engineer assigned to design roads and bridges who declined to be identified. "This is a big challenge but we can do it."

Unsolicited plan

The Chinese team of engineers is part of the Bagong Marawi Consortium earlier

identified by Eduardo del Rosario, TFBM chair, as the private sector entity that submitted an unsolicited master plan for the development and rehabilitation of Marawi.

Del Rosario also heads the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council (HUDCC).

The development contract has not been awarded to the consortium but it has been allowed to survey and inspect the area most affected by the war. The consortium is led by a Filipino management company but is composed of five Chinese companies, including China State Engineering Corp. Ltd.

Demolition

Demolition and debris management would be the initial task in the rehabilitation work, said HUDCC Undersecretary Falconi Millar.

"We are estimating 15 million tons of debris and our requirement to the potential developer is to complete that task in six months," Millar said.

Millar said President Duterte had given TFBM a specific deadline to complete the rehabilitation and rebuilding of Marawi.

Del Rosario said they had 33 months to finish the work from the date of the groundbreaking.

"President Duterte wants that when the Maranao return, they would be still returning to Marawi, but better, a better place to live in," he said.

About 25 hectares of Marawi

had been reduced to rubble by the fighting between government forces and Islamic State-allyed militants, who laid siege to the city on May 23 last year. About 12,000 families, or around 60,000 individuals, used to live in what was the main battle area.

Consultations

TFBM and the consortium have conducted more than 20 consultations with various stakeholders in Marawi. The consultations would continue for another two weeks.

"We want to make sure the Maranao are not outsiders in the plan. This is their city and they have a say on the master plan for Marawi," said Harry Cuevas, consortium manager.

The consortium proposed to undertake the rehabilitation and development of the war-torn city at a cost of P17.1 billion, but Del Rosario said this cost could still go up, depending on the final plans.

TFBM will choose the proponent by the end of April, after which the task force would publish the proposal and open it to a Swiss challenge.

The contract could be awarded by June, and after this, the work would begin at once. TFBM is targeting June 7 as the date for the groundbreaking ceremony.

"The President does not want photo ops. He wants groundbreaking, all the equipment in place and work to start immediately," Millar said. INQ

Local: 5287,

OFFIC

22 April 2018



Pahina. _____

Missing UP student

sumapi sa NPA

Ibinulgar kahapon ng militar na sumapi na sa mga teroristang New People's Army (NPA) at naging biktima pa'umano ng panggagahasa ang isang estudyante ng University of the Philippines (UP)-Cebu na may ilan taon ng napaulat na nawawala matapos na magtungo sa Negros Occidental.

Ang nasabing estudyante na itinago sa alyas

Mara, 26 anyos, residente ng Minglanilla, Cebu ay nagtapos sa UP Visayas-Cebu kung saan isa itong honor student at isa ring "academic achiever" noong high school.

Isa siyang undergraduate sa Bachelor of Science in Mathematics sa UP Visayas-Cebu bago sumapi sa komunistang NPA.

Ayon kay Captain Ruel

NI JOY CANTOS

Llanes, Civil Military Operations Officer ng Army's 303rd Infantry Brigade (IB), nadiskubre ang pag-sapi ni Mara sa NPA kasunod ng pagkakarokober ng tropa ng militar sa mga supersibong dokumento ng teroristang grupo matapos ang engkuwentro sa tropa ng Army's 79th Infantry Battalion (IB) sa Brgy. Guadalupe, San Carlos City, Negros Occidental kamakailan.

Una nang idineklarang nawawala ang naturang estudyante at sa pagkakarokober sa mga kagamitan nito tulad ng diary sa encounter site ay nakumpirmang sumapi na ito sa komunistang Kilusan.

Ayon sa opisyal, ang nasabing diary ay sulat kamay at may pribadong

paglalahad ni Mara sa kaniyang mapait na karanasan sa NPA terrorist.

Nabatid na namundok si Mara noong Nobyembre 2011 at nagsanay sa komunistang kilusan sa kagubatan ng Hlmamaylan, Negros Occidental.

Naging opisyal itong kasapi ng NPA noong 2012 at idineploy sa bulubunduking bahagi ng mga barangay sa San Carlos, Negros Occidental, Canlaon at Vallehermoso na pawang sa Negros Oriental.

Ibinulgar din ng estudyante sa kaniyang taalawan o diary na ginagahasa siya ng isa sa mga kadre ng NPA na tinukoy lamang sa alyas na Lando at minolestiya rin ng isang alyas Ka Mori sa panahon ng kaniyang pananatili sa kilusang komunista.

Kaugnay nito, sina-

bi naman ni Brig. Gen. Eliezer Losafes, commander ng Army's 303rd Brigade na ang paglalahad ni Mara sa kaniyang diary sa masaklap nitong sinapit ay patunay lamang na dumaranas ng sexual harassment ang mga babaeng recruit ng NPA terrorists.

"We thoroughly inspected the recovered documents and it confirms that "Mara" was with the group, she is a victim of sexual harassment," anang opisyal.

Nanawagan din ang opisyal sa mga estudyante na huwag pabola at palinlang sa matatamis na pangako ng mga rebeldeng NPA na nagrecruit sa hanay ng mga kabataan dahil masisira lamang ang kanilang kinabukasan.



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POLICE FILES

Page. _____

MILITARY TRUCK NAHULOG SA BANGIN: SUNDALO PATAY, 25 SUGATAN

ZAMBOANGA CITY – Isang sundalo ang kumpirmadong nasawi matapos aksidenteng mahulog sa bangin ang sinasakyan nilang military truck nitong Sabado ng umaga sa national highway ng Purok 5, Barangay Mirangan sa bayan ng Siay sa lalawigan ng Zamboanga Sibugay.

Sa inisyal na ulat mula sa 1st Infantry Tabak Division (1ID) ng Philippine Army, napag-alaman na 20 mga sundalo ang malubhang nasugatan kasama ang lima pang sibilyan na mga dependents.

Habang dalawa namang sundalo ang nagtamo ng hindi naman grabeng sugat sa katawan.

Sa panayam ng Bombo Radyo kay Mayor Ronald Suscano ang tagapagsalita ng 1ID, inihayag nito na base sa kanyang nakuhang updated report may dagdag pang dalawang sundalo ang binawian ng buhay sa ospital.

Bagama't patuloy pa umano niyang kinukumpirma ang nasabing impormasyon dahil kasahukayang nilalapatan ng limas ngayon sa Zamboanga City ang mga biktima.

Sumali ni Suscano na bumiyahit ang mga sundalo ng 35th Infantry Battalion sa pangunguna ni Lt. John Paul Baesam kasama ang limang mga dependents mula sa lalawigan ng Sulu at papunta sana sa headquarter ng 1ID para sumali sa pagsasanay ng Squad Challenge na sisimulan sa darating na Lunes.

Ang Squad Challenge ay taunang competition na simasalan ng mga tropa sa ika-31 ng Mayo, ang araw ng ambersaryo ng 1ID.

Mayroon nadisgrasya mga tropa na supposedly mag participate sa Squad Challenge sa Monday in line sa Anniversary ng Tabak on May 31, many series of activities isa doon yung Squad Challenge that will start on Monday. So, lahat ng Battalion under 1ID will be sending their expected squad to compete at yung nadisgrasya ay 35 IB from Sulu. Nagbiyahe sila papunta dito sa Tabak then unfortunately yun nga nangyari," pahayag pa ni Suscano.

Base naman sa ulat ng Police Regional Office (PRO-9), dead on the spot si Pfc. Glen Limacad.

Habang itinago muna ang pagkakakilanlan ng marami pang mga biktima dahil ipinapaalam pa sa kanilang mga pamilya ang kanilang sinamit.

Nagpapatuloy ang isinasagawang imbestigasyon ng militar kasama ng kapuhsan upang matukoy kung ano ang dahilan sa naturang aksidente.

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Pahina. 2

UP stude na umanib sa NPA, ni-rape ng kadre

Ibinulgar kahapon ng militar na sumapi na sa mga teroristang New People's Army (NPA) at naging biktima pa ng sexual harassments ang isang estudyante ng University of the Philippines (UP) Cebu na may ilan taon nang napanulat na nawawala matapos na magtungo sa Negros Occidental.

Ilinang naman ni Captain Ruel Llanes, Civil Military Operations Officer ng Army's 303rd Infantry Brigade (IB) ang nasabing estudyante sa pangalang "Mara" para sa kapakanan nito.

Si "Mara", 26-anyos, residente ng Minglanilla, Cebu ay nagtapos sa UP Visayas-Cebu kung saan isa itong honor student at isa ring "academic achiever" noong high school. Isa siyang undergraduate sa Bachelor of Science in Mathematics sa UP Visayas-Cebu bago sumapi sa komunistang grupo ng mga teroristang NPA.

Inihayag ni Llanes na nadiskubre ang pagsapi ni "Mara" sa grupo ng NPA terrorist kasunod ng pagkakarekober ng tropa ng militar sa mga subersibong dokumento ng teroristang grupo matapos ang engku-

wentro sa tropa ng Army's 79th Infantry Battalion (IB) sa Brgy. Guadalupe, San Carlos City, Negros Occidental kamakailan.

Ayon sa opisyal ang nasabing talaarawan (diary) ay sulat kamay at may pribadong paglalahad ni Sumulong sa kaniyang mapait na karanasan sa NPA terrorist na mamundok noong Nobyembre 2011 kung saan nagsanay ito sa komunistang kilusan sa kagubatan ng Himamaylan, Negros Occidental.

Ibinulgar din ni "Mara" sa kaniyang dairy na ginahasa siya ng isa sa mga kadre ng NPA na tinukoy lamang sa alyas na "Lando" at minolestiya rin ng isang alyas "Ka Mori" matapos na paghihipuan sa maseselang bahagi ng katawan sa panahon ng kaniyang pananatili sa kirusang komunista.

Kaugnay nito, sinabi naman ni Brig. Gen. Eliezer Losañes, Commander ng Army's 303rd Brigade na ang paglalahad ni "Mara" sa kaniyang diary sa masaklap nitong sinapit ay patunay lamang na dumaranas ng sexual harassment ang mga babaeng recruits ng NPA terrorists.

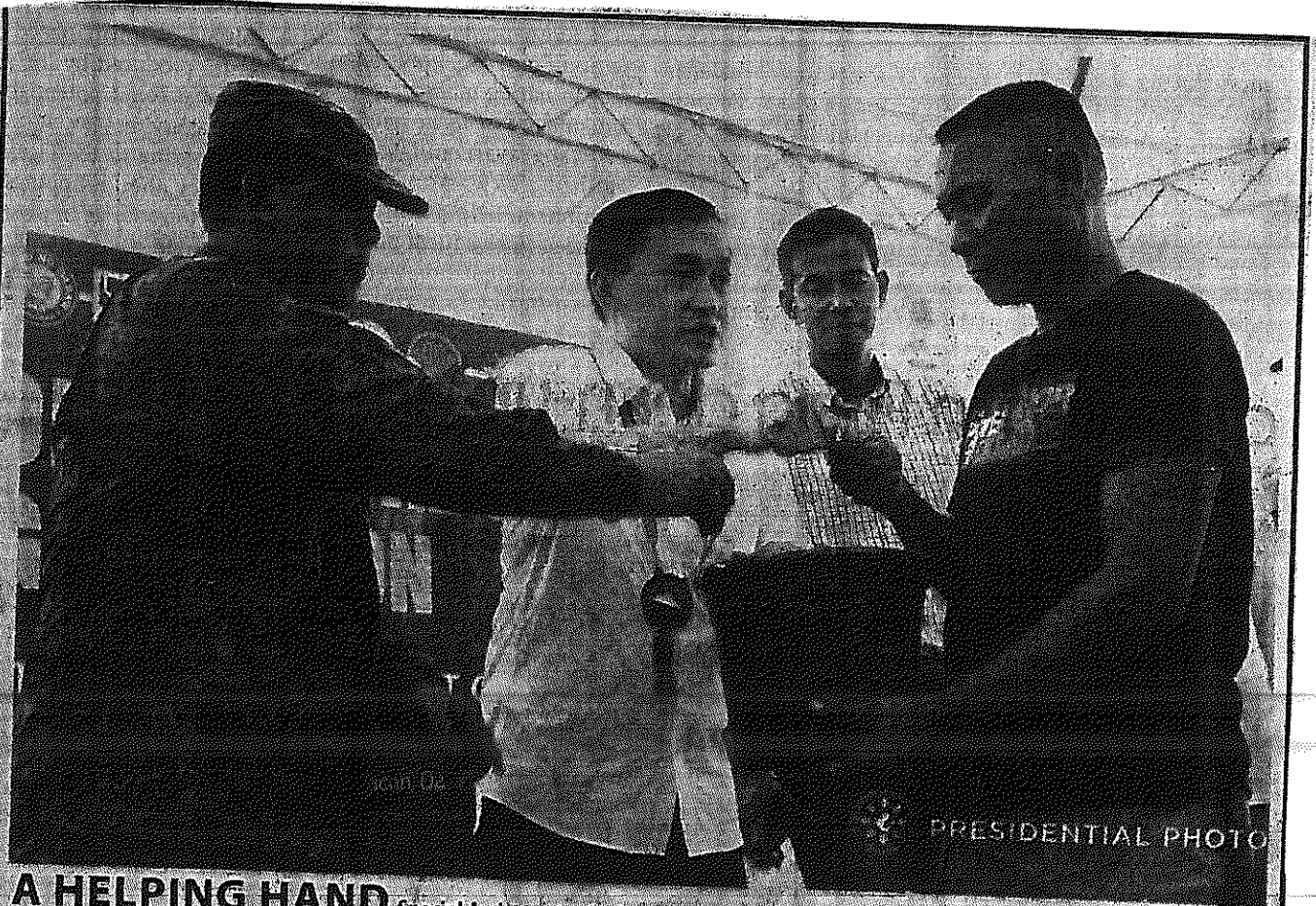
Nanawagan din ang opisyal sa mga estudyante na huwag pabola at palinlang sa matatamis na pangako ng mga rebeldeng NPA na nagre-recruit sa hanay ng mga kabataan dahilan masisira lamang ang kanilang kinabukasan. -Joy Cantos-

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The Manila Times

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PRESIDENTIAL PHOTO

A HELPING HAND

Special Assistant to the President Christopher "Bong" Go hands a pail of groceries to one of the fishermen repatriated from Indonesia. Assisting him was Eastern Mindanao Command chief Lt. Gen. Benjamin Madrial Jr.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

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27 April 2018



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Former Abu Sayyaf sniper aims to regain lost childhood

By Julie Alipala
@alipalajulieINQ

ISABELA CITY—Ten-year-old “Tony” has recently gone back to school, in a madrassa where he can continue learning Arabic—and be a child again.

Only four years ago, Tony did not even have the opportunity to play, let alone attend classes.

Instead, he lugged around an M4 assault rifle and was attacking and evading government troops as a member of the Abu Sayyaf terrorist group.

The boy proved to be no ordinary fighter and was deemed one of the sharpest among the 30 young combatants under the command of Motong Indama, a younger cousin of Abu Sayyaf leader Purudji Indama.

“The training took about a year,” recalled Tony. “I was taught how to handle a gun. The [Abu Sayyaf members] were so happy with me that they called me the Tipo-Tipo sniper,” he added.

Tipo-Tipo was the Basilan town that his group had tried to overrun in 2016, setting off clashes with government soldiers that dragged on for three months.

Though Tony had suffered his first combat wounds in a skirmish even before those encounters, he emerged more gung-ho and unafraid of death.

When Motong surrendered in July 2016, Tony was one of the 11 among his men who followed. The boy now lives with his uncles under the close supervision of Sumisip town officials.

In an interview with the Inquirer last week, Tony said his mother died after being “shot by a soldier” while she was bathing in a river. His father and three elder siblings were later killed in “another military operation.”

He learned about their vio-

He was a 6-year-old orphan when dragged into joining the dreaded terrorist group. Now 10, he hopes to find his way back to a normal life after years of fighting government forces



SCRAWNY SNIPER “Tony” being led into the Sumisip municipal hall with other surrenderers. —JULIE ALIPALA

lent deaths from his two remaining siblings, who were then only in their late teens.

Orphan recruit

The orphan was only 6 when his brothers took him along to join the Abu Sayyaf, then led by Motong and subleader Radsmil Jannatul.

In the jungle, Tony learned how to fire a gun faster than he learned how to read. Soon he was earning notice as a marksman, a scrawny one at that, who could negotiate steep mountain paths and climb tall trees with ease to spot enemies from afar.

Death had always stalked him—if not by bullets, then by starvation. “The best part of my life back then was having vegetables and dried fish for a meal; it was considered that special,” he recalled.

Despite the Abu Sayyaf’s notoriety as kidnappers who de-

manded millions of pesos in ransom, the boy said that as far as he knew, Motong’s men were only “tasked to fight” and did not take hostages during his time with the group.

In hindsight, he said, the adrenaline rush he felt when the fighting began had made him numb to all the hardships he faced, more so after he got wounded.

PAVE

When word got around that Motong was turning himself in, one of Tony’s siblings who had dragged him into the group thought that his kid brother had had enough.

“Now I just want to study in the Islamic school,” the boy said.

Tony was one of the 179 Abu Sayyaf surrenderers from Basilan and Sulu whom the regional government of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao

(ARMM) hopes to assist in their return to normal life through an initiative called Program Against Violent Extremism (PAVE).

Under the program launched earlier this month, surrenderers are provided medical services, housing, livelihood training and alternative learning sessions.

But the idea found some resistance among those who had fallen victim to the Abu Sayyaf, acknowledged ARMM Gov. Mujib Hataman.

“I know many people were hurt by this move, especially the kidnap victims. And while we have not talked about this yet, we are reaching out. The healing is not complete if the victims are not with us on this. There is no total peace, no total justice, if the former victims are not willing [to join us in this idea],” Hataman added.

The governor assured critics that the selected PAVE beneficiaries were “those without [criminal] cases.”

“Instead of teaching them to farm, which is [something they have to do] near the mountains, we agreed to teach them how to market their goods, [as well as the] technology for making ginger tea, peanut butter, etc.,” Hataman said, explaining how the program had been designed with the beneficiaries’ situation in mind.

The military is supporting the effort. “I have read hundreds of books on terrorism, all foreign models. We are confronted with a homegrown terror group [so] only a homegrown solution is applicable here,” said Brig. Gen. Juvymax Uy, commander of Task Force Basilan.

In Tony’s case, that solution may be to give him time to heal his inner wounds from living in the jungle, and again become just another child. INQ

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Marawi residents back building of military camp – task force

The Task Force Bangon Marawi (TFBM) on Friday said residents of Marawi are in favor of the government's plan to build a military camp in Marawi City.

TFBM spokesman and Office of the Civil Defense Assistant Secretary Kristoffer James Purisma made this clarification following reports that local residents are opposing the creation of a military camp as part of the city's reconstruction plan.

"Based on feedback we got from consultation with our brothers, they are in favor of military camp because we must remember that we need security measures for most affected area," Purisma said at a Bangon Marawi press briefing in Malacañang.

Purisma said the task force has been conducting series of consultations with the residents to get their suggestions on how to rebuild war-torn Marawi City.

"Overall, the stakeholders participating in the discussions expressed their appreciation for being informed and consulted on the proposed plans for the rehabilitation of the most affected area which directly affects them and the larger community," Purisma said.

"The discussions allowed for sharing of correct information, discussing concerns of stakeholders, as well as potential solutions," he added.

He said the consultations were participated by 34 clans in 13 clusters particularly those from 24 barangays of the most affected area.

Purisma said a third independent party has facilitated the discussions on the plans to rehabilitate and rebuild the severely-damaged area by a five-month conflict between government troops and ISIS-inspired groups.

"The task force would like to thank all participants in the discussions for their feedback, openness and sharing of concerns," Purisma said.

He said residents have been assured that results of the consultations will be used to finalize the rehabilitation and reconstruction plans for Marawi.

Purisma said the task force has also assured close collaboration with local government units for regular feedback during the implementation of rehabilitation plan.

He said the negotiations for the selection of the developer of the most affected area will be completed by early this May. **PNA**

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AFP scores Reds for killing pastor, wounding 2 in Surigao

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) strongly condemned the New People's Army (NPA) for the unprovoked attack that left a Jehova's Witnesses pastor dead and two of his companions injured in Gigaquit, Surigao del Norte last April 18.

"The killing of Jepti Acedo, an innocent civilian and a pastor, and the wounding of his two companions is totally unacceptable, appalling and downright an act of terrorism. This exemplifies the NPA's contempt and total disrespect for human rights and the International Humanitarian Law," AFP spokesman Brig. Gen. Bienvenido Datuin said in a statement released late Friday.

Datuin said the entire AFP commiserates with the families of Acedo while praying for the quick recovery of his two companions who were wounded in the NPA attack.

"The continued impunity and mass murder of human beings in the hands of NPA terrorists in Mindanao cements the national perception on the inhuman and evil character of their murderous organization as it strengthens their worldwide reputation as harbinger of disaster and omen of death," he added.

"The AFP is firm on its stand to fully support the primacy of the peace process but our soldiers will do everything necessary when the safety and security of our people are threatened," Datuin warned,

as he urged the Communist Party of the Philippines-NPA-National Democratic Front to stop all atrocities against the people and be sincere in the peace process.

Meanwhile, civilians of Northern Kabuntalan, Maguindanao on Friday yielded 30 assorted firearms in support of the government's "Balik Baril" program.

The turnover ceremony, held at the headquarters of the Army's 34th Infantry Battalion based in Barangay Salunayan, Midsayap, North Cotabato, was attended by Northern Kabuntalan town officials, led by Mayor Mary Jane Bayam.

The firearms included three Barrett sniper guns, five M14 rifles, and one M203 grenade

launcher.

Lt. Col. Angelo Lutera, the 34th IB commander, said he expects more firearms from the Northern Kabuntalan area in the coming days, noting that it borders the 220,000-hectare Liguasan Marsh, situated in the second district of the province.

Military reports indicated that several strategic sections of the vast marshland are being used as sanctuaries by the outlawed Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters and other lawless groups.

Bayam, for her part, vowed to do her best to convince her constituents to yield more loose firearms in adherence to the Army's ongoing disarmament program in the province. **PNA**

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MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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Candidates told not to pay for permits to campaign from CPP-NPA

BUTUAN CITY - The Commission on Election (Comelec) on Saturday warned candidates not to give in to demands from the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army (CPP-NPA) for permit-to-campaign (PTC) fees in relation to the May 14 Barangay, Sangguniang Kabataan elections.

The candidates were likewise warned not to give donations to any individuals as it is punishable by law.

"Article 261 of Omnibus Election Code on giving of donations, goods or in kind to any person or group during election period to advance his/her candidacy or political favor is good as election offense," stressed Comelec 13 Regional Director Francisco Pobe, in an exclusive interview with The Manila Bulletin at the agency's regional office here on Saturday.

Under the Local Government

Code, candidates even government officials may face administrative sanction if they're found supporting the enemy of the government, he pointed out.

Pobe warned candidates in the upcoming May 14 elections in Caraga region that they will face sanctions once they give in to the Communist movement's demands for PTC fees or any individual in the form of donations or any logistical support.

"We will file administrative cases against them (candidates or local officials) if they are found to have given in to the insurgents' demand for PTC or they're in cahoots with the NPA or any individual or group," stressed further the region's top Comelec official, as he disclosed that since the start of the filing of certificates of candidacies until Friday was orderly and no untoward incident happened in Caraga region.

22 April 2018

MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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3 soldiers hurt in drug raid

By CAMCER ORDONEZ IMAM

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY – A barangay chairwoman and 18 others were arrested in a early dawn raid in Libona, Bukidnon, where a shootout occurred, wounding three government troopers.

Aided by six search warrants, a composite team from the Criminal Investigation and Detention Group 10 (CIDG-10), Libona Municipal Police, Provincial Mobile Force, Special Action Force, NICA-10 and soldiers belonging to Task Force Oro raided four residences of Kinawi Barangay Chairwoman

Cherry Barros in Libona town, but were met with a volley of gunfire from inside compound, hitting three of the raiding soldiers.

After the firefight that lasted almost one hour, the raiding team swooped down on four houses of Barros and confiscated 15 long and short firearms, including rifle grenades, two fragmentation grenades, one link for K3 machine gun, two bottles of ANFO, three improvised blasting caps with time fuse, five pieces of shock tube, electric blasting cap, one silencer and assorted magazines and ammunition.



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Pahina. 3

CAFGU, 6 hayop niratrat, tighak

PATAY ang isang miyembro ng Citizen Armed Forces Geographical Unit at anim na hayop na kinabibilangan ng mga baka at kalabaw; matapos pagbabarilin ang mga ito ng mga pinaniniwalaang kasapi ng Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters sa Sitio Valencia, Barangay Bualan Pikit North Cotabato.

Ang biktima ay nakilalang si Fodel Abellanida, nasa hustong gulang at nakatira sa nasabing lugar.

Batay sa report ng pulisya, kasalukuyang nagpapas-

tal ng kanyang alagang baka ang biktima nang bigla na lang umanong pagbabarilin ng mga suspek.

Tinamaan ang biktima sa iba't ibang parte ng katawan na nagresulta ng agaran nitong kamatayan.

Sunod namang pinagdiskitahan ay ang mga alagang baka at kalabaw ng mga residente kung saan nakita na lamang ng mga may-ari ang kaniang mga alagang hayop na tadtad ng tama ng bala ng baril at pawang wala nang buhay.

MARY SAPICO

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April 2018

The Manila Times

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US military bases disguised as Philippine bases are here again

ON April 17, 2018, the first US-funded building of a military facility in the Philippines began with a groundbreaking ceremony led by the host country's Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana and the US Ambassador in Manila, Sung Kim. This is being done under an agreement signed in 2014 known as the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA). The first US-funded building is located at Basa Airforce Base in Pampanga.

The EDCA that allows these facilities inside Philippine military bases was made by President Benigno Aquino 3rd, not a treaty approved by the Philippine Senate as demanded by the Constitution but an executive agreement. Several legal authorities question the legality of that executive agreement, given that the approval of foreign bases is the sole prerogative of the Philippine Senate. That may likely be the reason that its implementation has been held in abeyance until this week.

Why President Rodrigo Duterte, a staunch critic of the United States and close friend of US adversary China, has allowed the implementation of this agreement made by the previous President has yet to be seen. The ultimate and real purpose of the new US bases within Philippine bases remains unclear. The primer explaining the EDCA distributed at the time of the signing of the agreement goes to great lengths to stress that the facilities are to enhance the ability of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) to defend the country from external threats. They are to "promote between the Philippines and its defense treaty ally, the United States, the following:

- Interoperability
- Capacity-building toward AFP modernization
- Strengthening AFP for external defense
- Maritime security
- Maritime domain awareness
- Humanitarian assistance and disaster response (HADR)

However, the recently announced agreement between President Duterte



REFLECTIONS

FR. SHAY CULLEN, SSC

and President Xi Jinping of China to cooperate and develop the natural resources of the West Philippine Sea claimed by China precludes any US intervention. Even if China has constructed military facilities on several reefs and islands including airstrips, no US assistance has been called for. The UN Arbitration on the Law of the Sea has ruled in favor of the Philippines to the disputed territory.

The stated purpose of the EDCA is in part to ensure "maritime security and maritime domain awareness." So that has been rendered moot. Again, another stated objective is the "strengthening (of the) AFP for external defense." Is the AFP facing any external threat, a possible invasion or attack, occupation perhaps? No, there is none. So the implementation of the bases agreement under EDCA must have another purpose, which President Duterte, in his wisdom, has allowed but about which he has remained silent.

The facilities are to enhance training and capacity-building by the AFP, the primer states. But these annual training exercises have continued for the past 25 years without the presence of the US bases. Why so many US bases within bases? Most AFP camps will have US troops and war materiel stored there.

The only single reason for these facilities is to support humanitarian aid in times of disasters. That alone is insufficient to justify massive expenditure on so many facilities when the Philippine Red Cross has stated that supposedly it has expanded its capability to deal with disasters. It is tasked with that duty and claims it can do it without foreign aid in most cases. There are few natural disasters of such magnitude

that foreign US aid is required.

The only threat that the Philippines is facing is internal: the New People's Army (NPA), the threat from ISIS and the recent occupation of Marawi by a rebel group. The need for prepositioned war materiel and US assistance was seen in the subsequent battle and destruction by aerial bombardment with the alleged help of US advisors and surveillance planes. Their involvement is as yet unconfirmed. These would be the only use of prepositioned US troops and war materiel, ammunition and supplies. Such materiel could also be available to support other US war action in Southeast Asia or Afghanistan.

There is no confirmed number of US troops that will be assigned to these US bases within Philippine bases. It is stated they are assigned there but will be on rotation. How long will they stay is unknown.

So 25 years after the US bases were closed down and the facilities were converted to civilian commercial use and Clark and Subic Naval Base became boom cities boasting hundreds of factories, hotels and malls, the bases are back. They are hiding behind a fig leaf claiming that they are not US bases but within Philippine military bases. It's just a charade. The US troops stationed there will be likely out and about looking for recreational entertainment with sex and will join the already thriving mob of sex tourists that are abusing our young women and children with impunity.

The fact that the sex industry, with its sex bars and clubs that are fronts for prostitution of women and children, is licensed and given mayors' permits shows local government complicity. The US bases to be reestablished are complicit, not only in violating the spirit of the Constitution, but also violating our women and children that are victims of human trafficking – yet again.

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ONLINE NEWS

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Battle rages between AFP soldiers and NPA rebels in Davao del Sur

By: [Eldie Acuirre](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 01:37 PM April 21, 2018

DIGOS CITY – Soldiers clashed with New People’s Army (NPA) rebels in a remote area of Barangay Astorga in Sta. Cruz, Davao del Sur on Saturday.

The clash started around 11:45 a.m. and was continuing, according to Lieutenant Colonel Rhojun Rosales, commander of the Army’s 39th Infantry Battalion.

Rosales said there had been no reported casualty so far.

The clash took place while soldiers were conducting operation in the hinterlands of Astorga in search of communist rebels who figured in an earlier firefight in Barangay Goma here.

The Astorga incident was the second encounter between soldiers and NPA rebels that took place in Davao del Sur this week.

On Wednesday, a clash took place in Magsaysay, Davao del Sur, which left two rebels dead.

Two firearms were recovered in that clash, along with the bodies of the two rebels.

www.inquirer.net

1 soldier dead, 25 others hurt when military truck turned turtle in Zamboanga del Sur

By: [Julie Alipala](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[Inquirer Mindanao](#) / 12:49 PM April 21, 2018

ZAMBOANGA CITY – A soldier died while 25 others, mostly soldiers, were injured in a mishap in Barangay Mirangan in Siay, Zamboanga Sibugay early Saturday.

Major General Roseller Murillo, commander of the 1st Infantry Division, said the soldiers from the 35th Infantry Battalion came from Sulu and were on their way to Pulacan in Labangan, Zamboanga del Sur for the Army Squad Challenge when the truck they were riding in turned turtle at past midnight.

Twenty soldiers were injured along with five civilians.

He said three of the civilians wounded were dependents of some soldiers.

Murillo said the details of the incident were still scant but the initial report was that the driver, whom he did not identify, lost control of the vehicle while passing by Mirangan past 12 midnight.

“The driver noticed that he was deviating from his lane and suddenly applied the brakes. He lost control of the vehicle,” Murillo said.

www.inquirer.net

Ex-colonel, 2 others convicted in vice mayor's killing

Philippine Daily Inquirer / 07:20 AM April 21, 2018

ECHAGUE, ISABELA—The Isabela Regional Trial Court (RTC) on Friday sentenced a retired Army colonel, a former corporal and their civilian accomplice to 40 years in prison for the 2015 murder of Jones Vice Mayor Florante Raspado.

Former Col. Reynaldo Jacinto Tapia, Army Cpl. Michael Deocariza and Victor Fontilara were found guilty of killing Raspado inside the Jones town hall on June 19, 2015.

But Judge Bonifacio Ong of RTC Branch 24 here cleared the three in the fatal shooting of Anthony Agarin, a security aide of a town councilor, who chased after them following the attack on Raspado.

Tapia and Deocariza were arrested in Maddela town, Quirino province, while Fontilara was nabbed in a police operation in San Agustin town, Isabela.

Lawyer Vicente Lasam, counsel of the Raspado family, said the three men were also required to pay P2 million in moral damages and P1.3 million in actual damages.

Raspado's wife, incumbent Vice Mayor Evelyn Raspado, said the conviction of the three men finally brought justice to her family.

The court decision came after Jones was listed as an election hotspot due to its history of violence in the last four polls.

Last year, Mayor Leticia Sebastian surrendered six high-powered guns, which were registered to her late brother, former Mayor Jesus Sebastian, who was killed by suspected New People's Army rebels.

Polic earlier caught Glenford Raspado, the vice mayor's son, for possessing unlicensed guns and illegal drugs during a raid on his house.

In 2017, Noimi Guerrero, 55, municipal civil registrar and concurrent town administrator, was gunned down as he emerged from his boarding house. Guerrero was Sebastian's nephew.—VILLAMOR VISAYA JR

www.pna.gov.ph

AFP scores Reds for killing pastor, wounding 2 in Surigao del Norte

By Priam Nepomuceno April 21, 2018, 9:53 am

MANILA -- The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) strongly condemned the New People's Army (NPA) for the unprovoked attack that left a Jehova's Witnesses pastor dead and two of his companions injured in Gigaquit, Surigao del Norte last April 18.

"The killing of Jepti Acedo, an innocent civilian and a pastor, and the wounding of his two companions is totally unacceptable, appalling and downright an act of terrorism. This exemplifies the NPA's contempt and total disrespect for human rights and the International Humanitarian Law," AFP Spokesperson Brig. Gen. Bienvenido Datuin said in a statement released late Friday.

Datuin said the entire AFP commiserates with the families of Acedo while praying for the quick recovery of his two companions who were wounded in the NPA attack.

"The continued impunity and mass murder of human beings in the hands of NPA terrorists in Mindanao cements the national perception on the inhuman and evil character of their murderous organization as it strengthens their worldwide reputation as harbinger of disaster and omen of death," he added.

"The AFP is firm on its stand to fully support the primacy of the peace process but our soldiers will do everything necessary when the safety and security of our people are threatened," Datuin warned, as he urged the Communist Party of the Philippines-NPA-National Democratic Front to stop all atrocities against the people and be sincere in the peace process. **(PNA)**

