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OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

NEWS CLIPPINGS

24 April 2018

Tuesday



Honor. Patriotism. Duty

TABLE OF CONTENTS

24 APRIL 2018

PAGE NR.	TITLE	WRITER	NEWSPAPER
1	Weather Forecast	-	Phil Star p.12
NATIONAL NEWS			
2-3	Joma to return if safety assured	Jose Rodel Clapano	Phil Star p.1
ARMY RELATED NEWS			
4	15- anyos na npa recruit patay sa encounter	Joy Cantos	Ngayon p.7
5	Sundalo, patay sa leyte encounter	Francis Wakefield	Balita p.5
6	More loose guns recovered in lanao del sur	Roel Pareño	Phil Star p.12
7	Soldier, workers get free MRT rides	Ghio Ong	Phil Star p.11
8	NPA leader, another killed soldier hurt in davao clash	Zaida Delos Reyes Palanca	Peoples Tonight p.14
AFP RELATED NEWS			
9	AFP seeks higher public awareness of maritime issues	Michael punong bayan	Phil Star p.2
10	Joma ready to return to PH for peace talks	Francis Wakefield	Tempo p.7
11-12	No terms from Reds; Last chance for talks-Palace	Ted Tuvera	Daily Tribune p.1
13	Joma to Digong: Thanks fpr onvite, but...	Delfin T Mallari Jr	PDI p.A3
14	Armed men strafe farmer's house in pikit	Malu Cadelina Manar	Manila Bulletin p.11
15	Military, police descend on Boracay	Francisco Tuyay	Manila Standard p.A2
16	Military informer itinumba ng NPA terrorist	Jorge Hallare	Joy Cantos p.16
ONLINE NEWS			
17	AFP takes alleged CPP-NPA supporters to task for disrupting traffic	Priam Nepomuceno	www.pna.gov.ph
18	Joma not in position to impose talk conditions: Palace	Jelly Musico	www.pna.gov.ph
19	AFP to counter terror, insurgency threats thru 'Oplan Kapayapaan'	Priam Nepomuceno	www.pna.gov.ph
20	Reds told to stop atrocities vs. civilians	Priam Nepomuceno, Ericka Cirera	www.pna.gov.ph

24 April 2018



Page: 12

MONDAY - FRIDAY 11AM & 5PM
PILIPINAS HD
WEDNESDAY 6AM, 6:30 PM & 9PM
THURSDAY 6AM

SUNRISE 5:37 AM
SUNSET 6:11 PM
MOONRISE 1:06 PM
MOONSET 1:13 AM

LOW TIDE 12:15 AM
HIGH TIDE 6:03 PM

TODAY'S WEATHER FORECAST APRIL 24, 2018 | TUESDAY

RISE OF HIGH PRESSURE AREA AFFECTING NORTHERN LUZON - EASTERLIES AFFECTING REST OF THE COUNTRY as of 4:00 am - April 23, 2018

LAOAG CITY 24 - 34 °C	TUGUEGARAO CITY 23 - 36 °C
BAGUIO CITY 16 - 25 °C	SBMA/CLARK 26 - 35 °C
METRO MANILA 24 - 34 °C	TAGAYTAY CITY 21 - 31 °C
LEGAZPI CITY 26 - 33 °C	ILOILO/BACOLOD CITY 25 - 32 °C
TACLOBAN CITY 23 - 33 °C	PUERTO PRINCESA 25 - 33 °C
METRO CEBU 26 - 32 °C	ZAMBOANGA CITY 24 - 33 °C
CAGAYAN DE ORO 24 - 32 °C	METRO DAVAO 25 - 33 °C

EXTENDED WEATHER FORECAST	APR 25 WED	APR 26 THU	APR 27 FRI	EXTENDED WEATHER FORECAST	APR 25 WED	APR 26 THU	APR 27 FRI
METRO MANILA	24 °C 34 °C	24 °C 33 °C	24 °C 33 °C	PUERTO PRINCESA	25 °C 33 °C	25 °C 32 °C	26 °C 32 °C
TUGUEGARAO	23 °C 35 °C	22 °C 35 °C	22 °C 34 °C	ILOILO/BACOLOD	26 °C 32 °C	26 °C 32 °C	26 °C 33 °C
LAOAG	24 °C 33 °C	23 °C 33 °C	23 °C 32 °C	METRO CEBU	26 °C 33 °C	25 °C 33 °C	25 °C 32 °C
BAGUIO	16 °C 25 °C	16 °C 26 °C	16 °C 26 °C	TACLOBAN	24 °C 33 °C	24 °C 32 °C	24 °C 33 °C
SBMA/CLARK	25 °C 34 °C	24 °C 34 °C	25 °C 33 °C	CAGAYAN DE ORO	24 °C 33 °C	24 °C 33 °C	24 °C 32 °C
TAGAYTAY	21 °C 31 °C	21 °C 30 °C	21 °C 30 °C	METRO DAVAO	25 °C 32 °C	25 °C 33 °C	25 °C 33 °C
LEGAZPI	25 °C 33 °C	25 °C 33 °C	25 °C 32 °C	ZAMBOANGA	24 °C 33 °C	24 °C 32 °C	24 °C 33 °C

☁️
Party cloudy to at times cloudy with rain showers and/or thunderstorms

1



24 April 2018



Page: 1

Joma to return if safety assured

By JOSE RODEL CLAPANO

After 31 years, Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) founding chairman Jose Ma. Sison is ready to return to his native land to restart peace negotiations.

But Sison first wants an assurance of his safety from “peace spoilers” in the military who might sabotage the talks between the government and the National Democratic Front (NDF) if he returns.

In an interview with radio station dzBB, Sison said he would end his exile and accept President Duterte’s invitation for him to return home from the Netherlands and directly talk peace with the government.

“On the possibility of myself coming back home to be with the President to guide the peace negotiations and hasten the peace negotiations, there has to be sufficient development in the negotiations, there has to be strong basis that the peace spoilers will not be immediately upset,” Sison said.

“If I will return home without an assurance and there is no better circumstance for the peace negotiations, peace spoilers might be able to infiltrate us,” Sison said.

Sison said he would feel safe if a ceasefire agreement between the NDF and the government peace panels is signed, amnesty is implemented and political

Turn to Page 3

prisoners are released, and the two important issues on agrarian reform and rural development under the Comprehensive Agreement on Socio-Economic Reforms (CASER) are resolved.

He said the two panels might be able to resolve these agreements and issues during the 60-day window set by Duterte.

Duterte invited Sison on Saturday to return to the country to enable them directly negotiate peace and oversee the talks.

“Proposal ko kay Sison, hindi ako magpunta doon. Ang pinag-awayan natin ang Pilipinas. Pumunta ka dito. Ako magbigay ng pamasaha (My proposal to Sison, I will not go there. We are fighting for the Philippines. You come here. I will pay for your transportation), I will pay for all your billeting and pagkain (food),” Duterte said.

He added that during the 60-day window, he will order the military not to make any move against communist rebels.

He said rebels, for their part, just need to lay down their arms.

Duterte did not say when

2



the 60-day window will end.

Sison said he feels Duterte has “good faith” in making the offer.

“But we need to consider the risks should someone manage to infiltrate and something happens to us or something happens before the start of peace negotiations,” Sison said.

Sison said the usual “peace spoilers” are those in the military who stand to benefit if the war between the government and the communist movement will continue.

Sison has been in exile for 31 years. He fled to Europe in 1987 after talks between the communist group and the government failed during the time of the late president Corazon Aquino.

Labor Secretary Silvestre Bello III, chief of the team negotiating with the NDF, told *dzBB* in a separate interview that his team is already making arrangements for the resumption of peace talks.

Bello also said that government negotiators have started backchannel talks with their counterparts in the NDF.

Sison and Duterte traded barbs last year after the peace

negotiations between the government and the NDF were terminated.

More than a week after ditching the peace talks, Duterte signed a proclamation declaring the CPP-New People’s Army as a terrorist organization.

In a Palace press briefing yesterday, presidential spokesman Harry Roque Jr. said the government cannot facilitate Sison’s safe travel from Europe to the Philippines.

“That’s beyond our control of course, but in the Philippines, his liberty will be guaranteed by the President,” Roque added.

Asked if the government would work to remove Sison from the US foreign terrorist list, Roque said Sison should make the arrangements himself.

Roque noted that President Duterte assured Sison that he would be secured only upon his return to the Philippines.

Last Saturday, Duterte said he was ready to pay for the airfare and accommodation of Sison once he agrees to come back to thresh out issues related to the peace talks.

Despite the complex issues, Roque believes that 60 days would be enough to resume the negotiations and

thresh out concerns.

Meanwhile, peace advocates welcomed the offer of President Duterte to resume peace negotiations with the NDF.

Ernesto Alcanzare, lead organizer of the Yes for Peace-Bayanihan ng Bayan, said “the President’s challenge to (Sison) is in tune with the documented call of millions of Filipinos for peace talks to be held here in the Philippines.”

NDF reciprocal working committee on social and economic reforms chair Julie de Lima in a statement posted on the NDF website said the CASER is a linchpin to achieve a just and lasting peace in the country.

As this developed, the CPP posted on its website a message to its allies on the occasion of the NDF’s 45th founding anniversary, calling for the broadest anti-fascist united front against the Duterte administration.

“By waging revolutionary resistance, both in the urban underground as well as in rural armed struggle, the NDF helps strengthen the people’s determination to fight and defeat the despicable regime,” the CPP said in its statement.

– With Christina Mendez, Ramon Efren Lazaro

24 April 2018



Pahina. 7

**15-anyos
na NPA recruit
patay sa encounter**

Kinumpirma kahapon ng militar na isang 15-anyos na menor de edad na rebeldeng New People's Army (NPA) ang napaslang sa pakikipag-engkuwentro sa tropa ng militar sa Brgy. Astorga, Sta. Cruz, Davao del Sur.

Ayon kay Lt. Col. Rhojun Rosales, Commander ng Army's 39th Infantry Battalion, ito'y matapos na positibo nang kilalanin kahapon ng kaniyang pamilya ang napatay na rebeldeng binatilyo.

Tinukoy ni Rosales ang nasawi na si Rondo Ondo, ng Sitio Tombo, Brgy. Old Bulatukan, Makilala, North Cotabato.

Ang nasawing NPA ay una nang inilagak sa Funeral Parlor sa Sta. Cruz, Davao del Sur kung saan kahapon ay nakilala ito matapos na magtungo sa punerarya ang ina na si Marissa Ondo na kumilala nito.

Sinabi ng opisyal na ang bangkay ni Ondo ay narekober habang nakasuot ito ng kulay itim na uniporme ng NPA fighters at nakuha rin sa tabi ng bangkay nito ang isang M16 rifle.

Kinondena naman ni AFP-Eastern Mindanao Command Chief Major Gen. Benjamin Madrigal ang panililalang ng CPP-NPA sa kanilang mga recruits kung saan ay ginagamit ng mga itong frontliner sa bakbakan ang mga bagong recruits na menor de edad. (Joy Cantos)

4



24 April 2018



Page. 5

Sundalo, patay sa Leyte encounter

Napatay ang isang sundalo matapos na kumasa ang tropa nito sa pitong miyembro ng New People's Army (NPA) sa isang liblib na lugar sa Mahaplag, Leyte nitong Sabado ng hapon.

Hindi muna ibinunyag ng Armed Force of the Philippines (AFP) ang pagkakakilanlan ng sundalo hanggang hindi pa naipagbigay-alam sa pamilya

nito ang insidente.

Binanggit ng militar sa report nito na dakong 5:50 ng hapon at nagpapatrulya ang tropa ng 78th Infantry Battalion (IB) ng Philippine Army (PA), na binubuo ng 14 na miyembro nito, sa Barangay San Juan, Mahaplag, Leyte, nang mamataan nila ang pitong miyembro ng NPA.

Sumiklab ang engkuwentro sa pagitan ng magkabilang panig at nang

maramdaman ng mga rebelde na talo sila sa bilang sa 25-minutong bakbakan ay umatras ang mga ito.

Dead on the spot ang isa sa sundalo dahil na rin sa mga tama ng bala sa katawan.

Tinutugis pa rin ng tropa ng pamahalaan ang nasabing mga rebelde.

Francis T. Wakefield

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24 April 2018



Page: 2

More loose guns recovered in Lanao del Sur

ZAMBOANGA CITY – Local officials of a town in Lanao del Sur surrendered 23 unlicensed firearms over the weekend.

Maj. Ronald Escano, First Army Division spokesman, said officials of Pantao-Ragat led by Mayor Lacson Lantud turned over the the guns to Col. Robert Daus, commander of the 2nd Mechanized Brigade under the Joint Task Force Ranao.

The guns include Garand, M14, M16 and Carbine rifles. Escano said at least 100 loose firearms have been recovered in Lanao del Sur since April 6.

"We are expecting more from other municipalities," he said.

– Roel Pareño

6



24 April 2018



Page: 11

Soldiers, workers get free MRT rides

Starting tomorrow, personnel of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) can avail themselves of free rides on the Metro Rail Transit Line 3 (MRT-3).

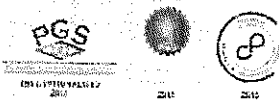
Transportation Secretary Arthur Tugade and MRT-3 general manager Rodolfo Garcia will sign a memorandum of agreement with AFP Civil

Relations Service chief Brig Gen. Bienvenido Datun Jr tomorrow for the free rides.

The MRT management is also offering free rides to workers in public and private entities on Labor Day.

The free rides are available from 7 a.m. to 9 a.m. and from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. – Louella Desiderio, Ghio Ong

9



24 April 2018



Page. 14

NPA leader, another killed, soldier hurt in Davao clash

By **ZAIDA DELOS REYES-PALANCA**

TWO persons, including a notorious leader of New People's Army (NPA), were killed while a soldier was wounded in an encounter with government forces the other day in Sta. Cruz, Davao del Sur.

One of the fatalities were identified as Julito Puebas, alias Taghoy, leader of Sentro De Grabidad of Guerilla Front 51 of the terrorist group.

The wounded soldier was identified as Cpl. Kenneth James Balicot, of the Army's 2nd Scout Ranger Battalion.

Taghoy's group is re-

sponsible for the atrocities in Sta. Cruz, Bansalan and Digos City, all in Davao del Sur and some parts of Toril, Davao City.

Accordingly, Taghoy's group figured in an encounter with the composite troops of the 39 Infantry Battalion and 2nd Scout Ranger Battalion in Sitio Bayongon, Bgy. Astorga, Sta. Cruz, Davao del Sur.

During the encounter, troops arrested a female NPA, identified as Jessa Lumana, and recovered one body of an unidentified NPA terrorist.

It was learned that in the same encounter, Taghoy was severely wounded but was rescued by pursuing troops and was given

first aid.

The troops exerted all efforts to administer first aid and save the groaning and severely wounded NPA leader while evacuating him to a helicopter landing point. Unfortunately, alias Taghoy expired while in transit.

It can be recalled that Taghoy and his group were responsible for the ambush of PNP SOCO personnel who responded to a crime situation sometime in March 2017 and the ambush of an ambulance sometime in March 2014, both in Managa, Bansalan, Davao Sur.

He was also responsible for the liquidation of a certain Raul Alang in Sta.

Cruz, Davao del Sur on Feb. 5, 2018.

Earlier this month, the same terrorist group was prevented from conducting atrocities in Digos City after troops from the Army's 39IB encountered them in Bgy. Goma.

Recovered during the encounter were an M16A1 rifle, four improvised explosive devices, one of which is a 16-kilogram improvised anti-personnel landmine, two rifle grenades, three long and three short magazines, two Icom radios with chargers, two bandoliers, seven back packs, NDF and BHB flags, medical supplies, other personal belongings and subversive documents.

8

24 April 2018



Page: 2

AFP seeks higher public awareness of maritime issues

By MICHAEL PUNONGBAYAN

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) is working on increasing public awareness of maritime issues, including the country's territorial dispute with some of its neighbors, particularly China.

The military's Northern Luzon Command (Nolcom) based in Camp Aquino, Tarlac City hopes to achieve this initially through spearheading a forum on the issue – together with other agencies and stakeholders – in Lingayen, Pangasinan tomorrow.

Nolcom public information office chief Lt. Col. Isagani Nato said resource speakers will discuss developments in the West Philippine Sea and South China Sea issue as well as efforts being made to safeguard the country's territorial waters and exclusive economic zone.

He explained that Nolcom's area of operation covers the biggest maritime area in the country – West Philippine Sea where Bajo de Masinloc or Panatag Shoal is located, Luzon Strait in the area of Batanes Islands and Philippine Rise off Casiguran, Aurora.

"Being responsible for protecting the biggest maritime area in the country, Nolcom finds it necessary to involve all stakeholders to contribute to the overall effort of securing the Northern Maritime Frontier," Nato said yesterday.

"Thus, collaboration and integration of efforts is paramount

to achieve desired common goals," he added.

"With its core purpose, Nolcom will continue to advance peace and development, fight for our people's rights and threats to peace, development and security, and protect our sovereign territory," he said.

The United States and Philippines armed forces, meanwhile, will conduct "subject matter expert exchanges" at various military installations throughout the Philippines beginning tomorrow until May 4.

In a statement, the US Pacific Air Forces Public Affairs said American and Filipino airmen are set to participate in exchanges that will cover command and control tactics and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief responses.

The US participation in the event is upon the invitation of the Philippine government, the statement said.

As part of the program, the US will send HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopters and airmen from units across the Pacific to Clark Air Base and Mactan-Benito Ebuen Air Base in the Philippines.

"The exchange is the sixth iteration of the US-Philippine Air Contingent established by US Pacific Command and executed by Headquarters Pacific Air Forces," the statement read.

The first US-Philippine Air Contingent was in April 2016.

9



24 April 2018



Page. 7

Joma ready to return to PH for peace talks

Communist Party of the Philippines founding chairman and National Democratic Front chief political consultant Jose Maria Sison is ready to return to the Philippines once a significant advance in the peace negotiations has been achieved.

"I declare that I will certainly return home when a significant advance in the peace negotiations has been achieved within the framework of The Hague Joint Declaration and when my comrades and lawyers are satisfied with legal and security precautions," the exiled Sison said following President Duterte's call to resume the peace talks within 60-days.

"I am confident that the GRP and the NDFP negotiating panels, consultants, and drafting teams will be able to produce in the next few weeks the documents necessary for resuming the peace negotiations and making the peace process strong and

stable," he added.

Sison, who has been living in The Netherlands for more than 30 years, thanked Duterte for asking him to return to the country and assurances of hospitality and guarantees for his safety.

"I have long wished that we could meet again and cooperate closely in enabling the peace process to advance from one item to another in the substantive agenda," Sison said.

"While we encourage the GRP and NDFP negotiating panels to prepare for the resumption of the peace negotiations, we must consider that if I return to the Philippines prematurely, I expose not only myself but also the entire peace process to extremely high risks of violent sabotage and termination by spoilers who are out to terminate the peace process once and for all," he said. **(Francis T. Wakefield)**

10

W April 2018



Page:

No terms from Reds; Last chance for talks – Palace

By Ted Tuvera

The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and its founding chairman Jose Maria Sison cannot impose conditions for the resumption of the stalled peace talks and Sison's return to take part in negotiations with the government upon President Duterte's invitation.

Despite Mr. Duterte's recent assurance that the 79-year-old communist leader will not be arrested if he returns, Sison wanted proof of progress in the negotiations before he accepts Mr. Duterte's invitation.

"I don't know if Sison is in a position to provide for conditions. What the President said was if peace talks will resume, he is welcome to come home," Roque told reporters.

"The President will assure his security and the fact that he will not be arrested. Beyond that, the President has not acceded to any further terms," he added.

Roque instead said the offer for the resumption of the government's peace talks with the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army (CPP-NPA) could be the "last chance" to end the communist rebellion.

"The problem is we've been talking peace with them for years and years and years. Walang katapusan. So I think the President said that this is our last chance," Roque said.

He said the 60-day window set by Mr. Duterte to revive the talks will be enough to achieve the parties' shared agenda of addressing the root cause of the rebellion.

"I don't think there's a divergence

Turn to page 2

of views on the root causes of rebellion; it is poverty. So if the government and the CPP-NPA will agree to address the root causes, then it should not even take 60 days," Roque said.

"We have a common platform. A better life for all Filipinos," he added.

Roque said the 60-day period would start as soon as both sides clearly agree upon the specific conditions for the revival of the talks.

"No target... as far as I know, both have to agree to resume peace talks and the 60-day period should be reckoned from that day," he said.

He added the safety of Sison should he come home to the Philippines will be guaranteed by the government.

"The President has given his word that he will not be apprehended while in the Philippines... His liberty will be guaranteed by the President," Roque said.

He said apart from guaranteeing the Communist leader's protection while in the country, the President has not acceded to any other conditions set by the CPP.

"I don't know if he's in a position to provide for conditions," he said, referring to Sison's recent statement that significant advances in the peace talks should first be attained before he comes home.

"What the President said was if peace talks will resume, he's welcome to come home, the President will assure his security and the fact that he will not be arrested. Beyond that, the President has not acceded to any further terms," Roque stated.

Sison lay down conditions

Sison, who has been in self-exile in the Netherlands since 1987, said that he will not give in to Mr. Duterte's invitation unless positive progress is seen in the possible resumption of the stalled peace talks between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the CPP's negotiating wing the National Democratic Front (NDF).

"I declare that I will certainly return home when a significant advance in the peace negotiations has been achieved within the framework of The Hague Joint Declaration and when my comrades and lawyers are

satisfied with legal and security precautions," Sison said.

"I have long wished that we could meet again and cooperate closely in enabling the peace process to advance from one item to another in the substantive agenda," he added.

Roque said that while Mr. Duterte has his word that Sison will not be arrested in the Philippines, he cannot be assured of such immunity while en route to the country.

Sison is considered by the US government as a "terrorist" personality which could have him nabbed elsewhere in the world.

"That's beyond our control of course," Roque said of Sison's security outside the Philippines.

"But in the Philippines, his liberty will be guaranteed by the President," he added.

Meanwhile, red flags of the communist movement flew yesterday morning at Aurora Boulevard in Quezon City as CPP sympathizers and members of National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP)-associated underground organizations marched.

"Celebrating" the 45th anniversary of the NDF, the red-covered activists urged peoples to continue opposing the Duterte administration by means of joining the New People's Army (NPA).



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"In line with the principles of united front building, the basic revolutionary forces must be resolutely strengthened to serve as solid foundation, rampart and scaffolding for building the broadest anti-fascist united front against the Duterte regime," the Communist Party said in its statement.

"To do so, the broad masses of workers and peasants must be mobilized in a big way to expose and actively resist the fascist attacks of the Duterte regime against the people. Solid blows by New People's Army against Duterte's fascist machinery will rouse widespread resistance against the regime's tyranny and terrorism," it added.

Reds cause traffic

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), in turn, urged the public to take action against alleged supporters of the CPP-NPA-NDF for disrupting vehicular traffic at the crossing of EDSA and Aurora Boulevard, Cubao, Quezon City.

"The AFP enjoins the people in taking to task the CPP-NPA-NDF in its conduct of

another rally that severely disrupted the flow of traffic and inconvenienced motorists plying EDSA on Monday," AFP spokesman Brig. Gen. Bienvenido Datuin said.

He added that this is not the first time NPA supporters have disrupted traffic while conducting rallies.

"Last month, individuals clad in red, posing as members of the NPA held a rally at Mendiola bridge in Manila on March 29 in time for the anniversary of the terror group. This also caused heavy traffic," he added.

Also in March last year, a similar rally was held by individuals posing as NPA members that blocked traffic in EDSA.

"The ire they received from stranded motorists during their rally manifests the public's exasperation on such disruption by the communist group," Datuin added.

He also stresses that the public has grown tired of the repeated abuse of the democratic space by the CPP-NPA-NDF and its front organizations.

"As a common theme in their rallies in the past, their clamor always focus on human rights which they do not have respect for; and the resumption of peacetalks while the NPA, their armed wing conduct atrocities against the people," the military official pointed out.

Datuin added that the AFP is calling the public to reject these disruptions and the terror activities of the CPP-NPA-NDF by calling out the communist group on their deceit and betrayal.

"The unified voice of the Filipino is needed in making them realize their eroded credibility," he pointed out.

No preconditions please – ACT solons

ACT Teachers Reps. Antonio Tinio and France Castro have urged President Duterte to scrub his preconditions for the resumption of peace talks between government (GRP) and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDF).

Tinio and Castro said it is the obligation of both parties to comply with previous agreements and adding preconditions will not help move the peace negotiations forward.

"Duterte must lift the preconditions he set to resume the peace talks and allow the negotiating panels to continue with the agenda set at the Hague Declaration which already identified the substantive agenda of

the formal peace negotiations," Tinio said. "Peace negotiations are long processes of debates and agreements between the two parties which cannot be fast tracked in just 60 days. The next agenda of the peace panel would be on the Comprehensive Agreement on Socio-Economic Reforms (CASER), which cannot be agreed upon in a rush as it will be the most important document in the peace process because it aims to resolve the historical and structural inequities in Philippine society."

Observers have noted that while the NDF panel had already prepared drafts and submitted studies for consideration of both parties, the government side had been bogged down with a slew of objections on the state position coming from various departments, including the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA).

On the CASER issue alone, it has taken the GRP panel more than one year to thrash out internal differences and months to recruit sensible editors to make the government position intelligible.

"The peace talks between the GRP and the NDF already resulted in agreements between the two parties which would allow a more neutral and less hostile environment when entering the peace negotiation," Castro said. "These are the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees (JASIG), which is basically an identification system that gives protection and security to consultants of both parties, the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL), which obliged both parties to promote the respect of and adherence to international humanitarian law among its forces. It emphasizes the urgency of protecting the civilian population."

"Duterte and the Department of Justice (DOJ) still have not done anything to lift the list of fake terrorists which also contains names of the NDF negotiating panels along with many human rights activists and peace advocates," Tinio added. "He must junk the petition filed by the DOJ because it falsely tags critics of the administration, activists, and members of legal progressive organizations as 'members' and 'officers' of the CPP and NPA."

Gerry Baldo

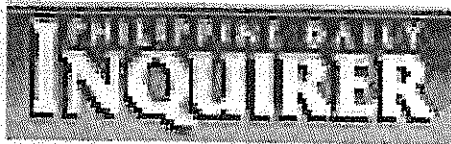
12

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24 April 2018



Page: A3

Joma to Digong: Thanks for invite, but ...

By Delfin T. Mallari Jr.
@dtmallarijrINQ

LUCENA CITY—Exiled Communist Party of the Philippines founding chair Jose Maria “Joma” Sison on Monday thanked President Duterte for inviting him to return to the country for the resumption of the peace talks but politely declined the offer, saying it could possibly put his life at risk.

Sison said he was grateful for Mr. Duterte’s “assurances of hospitality and guarantees for

my safety.”

“I have long wished that we could meet again and cooperate closely in enabling the peace process to advance from one item to another in the substantive agenda,” Sison said in a statement addressed to Mr. Duterte, his former student at Lyceum of the Philippines.

Significant advance

The chief consultant of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) said he would return to the Philippines



Jose Maria “Joma” Sison

only when the peace talks have advanced significantly.

“If I return to the Philippines prematurely, I expose not only myself but also the entire peace

process to extremely high risks of violent sabotage and termination by spoilers who are out to terminate the peace process once and for all,” Sison said.

Mr. Duterte on Saturday urged Sison to come home for the resumption of the peace talks that the President terminated in November last year.

But in February, Mr. Duterte set a 60-day timeframe for the negotiators of both parties to work on the resumption of talks.

Early this month, Sison said the government and NDFP

would conduct back-channel talks to prepare for the resumption of the formal peace talks. The NDFP is the umbrella group of all communist-led underground organizations.

‘Respect agreements’

The two panels, which met for five days in Utrecht, have decided not to issue their respective statements yet on the result of the initial talks, according to Luis Jalandoni, NDFP senior adviser.

Sison said both parties should focus on the crafting of an accord

to “respect existing agreements prior to Proclamation 360 and to remove the obstacles and hindrances to the participation of a significant number of NDFP negotiators, consultants and experts in the peace negotiations.”

Mr. Duterte issued Proclamation 360 that officially terminated the peace process last year.

Sison said both parties should also draft mutually satisfactory agreements on cease-fire and amnesty for political prisoners. —WITH A REPORT FROM KARLOS MANLUPIG INQ

13

24 April 2018

MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

Page: 11

Armed men strafe farmer's house in Pikit

By MALU CADELINA
MANAR

KIDAPAWAN CITY – Unidentified armed men strafed with bullets the house of a 58-year-old farmer in Pikit, North Cotabato, Sunday night, police said.

Sr. Insp. Arvin Cambang, deputy chief of Pikit PNP, identified the owner of the house as Felcido Tanudtanud Canete, a farmer, and a resident of Barangay Kolambog, Pikit.

Cambang said the victim and his family were asleep when they were awoken by the sound of gunshots outside their house.

After the gun bursts, a loud explosion came next, according to Cambang.

Fortunately, no one in the Canete household was hurt, the police said.

Cambang and a team from the Army's Seventh Infantry Battalion went to Canete's house the next day and saw damage that could only have been come from an M203 grenade launcher.

Authorities theorized the attack on Canete was connected to previous incidents in Sitio New Valencia, Barangay Bualan, Pikit in Cotabato.

On April 19, a member of the Citizens Armed Forces Geographical Unit (CAFGU) identified as Rodel Abellanida, 33, was shot dead by armed men while tending to his farm animals in Barangay Bualan.

Rido or clan feud was believed the motive behind the killing.

The Pikit PNP has yet to release updated reports as to why they saw a link between the Abellanida killing and the strafing of Canete's house.

14



94 April 2018

Manila Standard

Page. A2

Military, police descend on Boracay

By Francisco Tuyay

POLICE and military troops have been deployed to Boracay Island to enforce security measures during the closure and rehabilitation of the resort next Thursday.

Military troops from the Army, Air Force and the Navy were deployed as a joint force to support law enforcement activities, and the implementation of heightened security measures during the closure and rehabilitation of Boracay.

Deployed were also more than 400 policemen to prevent vandalism and theft on private property.

Philippine National Police chief Oscar Albayalde said the Police Regional Office 6 (PRO-6) under Chief Supt. Hawthorne

Binag would be in charge of securing the island.

“[Chief Supt.] Binag will be in full control and supervision and we will give him the responsibility on how to deal with the misdeeds. He will be there and will monitor activities 24 hours a day,” the new PNP chief said.

Albayalde said crowd control police would exercise maximum tolerance when dealing with any possible protests from locals, adding a relocation program for those who would lose employment during the island’s rehabilitation period had shifted gear.

In related developments:

• Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque on Monday appealed to the Boracay Task Force to provide media members more elbow room to cover the beach resort’s rehabilitation when the island is closed.

In a press briefing, Roque said during

the Cabinet meeting, he personally appealed to the interagency to reconsider the 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. rule applied to members of the media to cover the island’s closure.

“I do agree that media does (sic) not sleep and of course although a comparison was made between Boracay and Marawi, I said *wala namang IED sa* [there is no IED in] Boracay,” he said, referring to improvised explosive devise.

Roque believed he was able to persuade the Cabinet to provide media with accreditation so that they could issue media cards to accredited members of the Boracay Press Corps and be treated as residents in the island.

“But let’s await the final word from the interagency. I do not want to preempt them. But my impression was they were in agreement before I left the meeting. That was the last point that I raised before

I left the meeting,” he said.

Reporters and their crew would be required to spend their nights outside the island and would have to be accompanied by escorts while in Boracay.

• Senator Sherwin Gatchalian on Monday urged the Aklan Electric Cooperative Inc. to avoid passing on extra power charges to its consumers during the impending six-month closure of Boracay Island by invoking force majeure.

He said the closure of restaurants, resorts, and other commercial establishments on Boracay Island during the effectivity of the closure order would not only result in the loss of jobs.

He said it would also drive down the demand for electricity in Akelco’s franchise area, as these commercial establishments account for 41 percent of the electric cop’s power demand. **With Vito Barcelo, Macon Ramos-Araneta, and PNA**

15



24 April 2018



Pahina. 2

Military informer itinumba ng NPA terrorists

Pinagbabaril ang isang lalaki na umano'y informer ng militar ng mga pinaghihinalaang miyembro ng teroristang New People's Army (NPA) kamakalawa sa Brgy. Caditaan, Magallanes, Sorsogon.

Namatay noon din ang biktima na kinilalang si Ruel Martinez, 36, ng Sitio Cantamayon, Caditaan, Sorsogon.

Batay sa ulat, bago nangyari ang pamamaril sa biktima bandang alas-2:00 ng hapon sa nasabing lugar ay nasa loob ng kanyang bahay ang biktima nang pasukin ng tatlong armadong lalaki ang bahay at kinaladkad ito palabas at dinala sa magubat na bahagi ng Sitio Suwa at doon ito pinagbabaril.

Narekober ng mga nagrespondeng operatiba ng pulisya sa lugar ang mga basyo ng bala ng M 16 rifle na ginamit sa pamamaslang sa biktima. - *Joy Cantos, Jorge Hallare.*

16

ONLINE NEWS

24 APRIL 2018

www.pna.gov.ph

AFP takes alleged CPP-NPA supporters to task for disrupting traffic

By Priam Nepomuceno April 23, 2018, 6:33 pm

MANILA -- The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) is urging the public to take action against alleged supporters of the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army-National Democratic Front (CPP-NPA-NDF) for disrupting vehicular traffic at the crossing of EDSA and Aurora Boulevard, Cubao, Quezon City, Monday morning.

"The AFP enjoins the people in taking to task the CPP-NPA-NDF in its conduct of another rally that severely disrupted the flow of traffic and inconvenienced motorists plying EDSA on Monday," AFP spokesperson Brig. Gen. Bienvenido Datuin said.

He added that this is not the first time NPA supporters have disrupted traffic while conducting rallies.

"Last month, individuals clad in red, posing as members of the NPA held a rally at Mendiola bridge in Manila on March 29 in time for the anniversary of the terror group. This also caused heavy traffic," he added.

Also in March last year, a similar rally was held by individuals posing as NPA members that blocked traffic in EDSA.

"The ire they received from stranded motorists during their rally manifests the public's exasperation on such disruption by the communist group," Datuin added.

He also stresses that the public has grown tired of the repeated abuse of the democratic space by the CPP-NPA-NDF and its front organizations.

"As a common theme in their rallies in the past, their clamor always focus on human rights which they do not have respect for; and the resumption of peacetalks while the NPA, their armed wing conduct atrocities against the people," the military official pointed out.

Datuin added that the AFP is calling the public to reject these disruptions and the terror activities of the CPP-NPA-NDF by calling out the communist group on their deceit and betrayal.

"The unified voice of the Filipino is needed in making them realize their eroded credibility," he pointed out. **(PNA)**

17

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INTEGRITY

2018

2018

www.pna.gov.ph

Joma not in position to impose talk conditions: Palace

By Jelly Musico April 23, 2018, 5:59 pm

MANILA -- Malacanang on Monday said Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) founding chairman Jose Maria 'Joma' Sison is not in a position to set terms before returning to the country.

"I don't know if he is in a position to provide for conditions," Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque said in a Palace briefing.

Over the weekend, President Rodrigo Duterte prodded Sison to come home, giving a 60-day time frame for peace negotiations.

Duterte has even said he will pay for Sison's airfare, billeting and food and would allow the communist leader to set up camp where they can talk "minus arms".

In response, Sison said he will "certainly return when a significant advance in the peace negotiations has been achieved within the framework of The Hague Joint Declaration".

The communist leader also wanted an assurance that his comrades and lawyers are satisfied with legal and security precautions.

"What the President said was if peace talks will resume, he is welcome to come home. The President will assure his security and the fact that he will not be arrested. Beyond that, the President has not acceded to any further terms," Roque explained.

He, however, said Sison's new condition "will have to be discussed" by the government.

Roque clarified that the 60-day "window" will commence "as soon as both sides have clearly agreed to resume peace talks".

"If the government and the CPP-NPA will have agreed to address the root causes, then it should not even take 60 days," he said. *(PNA)*

18

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AFP to counter terror, insurgency threats thru 'Oplan Kapayapaan'

By Priam Nepomuceno April 23, 2018, 2:57 pm

MANILA -- The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) will try to neutralize insurgency and terrorism through its Development Support and Security Plan "Kapayapaan".

This was stressed Monday by AFP spokesperson Brig. Gen. Bienvenido Datuin when asked on how the military, now under the leadership of Chief-of-Staff Lt. Gen. Carlito Galvez, intends to address the above-mentioned threats.

"Through vigorous implementation of Community Support Program under Development Support and Security Plan 'Kapayapaan'," he added.

Since beating both threats are equally important, Datuin said that these will be simultaneously addressed in coordination with the local government units and other sectors of the society.

"Kapayapaan" was launched in January 2017 succeeding "Bayanihan" which formally ended Dec. 31, 2016 having been launched on Dec. 22, 2010.

While the latter's approach is the whole-of-nation approach that focused on security aspect, "Kapayapaan" is centered on the AFP' support to the challenges on governance, development and security.

Strategic concepts of "Kapayapaan" are the following:

- *Sustained military operation to defeat the foreign and local terrorist organizations;
- *Contribute to the promotion of peace;
- *Active support to law enforcement in war against drugs;
- *Contribute to nation building. **(PNA)**

19

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Reds told to stop atrocities vs. civilians

By Priam Nepomuceno April 23, 2018, 10:26 am

MANILA -- The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) stressed that the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army-National Democratic Front (CPP-NPA-NDF) must convince its members to stop committing atrocities against civilians to prove its sincerity and commitment in forging lasting peace with the government.

AFP spokesperson Brig. Gen. Bienvenido Datuin made this statement over the weekend following the unprovoked attack that killed a pastor of the Jehovah's Witnesses and wounded two of his companions in Gigaquit, Surigao Del Norte last April 18.

In the incident, Jepti Acedo was killed while two of his companions were severely wounded in the said attack.

"The AFP reiterates its call to the CPP-NPA-NDF to stop all atrocities against the people and be sincere in the peace process," he added.

Datuin said this latest NPA atrocity is totally unacceptable, appalling and downright an act of terrorism.

"This exemplifies the NPA's contempt and total disrespect to human rights and International Humanitarian Law," the AFP spokesperson stressed. *(With reports from Ericka Cirera, OJT/PNA)*