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NEWS CLIPPINGS

02 December 2018

Sunday



Honor. Patriotism. Duty

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www.retiredanalyst.blogspot.com



Honor. Patriotism. Duty

SATUR'S GROUP FREED; GOV'T 'DIRTY WORK' HIT

STORY BY THE INQUIRER STAFF

After failing to comply with two orders from the Tagum City court, the PNP released late on Saturday the 18 activists accused of kidnapping 'lumad' schoolchildren whom security forces claimed were being trained for their eventual recruitment by the communist New People's Army.

A2

FROM A1

By the Inquirer Staff
@Team_inquirer

DAVAO CITY—Two days after being arrested in far-flung Talaingod, Davao del Norte province, Satur Ocampo and other activists, now called the "Talaingod 18," were released on Saturday night as their supporters denounced security forces for the "dirty work" used against them.

Lawyer Joel Mahinay of the Union of Peoples' Lawyers in Mindanao said he posted a bail bond for his clients, including the former Bayan Muna representative, amounting to P1.44 million.

Mahinay said Executive Judge Arlene Palabrica of the Tagum Regional Trial Court had to order the police to present the group before her twice, but the police did not comply until late Saturday night.

The group, which also includes ACT Rep. France Castro,

was charged with kidnapping and trafficking of children from a "lumad" or indigenous people's school that earlier complained of being harassed by security forces.

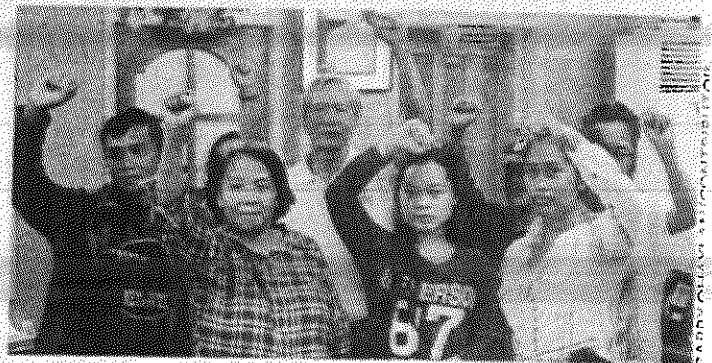
The group's lawyers said the 18 activists were part of a 75-member "solidarity mission" that only wanted to bring food and other supplies to a lumad school in Barangay Palma Gil in Talaingod.

Police, military harassment

Officials of the school, one of two operated by Salugpongan Ta' Tanu Igkanogon Community Learning Center Inc., complained that they had been harassed by the military since June.

Lolita Muya, the school president, said soldiers of the Army's 56th Infantry Battalion even set up camp near their other campus in June, a charge the military denied.

Muya said that on Oct. 25, soldiers and members of the Alamara militia gave them a week to leave the school in



DEFIANT Former Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo (center), ACT Rep. France Castro (front, left) and their colleagues during inquest proceedings in the Provincial Prosecutor's Office in Tagum City

Sitio Nasilaban.

On Nov. 1, four Alamara men returned and threatened to kill the teachers if they didn't leave the place, prompting the teachers to flee to the Salugpongan school in Sitio Dulyan, Muya said.

But on Wednesday, Alamara militiamen also padlocked the school at Sitio Dulyan, prompting the lumad teachers to flee with their students in tow and seek help from the solidarity

mission that was lobbying with government officials in Tagum City, she added.

When the group received the teachers' distress call, they decided to go to the school in a convoy of five vehicles to rescue the teachers and students. They were arrested on their way out of Talaingod.

Philippine National Police chief Director General Oscar Al-bayalde on Saturday tried to justify the operation and

claimed that the Salugpongan teachers had been teaching their students a "different curriculum."

Albayalde said in a radio interview that the Talaingod 18 were arrested at a checkpoint.

Different anthem

"When we spoke with the lumad, they said they were being taught a different national anthem. They forced 14 minors to that school where they teach something different," Albayalde said, reiterating the military's claim that the school had been shut down.

For Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) founder Jose Maria Sison, the police used the legal process "to persecute people. Make false charges, detain the victims and make them crawl through the reactionary legal processes."

He accused the Duterte administration of copying the Arroyo administration's controversial "Bantay Laya" strategy, which has been linked to extrajudicial killings.

"The same tactic of legal offensive used under 'Oplan Bantay Laya' of Arroyo is being used under 'Oplan Kapayapaan' of Duterte," Sison said in an online interview from Utrecht in the Netherlands.

"They started some time ago. They are going to accelerate their dirty work," he added.

Oplan Bantay Laya was the counterinsurgency strategy that the military adopted against the CPP and the New People's Army during the Arroyo administration.

Officials of the Department of Education (DepEd) denied they ordered the school closed.

"Who said that? They should have asked us. We never issued any closure order," said Jenelito Atillo, DepEd regional spokesperson. "If ever DepEd would do so, everything would have to go through due process."

—WITH REPORTS FROM
GERMELINA LACORTE, MART SAM-
BALUD, DELFIN MALLARI JR., JEROME
ANING AND KRIXIA SUBINGSUBING
INQ

Another big-time oil price rollback bared



Fuel prices are expected to be rolled back for the eighth consecutive week, led by Phoenix Petroleum Philippines Inc., amid continued concerns on oversupply in the international market.

In a text advisory, Phoenix Petroleum said it implemented a P2 per liter decrease on gasoline and diesel prices starting at noon yesterday. This is to provide motorists with cheaper fuels for the long weekend.

Meanwhile, Unioil Philippines said its fuel prices would be rolled back by P2.20 to P2.40 per liter for diesel and by P1.90 to P2 per liter for gasoline next week.

BY DANESSA RIVERA

Other oil firms have yet to announce their respective price reductions next week.

Based on the Department of Energy (DOE)'s oil monitoring, the fuel price reduction is still due to the perceived oversupply in the international market. DOE-Oil Industry Management Bureau assistant director Rodela Romero said.

Among the factors for this are the 3-6-million-barrel increase in commercial crude inventories last week, increase in US interest rates which strengthened the US dollar and uncertainty over the US-China trade war, and signs of

Turn to Page 2

Another From Page 1

increased global crude production.

Prior the implementation of the new round of price cuts, local oil firms have rolled back gasoline prices by around P9.10 per liter, diesel prices by P8.40 per liter and kerosene by around P7.10 per liter for seven successive weeks.

Yesterday, Petron Corp. said it rolled back Gasul and Fiesta

Gas prices by P6.40 per kilogram or P70 per 11-kilogram tank. It also reduced AutoLPG prices by P3.50 per liter at the same time.

Solane also lowered its LPG price by P6.36 per kilogram while Eastern Petroleum slashed the price of its EC Gas LPG by P6.50 per kilogram or P71.50 for an 11-kilo cylinder.

This is based on the pricing of Saudi Arabia's state-owned oil company Saudi Aramco, which sets an international price benchmark at the beginning of each month and is being tracked by local retailers.

Saudi Aramco set its December contract price for propane at \$445 per metric ton (MT), significantly lower than \$540 per MT the previous month.

Despite the rollbacks in fuel

prices, senators maintained that the government must pursue the suspension of the implementation of the second round of fuel excise tax hike next year as inflation remains high at 6.7 percent.

Sen. Aquilino "Koko" Pimentel III said economic managers could not yet explain the cause of inflation.

"We're calling for the postponement of the implementation of the second round of excise tax in oil, which is an

effort to control inflation. Let's see its effects on inflation," Pimentel said in an interview over radio *dwiZ*.

Although unsure, the senator said they are "suspecting" oil prices as causing inflation, but they want to give time to confirm their "theory."

Pimentel and Sen. Sonny Angara, chairman of the Senate committee on ways and means, had earlier said the country's economic managers should first roll out safety nets

for the poor and find ways to temper further increases in the prices of basic goods before they even think of pushing ahead with the second round of fuel excise tax hike next year.

Pimentel, who had earlier filed a resolution seeking to suspend the second round of fuel excise tax hike, warned that the inflation rate may spiral out of control if the government will not initiate measures to address it. - **With Cecille Suerte Felipe**

FREEDOM OF NAVIGATION

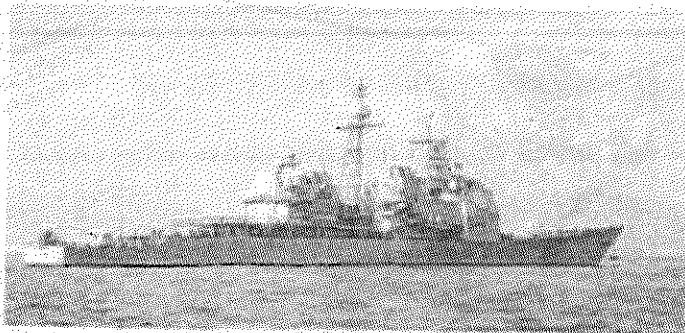
CHINA HITS US FOR SAIL-BY NEAR DISPUTED

ISLANDS IN SOUTH CHINA SEA

BEIJING—China on Friday scolded the United States for sending naval vessels close to disputed islands in the South China Sea where Beijing has built military installations.

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According to the Pentagon, the USS Chancellorsville guided-missile destroyer sailed Monday near the Paracel islands, known as Xisha in Chinese, "to challenge excessive maritime claims and



INTERNATIONAL WATERS The USS Chancellorsville, a guided missile destroyer, sails near the Paracel Islands. —AFP

preserve access to the waterways as governed by international law."

Chinese military scrambled aircraft and warships, sending

out warnings for the American vessel to leave the area.

"We urge the US to strengthen the management of its vessels and aircraft that pass by Chinese

territory to prevent unexpected events," People's Liberation Army Southern Theatre spokesperson Li Huamin said in a statement.

Diplomatic complaint

China has also lodged a diplomatic complaint with Washington, foreign ministry spokesperson Geng Shuang said during a regular press briefing, calling on the US to "immediately stop such provocative actions that violate China's sovereignty."

The Paracels are claimed by China, Taiwan and Vietnam.

China claims nearly all of the South China Sea though Taiwan, the Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia

and Vietnam all claim parts.

Further angering those countries, and the United States, Beijing has moved aggressively to build up reefs into artificial islands capable of hosting military planes.

It was the second US naval operation to irk China this week.

Third operation

On Wednesday, two US ships sailed through the Taiwan Strait—which China considers its territory but the United States and others see as international waters open to all—prompting a furious Beijing to send warships and fighter jets.

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"All operations are designed in accordance with international law and demonstrate that the United States will fly, sail and operate wherever international law allows."

The naval tensions come just ahead of scheduled talks between US President Donald Trump and Chinese leader Xi Jinping at the G20 summit in Argentina this weekend aimed at softening trade tensions. —AFP

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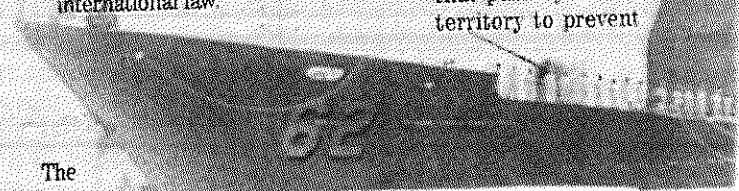
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AFP

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DUTERTE ASKED TO RETHINK ESPENIDO RETURN

GROUP WANTS AFF INSTEAD TO FIGHT PARAJINOG SYNDICATE



December 2018

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TO OZAMIZ



JOVIE ESPENIDO

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—A former radio commentator on Saturday said a group of professionals in Ozamiz City was opposing the return of Chief Insp Jovie Espenido to his old post as police chief of the city where he led a bloody campaign against illegal drugs.

An open letter signed by former radio commentator Darwin Aguirre said the "concerned Ozamiz professionals" were "worried that with Espenido back in Ozamiz, the path of change and reform (in the city) could be hampered."

President Duterte on Wednesday ordered Philippine National Police Director General Oscar Albalade to assign Espenido back to the city.

The group is appealing to the President to reconsider his decision.

Aguirre himself is in hiding after being accused by the police of involvement in the drug trade. He has said that the accusation was fabricated.

The other concerned Ozamiz professionals, he said, were fearful of coming out in the open for fear of reprisals.

Espenido was first assigned to Ozamiz from Albuera, Leyte province, in December 2016. He was moved to Virac, Caranduanes, in mid-October.

'Fear, insecurity in the city'

Local media reports say that in just two operations, the police under Espenido killed at least 22 people—13 during a raid on the Parajinog patrol's residence in July 2017 and nine robbery suspects a month earlier.

The justice department later filed homicide charges against Espenido and other Ozamiz police officers for the killing of six of the alleged robbers.

Aguirre said there was "growing fear and insecurity in the city" over police operations under Espenido.

He said the existence of the "no compelling reason to revoke" Salvador Panelo said there was Presidential spokesperson Alexy Sando, Ozamiz's acting police chief, to the city's Peace and Order Council on Thursday said that crime "continued to be on the decline," the former

"We heaved a sigh of relief when Espenido was gone. So please, Mr. President, spare Ozamiz City from another episode of terror," Aguirre said in his letter.

Salvador Panelo said there was Presidential spokesperson Alexy Sando, Ozamiz's acting police chief, to the city's Peace and Order Council on Thursday said that crime "continued to be on the decline," the former

Misleading

Aguirre, however, said the President was being "misled in thinking that crime incidence was on the rise."

On a visit to Ozamiz on Wednesday, Mr. Duterte ordered Albalade to return Espenido to the city in response to an appeal by Misamis Occidental Rep. Henry Carninal.

Carninal said the Parajinog crime syndicate had regained strength and that incidents of crime had risen since Espenido's departure.

broadcaster said.

"Yes, the remnants of the Parojinog syndicate are still there but there are only a handful left of its criminal workhorse, thanks to the previous efforts of Espenido," the letter said.

'Attack dog'

"Mr. President, if you think there is a need to reinforce current police efforts against the remnants of the Parojinog syndicate, bring in the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) into our city" it added.

Aguirre said Oaminal was using the police for partisan politics but the congressman dismissed his statement and called him the "media handler" and "attack dog" of the Parojinogs.

"If it were some other guy who is responsible and objective, perhaps I would answer but I don't want to dignify him. I don't have to answer (his allega-

tions)," he told the Inquirer.

In his statement, Panelo said the PNP was in the best position to decide on how to deal with local crimes.

'Relentless drive'

"Even assuming that the incidence of crimes in Ozamiz has decreased, this can be attributable to the relentless drive of Espenido against criminal elements, and the more reason should he be taken back as police chief so he could continue his determined drive to rid Ozamiz City of the illegal drug operators," Panelo added.

In a radio interview on Saturday, Albayalde said the PNP had to follow "the order of our Commander in Chief."

He maintained that it was in response to "the people's request there."

—WITH REPORTS
FROM INQUIRER MINDANAO, CHRIS-
TINE O. AVENDAÑO AND JAYMEE T.
GAMIL INQ. *AP*

METROLINE

Army names new logistics chief

The Philippine Army has a new assistant chief of staff for logistics in the person of Col. Rey Alemania, a member of the Philippine Military Academy "Tanglaw-Diwa" Class of 1992.

He officially replaced Col. Glenn Cruz in a change of office ceremony held in Fort Bonifacio last week presided by Army acting chief of staff Brig. Gen. Jose Faustino Jr.

The Army said Alemania has a master's degree in business administration and public management and prior to his current post, he was the deputy of the Office of the Army Finance Management.

He was also a former commanding officer of four different battalions from 2005 to 2014 and became the assistant chief of staff for operations of the Mechanized Infantry Division in 2015. 13

Alemania said "it is a great challenge for anyone in this position on how to synchronize logistics programs with financial resource execution and that's what I've been tasked to do."

— Michael Punongbayan

Palace to Satur: Stop using arrest for propaganda

By CHRISTINA MENDEZ

Detained former lawmaker Satur Ocampo and his comrades should stop using their arrest as another tool for propaganda against the government and should, instead, follow the rule of law that allows them due process, presidential spokesman Salvador Panelo said yesterday.

Following the arrest of Ocampo and his supporters, Panelo noted that serious charges have been filed against them for violating Republic Act 10364 or the Expanded Anti-Trafficking of Persons Act of 2012.

"Mr. Ocampo, together with all the accused, have been given 10 days to file their respective counter affidavits to refute the allegations against them, hence due process is being accorded them," he said.

Panelo, who is also the chief presidential

legal adviser, urged Ocampo and his supporters "to hold their horses."

"Rashly jumping to conclusions and engaging in a propaganda war not only is unproductive but an attempt to resort to trial by publicity against the government by those identified with the left," he opined.

He told Ocampo that the rule of law must always prevail in a democracy, explaining that "there is no room for short cuts that impair the legal processes. Let the constitutional processes proceed without fear nor favor."

Ocampo, ACTS party-list Rep. France Castro and 17 others, who include four UCCP pastors, *lumad* school teachers and a school administrator, were charged with kidnapping and human trafficking over the transport of minors in Davao del Norte. They were in five vans when the military stopped them at

a checkpoint.

Meanwhile, the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) has sent a response team to monitor their detention in Davao del Norte and to ensure that due process is respected and their rights guaranteed.

"We in CHR will work closely with human rights organizations and lawyers' groups in affirming all the rights that Ka Satur, Cong. France and everyone else that are being charged in this absurd scenario," said CHR chair Chito Gascon.

Gascon criticized Ocampo's arrest and detention, saying the charges of child abuse and trafficking "boggles the mind" as the group was undertaking a humanitarian solidarity mission.

Provincial prosecutor Norman Solis found probable cause to indict the suspects for violations of Article VI Section 10(a) for allegedly engaging in conditions prejudicial to the

children's development under RA 7610 or the Special Protection of Children Against Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act.

Bail was set at P80,000 each but the suspects agreed to be held in police custody until preliminary investigation on the kidnapping charges filed against them have been resolved.

Police claimed they conducted the operation after receiving a complaint that minors, aged 14 to 17 and mostly students of the closed Salugpungan school, were taken without permission from their parents.

Interior Secretary Eduardo Año lauded law enforcement agencies "for coming to the rescue" of the minors and arresting the suspected perpetrators.

"We at DILG strongly condemn all forms of child trafficking and exploitation in the country and will make certain that all those guilty of these abhorrent acts against the vulnerable and innocent will face the full judgment of the rule of law," he said in a statement.

He denounced the Communist Party of the Philippines for their alleged "deplorable brainwashing" of the youth.

— With Romina Cabrera

NPA Sparrow Unit long gone – Albayalde

By **ROMINA CABRERA**

In the face of President Duterte's wish to form a death squad to go after Sparrow units of communist rebels, the head of the Philippine National Police (PNP) said the infamous hit squad is "long gone."

PNP chief Director General Oscar Albayalde said they have not monitored incidents involving these sparrow units of the New People's

Army (NPA) for the past three years. Albayalde said they have tallied 136 killings allegedly perpetrated by the NPA.

"We have monitored those incidents but the Sparrow units of the NPA are no longer existing," he said.

The President floated the idea of establishing a "Duterte Death Squad" or an armed civilian group to counter the Sparrow Unit of the NPA.

Albayalde noted that they have not received any directive from Malacañang regarding the plan.

Albayalde said the President may have been prompted to float the idea of a death squad following the spate of encounters with the NPA in the provinces of Negros and the Bicol region.

Duterte issued Memorandum Order no. 32 ordering the deployment of additional forces in Samar, Negros provinces and the Bicol region to

suppress acts of violence.

PNP spokesman Chief Supt. Benigno Durana Jr. earlier said the creation of a hit squad is not part of the job of the police force.

Duterte's security officials are cautious over the proposal while other sectors aired concern, saying that this would lead to more human rights abuses and deaths in the government's anti-insurgency campaign. — **With Cecille Suerte Felipe**

PNP CHIEF: NO MORE NPA-SPARU HIT SQUAD

PHILIPPINE National Police chief Dir. Gen. Oscar Albayalde on Saturday said the infamous hit squad of the New People's Army, the Special Partisan Unit (SPARU), no longer exists.

The alleged presence of SPARU assassins prompted President Rodrigo Duterte to declare that he will form a death squad to counter that of the communist rebels.

"Right now, we have not monitored (any SPARU presence). There have been instances in the past years and killings recorded, about 136. But we have monitored those and indeed, the SPARU has long ceased to exist," Albayalde said in an interview with dzBB.

On Tuesday, Duterte said he wanted to form a "Duterte Death Squad" to counter SPARU members.

"I will create my own SPARU—Duterte Death Squad against the SPARU. I will match their talent also for assassinating people. They will have firearms for sure. That's my plan," the President said.

"They will do nothing but look for riders who are prospective New People's Army members and take them out," Duterte added.

Albayalde said the President may have his own sources as to the presence of the hit squad of the communist rebels.

The PNP chief, however, clarified that the Palace has yet to make an official order on the proposed formation of the Duterte Death Squad.

"We are talking with the Armed Forces of the Philippines in anticipation of the order. We need to discuss the composition of such a group—whether it will be from the military or the PNP," Albayalde said.

Duterte's proposal was immediately shot down by his own political ally, Senator Aquilino Pimentel III, president of the President's ruling party, PDP-Laban.

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Intel prompted DDS idea – Albayalde

Duterte has his own sources of information on the activities of the communist rebels

By Elmer Manuel

President Rodrigo Duterte must have gotten compelling information that prompted him to seek the creation of a special operations group to go against the communist hit squad "Sparrow Unit," Philippine National Police chief Director General Oscar Albayalde said on Saturday.

On Tuesday, Duterte said he wanted to form a "Duterte Death Squad" that "will match the talent" of the New People's Army (NPA) "Sparrow Units."

However, Albayalde said based on their own intelligence monitoring, the Sparrow Unit has long been disbanded.

"So far we have not monitored anything (on the activities of a communist hit squad). While there were incidents of killings (linked to the communists) reported in the past three years, or 136, all of these were monitored (by our intelligence agents). However, our information indicates that the "Sparrow Unit" is long gone," Albayalde said in a radio interview.

Asked what compelled the President to make such an announcement, Albayalde said Duterte has his own sources of information on the activities of the communist rebels.

He noted that recent series of encounters of military and police personnel with the NPA, such as the Sagay massacre, may have prompted Duterte to give the order.

"The ambush in Bicol against the troops of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, the incident in Samar where the police station (was overrun by communist rebels) – these developments probably served as the trigger that prompted the President to make such a decision.

Albayalde clarified that so far, they have not received

any official directive from Malacañang on the formation of a "Duterte Death Squad."

"We are already talking to the AFP to discuss what to do if the President pursues the idea. We have to discuss how to form such a group and if it would be composed exclusively of soldiers or of policemen," Albayalde said.

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana backed Duterte's plan.

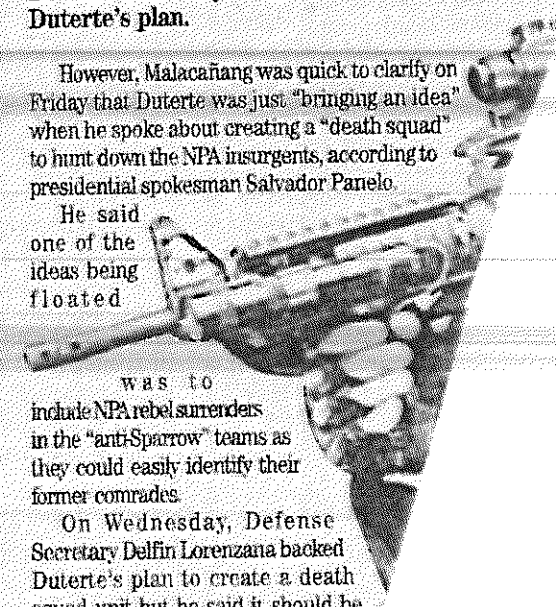
However, Malacañang was quick to clarify on Friday that Duterte was just "bringing an idea" when he spoke about creating a "death squad" to hunt down the NPA insurgents, according to presidential spokesman Salvador Panelo.

He said one of the ideas being floated

was to include NPA rebels surrenders in the "anti-Sparrow" teams as they could easily identify their former comrades.

On Wednesday, Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana backed Duterte's plan to create a death squad unit but he said it should be composed of soldiers who must be properly trained and should not be allowed to fire at will.

Panelo said while Duterte was serious about the plan, details about its possible implementation would still have to be threshed out by the Department of National Defense. 3



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NPA hit squad long gone, says Albayalde

Police intelligence units have not monitored the presence of the infamous hit squad of the New People's Army in any part of the country for several years, Director General Oscar Albayalde, chief of the Philippine National Police, said yesterday.

But Albayaide said President Duterte may have his own sources with regards to the continuous operations of the NPA Special Partisan Units, also known as "Sparrow Unit," especially in areas where the communist rebels usually operate.

What they know and were able to validate, according to Albayaide, were 136 deaths being attributed to the attacks of the communist rebels in some parts of the country in the past three years.

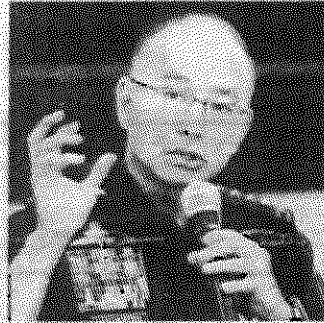
"We have not monitored the presence of the SPARU units for a long time although there were killings recorded in the past three years," said Albayaide in an interview over dzBB.

The SPARU gained notoriety in the 1980s for assassinations of soldiers, policemen, politicians, and businessmen whom the rebels accused of corruption and other wrongdoings. It was during the 1980s when the strength of the NPA peaked at more than 25,000.

But SPARUs began to fade away over the years as government forces have intensified its operations against the communist rebels. Based on the latest assessment, the strength of the NPA is estimated at more or less 4,000.

The discussion about SPARU was revived after Duterte threatened to create his own liquidation squad to match what he called SPARU unit operations.

While stating that the SPARU has long been gone, Albayaide said Duterte might have been angered by the



ALBAYALDE

series of attacks of the communist rebels even in the middle of the peace negotiations. Those attacks prompted Duterte to cancel the peace talks.

The chief PNP mentioned the death of three policemen in an ambush in Camarines Sur in October, the attack on police station in Samar, and the death of nine farmers in Negros Occidental.

"This might have triggered the President to issue such statement," said Albayaide.

So far, Albayaide said they have not received any order from Malacanang about the formation of hit squads against the communist rebels in the police organization.

"We have not received any directive. We have been talking with the Armed Forces of the Philippines that if in case that pushes through, we need to discuss how it would be formed," said Albayaide.

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana was quoted as saying that he is in favor of the President's proposal provided that those who would compose the hit squads are soldiers in order to ensure accountability for any mistakes or abuses. (Aaron Recuenca)

Sparrow unit ng NPA, matagal ng wala - PNP

Hindi na gaanong aktibo at humina na ang Sparrow Unit ng New People's Army (NPA) sa loob ng nakalipas na tatlong taon, ayon kay Philippine National Police (PNP) Director General Oscar Albayalde.

"Wala na po tayong namomonitor. Although, may mga incidents the past three years kung di ako magkamali, may mga killings natatalaga mga 136 accordingly. Pero monitored po yan [at] talagang matagal ng wala ang Sparrow Unit," sabi ni Albayalde.

Ginawa ni Gen Albayalde ang pahayag kasunod ng naging banta ni Pangulong Duterte na pagbuo nito ng "Duterte Death Squad" (DDS) bilang pantapat sa Sparrow Unit ng NPA.

Ang Sparrow na hit squad ng NPA ay na mayagpag sa panahon ni dating Pangulong Ferdinand Marcos noong

dekada 80.

Pero ayon kay Albayalde, posibleng ang mga pinakabagong engkuwentro ng militar at pulis sa mga rebelde sa Bicol Region, Negros Occidental at maging sa mga pag-atake sa Samar, gayundin ang Sagay massacre ang nag-udyok sa Pangulo na magbigay ng ganung pahayag.

Kabilang sa mga pinasiang ng Sparrow ay mga pulis, sundalo, negosyante at maging ang mga pinaghihinang Deep Penetration Agent (DPA) ng pamahalaan gayundin ang kanilang mga dating kasamahan.

Samantala, nakatakdang namang magpulong ang AFP at PNP hinggil sa pagbuo ng DDS kontra Sparrow pero hinihintay pa ang opisyal na direktiba mula sa Malacañang. (Joy Santos)



Reds surrender in S. Kudarat, Agusan Sur

KORONADAL CITY - Six members of the Guerrilla Front 73 of the New People's Army (NPA) surrendered in Senator Ninoy Aquino town in Sultan Kudarat on Friday. Col. Harold Cabunoc, 33rd Infantry Battalion (IB) commander, said the rebels led by an alias Loloy turned over a caliber .30 rifle, a caliber .45 pistol and three caliber .38

revolvers.

The surrenderees were presented to Mayor Randy Ecija Jr. and Col. Robert Dauz, First Mechanized Brigade commander.

In Agusan del Sur on Tuesday, three leaders of the Peacock Platoon of the NPA's Guerrilla Front 88 yielded to Army soldiers in San Luis.

Capt. Aldim Viernes, 401st IB civil-military operations officer, said the surrenderees also turned over an M16 rifle, an Armalite, a shotgun and various types of ammunition.

- Ramil Bajo, Ben Serrano

NPA leader, 5 others surrender in Sultan Kudarat

CAMP SIONGCO, Maguindanao (PNA) — Six Communist rebels belonging to the Guerilla Front 73 of the New People's Army (NPA) surrendered in the Sultan Kudarat town of Senator Ninoy Aquino on Friday, Army officials said.

Lt. Col. Harold Cabunoc, commander of the 33rd Infantry Battalion, said the six NPA surrenderers included a rebel leader named Ka Loloy, 50, a resident of Esperanza, Sultan Kudarat.

Cabunoc said the latest batch of NPA surrenderers indicated that the military and the local government of Senator Ninoy Aquino town "are winning the hearts of Communist rebels."

He said the rebels yielded "because they want to live normal lives."

Ka Loloy, the group's leader, said he "learned about the social benefits of the government program extended to our companions" who had earlier laid down their arms.

Cabunoc said Ka Loloy, who brought with him five of his comrades, vowed to support the national government's peace initiatives.

The former NPA members are expected to receive cash benefits for the five assorted weapons that they handed over to the government through the Army — a caliber .30 Springfield rifle, a caliber .45 M1911 pistol, and three caliber .38 revolvers.

Cabunoc presented the former rebels to Senator Ninoy Aquino Mayor Randy Ecija Jr. and Col. Robert Dauz, commander of the Army's First Mechanized Infantry Brigade.

He and Dauz also presented the rebel returnees to Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP) Undersecretary Reynaldo Mapagu, who happened to be in town on Saturday to inspect a government-proposed housing project for former rebels.

Mapagu, former Philippine Army chief, chairs the government Task Force Balik-Loob, who said that his office will fulfill President Rodrigo Duterte's commitment to help rebel returnees.

"The pledges of our President are real. I would like to call on the remnants of the communist rebels to rejoin the mainstream society," he said.

Major Gen. Cirilito Sobejana, commander of the 6th Infantry Division, welcomed the latest NPA surrenderers.

"This is a welcome development in our campaign against the communist terrorists. It is a reflection of their renewed trust to our government as a whole," Sobejana said.

Since March 2017, almost 200 rebels have surrendered through the facilitation of the 33rd Makabayan battalion. The rebels operate in the Daguma Range that straddles Sultan Kudarat and Maguindanao.

6 NPA REBELS SURRENDER IN SULTAN KUDARAT

SIX communist rebels who are members of a defunct Guerilla Front 73 of New People's Army surrendered to authorities in Senator Ninoy Aquino,

Sultan Kudarat on Friday. A former communist, identified as Ka Loloy, brought five of his comrades to lay down their arms to the authorities to support the peace initiatives of the government. "We have learned about the social benefits of the E-CLIP (Enhanced Comprehensive Local Integration Program) and the assistance provided by the government to those who had surrendered earlier," Ka Loloy said. They turned over one caliber 30 Springfield rifle, a caliber 45 pistol, and three caliber 38 revolvers to the town's mayor Randy Eclja Jr. and Col. Robert Dauz, commander of the 1st Mechanized Infantry Brigade.

A7 **ROY D.R. NARRA**

Peace talks resolution endorsed

By BEN ROSARIO

The House Special Committee on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity has endorsed the adoption of a resolution urging President Duterte to reactivate peace negotiations with the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP).

Chaired by Tawi-tawi Rep. Ruby Sahali, the House panel wants Duterte to ensure completion of the comprehensive agreements on social, economic and political reforms that will lay the bases for a

“just and lasting peace.”

The still untitled resolution authored by Sahali came on the heels of the resignation of Secretary Jesus Dureza as Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process.

In her opening remarks during a committee hearing, Sahali lamented the resignation of Dureza, saying that she is duty-bound to express the sentiments of the people in seeking the resumption of the stalled peace talks.

Duterte has refused to return to the peace negotiating table as he strongly doubted the NDFP's sincerity in putting an end to its rebellion against the government. **A**

Pagpapatuloy ng peace talks, OK sa House panel

Inendorso ng House Special Committee on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity ang adoption ng resolusyon na humihikayat kay Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte na buhayin ang usapang pangkapayapaan sa pagitan ng National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP).

Sa pamumuno ni Tawi-tawi Rep. Ruby Sahali, nais ng House panel na tiyakin ni Duterte ang kumpletong comprehensive agreements sa social, economic at political reforms na magsisilbing pundasyon ng "just and lasting peace."

Ang hindi pa napapangalanang resolusyon, na isinulat ni Sahali, ay nabuo sa kasagsagan ng pagbibitiw ni Secretary Jesus Dureza bilang presidential adviser on the peace process.

Sa kanyang talumpati sa committee hearing kamakailan, sinabi ni Sahali ang pagbibitiw ni Dureza, sinabing siya ay duty-bound para ipahayag ang sentimiyento ng mga taong nagnanais na ituloy ang peace talks.

Ito ay co-authored nina Reps. Carlos Isagani Zarate (Bayan Muna); Teddy Brawner Baguilat, Jr. (LP, Iligao); Leopoldo Bataoil (NP,

Pangasinan); Bayani Fernando (PDI-Laban, Marikina City); Anthony Bravo (Coop-Natcco); Arlene Brusas (Gabriela Parylist); Ariel Casilao (Anakpawis); Emmanuel Billones (LP, Capiz); Eleonor Bulut-Begtang (LP, Apayao); Sabiniano Canama (Coop Natcco), at Lorna Bautista-Bandigan

(NUP, Davao Occidental).

"We can start by maintaining effective communication exchanges that strike at the very root of these peace negotiations," pahayag ni Sahali.

Ben R. Rosario

'Indoctrination in the guise of education'

By **AARON B. REQUIENCO**

The Philippine National Police (PNP) has accused former Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo and his companions of conducting anti-government indoctrina-

tion on lumad children in the guise of regular education.

PNP chief Director General Oscar Albayalde said that the group of Ocampo who were acting as teachers of lumad children were teaching their "students" a

different version of the national anthem.

"They set up a school in the area where they teach lumad children something that are way different from what should be taught in schools," said Albayalde.



Indoctrination in the guise... ◀1

Chief Supt. Marcelo Morales, director of the Southern Mindanao regional police, said not less than the parents of the children and the tribal leaders in Davao del Norte had confirmed the alleged indoctrination of the Ocampogroup.

"There were reports that the children were taught with false ideals at school, far from the mandates of the Department of Education. Also allegedly, these group are using the children to be with them to rally against the government," said Morales.

The lumads have been at the center of the clash between the government and communist rebels in the eastern part of Mindanao. Both the government and the

NPA have been trading accusations over the death of tribal leaders and other tribal members over the years.

Intelligence officials claim the lumad tribes in Davao and CARAGA regions have been the hotbed of rebel recruitment over the years—the reason why the NPA is strong in the eastern part of Mindanao.

Different story

As an anti-insurgency strategy in the past, some lumads were allegedly formed into paramilitary groups to fight recruitment and spread of communist insurgency in their ancestral lands.

This allegedly resulted in the death of

lumad tribal leaders and some members over the years.

Ocampo, ACT partylist Rep. France Castro and 16 others were charged in connection with the alleged abduction of lumad children on Thursday night in Davao del Norte.

The group of Ocampo was apprehended by police and military forces in a checkpoint. With them were lumad children, reportedly students of Salugpungan School in Talaingon town.

Ocampo's group alleged that they saved the non-resident students of Salugpungan because they reportedly had nowhere to go after the school was ordered closed by the tribal leaders. Salugpungan school was ordered closed by the education department.

They were about to transfer the students to another location when they were intercepted.

But tribal leaders and some residents have a different story. They said Ocampo's group took away the children without the consent of the parents.

Due process

Ocampo, Castro and 16 others are facing charges of child abuse, kidnaping and failure to return a minor. The Office the Provincial Prosecutor recommended an P80,000 bail for each of the 18 respondents.

Presidential spokesman Salvador Panelo assured that Ocampo and the other accused will be accorded their right to due process.

"Mr. Ocampo, together with all the accused, have been given 10 days to file their respective counter affidavits to refute the allegations against them. Hence, due process is being accorded them," he said.

"We advise Mr. Ocampo and his supporters to hold their horses. Rashly jumping into conclusions and engaging in propaganda war not only is unproductive but an attempt to resort to a trial by publicity against the government by those identified with the left," Panelo said.

"The rule of law must always prevail in a democracy. There is no room for shortcuts that impair the legal processes. Let the constitutional processes proceed without fear or favor," he added. (With a report from Genalyn D. Kabiling)

CEAP president says gov't should look into conditions of lumad schools

By **ANTONIO L. COLINA IV**

DAVAO CITY - Catholic Educational Association of the Philippines (CEAP) president Fr. Joel S. Tabora appealed to the government to look into the conditions of schools of indigenous peoples (IPDs), and verify allegations of their "illegal closure" and the transport of minors without parents' consent on Wednesday night.

In his statement, Tabora, who is also president of Ateneo de Davao University (ADU), said amid the conflicting claims of the government forces and the progressive groups, the IP, or lumad, students who only wish to continue with their education have become the "unfortunate victims" of the incident.

"As appears to be the sad norm in conflict ridden areas, it is our sisters and brothers in the indigenous com-

munities that get caught in the crossfire of warring forces," he said.

Joint forces of the police and the military's 56th Infantry Battalion blocked 75 individuals, including members of the National Solidarity and Fact Finding Mission, 29 students and 12 teachers of the Salugpongan Ta Tanu Igkanugon Community Learning Center (STTICLC), in Barangay Palma Gil, Talaingod, Davao del Norte. 13

Strange lessons at Lumad schools

By Kristina Maralit

Children of the Lumad tribal minority were being brought to schools which provide unusual or different lessons similar to where two leftist personalities were planning to bring a group of young students, the Philippine National Police (PNP) said yesterday.

Turn to page 2

orders from a Nueva Ecija Regional Trial Court (RTC) in July for murder charges. This, however, was overturned the following month.

Panelo called on their supporters not to use the arrest to engage in a "propaganda war" against President Rodrigo Duterte and his administration and just let the legal process take its course.

"There is no room for shortcuts that impair the legal processes. Let the constitutional processes proceed without fear nor favor," Panelo said.

The left-wing individuals have been detained at the police station in Talaingod, Davao del Norte since Wednesday evening after they were allegedly attacked by unidentified men.

Rescue mission?

An information from Castro indicated the National Solidarity Mission (NSM) joined by Castro and Ocampo was allegedly blocked by elements of the Philippine Army's 56th Infantry Battalion in Sitio Igang, Barangay Palma Gil at around 8

From page 1

Former partylist Bayan Muna Rep. Sarin Ocampo, ACT Teacher's partylist Rep. France Castro and 70 others, including 14 minors, were arrested in Davao del Norte for alleged human trafficking.

They were on board five vans when they were held at a checkpoint last 29 November.

Philippine National Police chief Director General Oscar Albayalde said Ocampo and Castro are bringing the young humans to a school where the national anthem is also "different."

"The children are being forced to enter those schools. 14 minors were found with them," he added.

Due process served

Presidential spokesman Salvador Panelo said the rule of law must always prevail as he urged Ocampo and his supporters to refrain from jumping into conclusion regarding his arrest.

"Mr. Ocampo, together with all the accused, has been given 10 days to file their respective counter-affidavits to refute the allegations against them, hence due process is being accorded them," Panelo said.

"Rashly jumping into conclusions and engaging in propaganda war not only is unproductive but also an attempt to resort to trial by publicity against the government by those identified with the Left," he added.

Ocampo and his companions were charged for allegedly violating the Anti-Trafficking of Persons Act (Republic Act 9208) and the Special Protection of Children Against Abuse, Exploitation and Distribution Act (Republic Act 7610).

Avoid propaganda

Ocampo is one of four left-leaning activists with standing arrest

p.m. of Wednesday.

According to Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) secretary general Renato Reyes, the whole humanitarian mission was held "on the pretext that the minors with them were traveling without permit."

"The context is that they had to rescue the students and teachers that night because their school was forcibly closed by a paramilitary group," Reyes said.

Ocampo said the military had accused communist rebels of recruiting new members from the Lumad school.

The rule of law must always prevail.

Ocampo, Castro and 17 others were charged on Thursday with trafficking and for allegedly holding minors during the said solidarity mission in Talaingod, Davao del Norte.

Joint mission

Albayalde said soldiers from the Armed Forces of the Philippines were part of the security forces during the arrest but the arresting officers were from PNP.

"If there will be complaints from the parents of the minors, Ocampo will have a major problem," Albayalde added.

The PNP chief welcomed the possible filing of counter charges by the camp of Ocampo and Castro against the PNP and AFP officers involved in their alleged harassment and detention.

"It's their right to file counter-charges according to law," Albayalde said.

Communists 'brainwashing' youth – DILG

INTERIOR Secretary Eduardo Año has denounced the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army (CPP-NPA) for "brainwashing" young Filipinos.

The statement came three days after former Bayan Muna congresswoman Satur Ocampo and Rep. Francisca Castro of Alliance of Concerned Teachers (ACT) party-list were arrested for alleged child trafficking in Davao del Norte.

Año said in a statement the CPP-NPA and their communist front organizations were brainwashing the Filipino youth to sympathize with them and fight the government "in guise of nationalism and humanitarian missions."

"We do not condone such reprehensible behavior against minors and condemn

► Youth A2

■ YOUTH FROM A1

Communists "brainwashing"

the communists and their allies for their sins against the youth such as kidnapping, child trafficking and other illegal treatment of children," the chief of the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) added.

Ocampo, Castro and 72 others were arrested in Talaingod, Davao del Norte, on November 28 for allegedly kidnapping 14 minors whom police said were made to form part of a "solidarity mission convoy."

According to the police, they arrested Ocampo and the others after tribesmen in the convoy complained that the former lawmaker and his companions were taking away their children to bring them to a *lumad* (indigenous people) school without the parents' permission.

Another ACT congressman, Antonio Tinio, said the Ocampo group was attacked by members of the paramilitary group known as Alamara.

Instead of arresting the attackers, the police brought members of the group to the Talaingod Police Station where they were detained, Tinio said.

Año said they "strongly con-

demn all forms of child trafficking and exploitation in the country and will make certain that all those guilty [of] these abhorrent acts against the vulnerable and innocent will face the full judgment of the rule of law."

Ocampo and his group are facing charges of child abuse, exploitation and discrimination under Republic Act 7610.

Ocampo's wife, Carolina Malay, decried the arrest of her husband and members of his group.

"My husband was doing what he believes to be right, the way the Duterte administration is going about governing, it really shows people the severe limitations of the system, it's exposing the deep flaws in our governance, can we see due process there?" Malay told *The Manila Times*.

Commission on Human Rights Chairman Chito Gascon supported Malay.

"We will coordinate with the lawyers, we call on the government to ensure that their rights as accused are being protected, and they are given the opportunity to present their case," Gascon said.

ROYD.R. NARRA
AND JOVEMOYA

Palace: Duterte won't militarize peace panel

MALACANANG has allayed fears of the government's critics that President Rodrigo Duterte might soon militarize the office of his adviser on the peace process as a result of the resignation of Jesus Dureza.

Palace spokesman Salvador Panelo was reacting to the warning of communist leaders Jose Maria "Joma" Sison and Satur Ocampo on the possibility of designating a military man to lead the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP).

"I'm surprised even that you are giving credit to Joma Sison. Joma Sison I think is living in a different world. He has lost touch with his men," Panelo said in an interview.

"He started with a beautiful concept but 50 years hence wala walang nangyayari, hindi na siya sinusunod ng mga tao niya (Nothing happens, even his own people do not follow him). Otherwise kung sinusunod siya, sama walang mga violations ng ceasefire (if they follow him, there would be no violations of ceasefire)," he added.

Sison, in a television interview, earlier said it was possible that Duterte would like the military to "take over" the OPAPP, beginning with the possible appointment of outgoing Armed Forces chief Carlito Galvez Jr., who expressed interest

■ MILITARIZE FROM A1

Palace: Duterte won't

in becoming a peace consultant when he retires.

He was chairman of the government's Committee on the Cessation of Hostilities before taking over as military chief.

"We surmise that Duterte would like the military, like the outgoing [Armed Forces] chief of staff Carlito Galvez, to take over OPAPP and militarize it," Sison said in an interview with ABS-CBN News Channel.

"The problem is when the military comes in, they impose conditions for the surrender of the New

People's Army (NPA)," he added.

The NPA is the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines, which Sison founded.

Ocampo, formerly an adviser to the communist rebels' negotiating panel, said replacing Dureza with a former military officer would be bad for possible resumption of peace talks.

"Peace negotiations where the military will have the last say is not going to result in an acceptable agreement," he added.

CATHERINE S. VALENTE

Mindanao based NPA rebels yield

By Kathleen Mae Bulquerin

Apparently realizing the futility of waging a losing insurgency war, more members of the New People's Army (NPA) are returning to the fold of the law, to benefit from the Enhanced Comprehensive Local Integration Program (E-CLIP) of the government.

This after another batch of rebels belonging to the NPA's Guerilla Front 7surrendered to government troops in Sultan Kudarat last Friday, and expressed their desire to return to normal civilian life.

Lt. Col. Harold Cabunoc, commander of the 33rd Infantry Battalion, said the six NPA rebels were led by Ka Loloy, 50, a resident of Esperanza, Sultan Kudarat.

Defense Undersecretary Reynaldo Mapagu, head of the Task Force Balik Loob for his part, said the rebels are realizing that the pledges of the President are real.

Cabunoc said the latest developments indicate that the military and initiatives of the government to win peace are succeeding because the rebels are realizing the sincerity of the national

leadership, to help and win them back.

"We have learned about the social benefits of the E-CLIP and the assistance that were provided by the government to those who had earlier surrendered" Ka Loloy said.

They also surrendered their firearms including caliber .30 Springfield Rifle, caliber 45 M1911 pistol, and three caliber .38 revolvers.

Defense Undersecretary Reynaldo Mapagu, head of the Task Force Balik Loob for his part, said the rebels are realizing that the pledges of the President are real.

"I would like to call on the remaining communist rebels to rejoin the mainstream society," he said.

Meanwhile, Maj. Gen. Cirilito Sobejana of 6th Infantry Division was pleased with the surrender of the rebels in Sultan Kudarat.

"This is a welcome development in our campaign against the communist terrorists. It is a reflection of their renewed trust to our government as a whole," he said.

To recall, last October 4, at least 18 NPA rebels belonging to "Yunit Milisya" also surrendered to government forces in Senator Ninoy Aquino, Sultan Kudarat.



Navy officer, nilikida

Nasawi noon din ang isang opisyal ng Philippine Navy matapos pagbaharilin ng isang smasabing hitman ng mga rebeldeng New People's Army habang pauwi ng kanyang tahanan sa Pio Duran, Albay, nitong Biyernes ng hapon.

Sa report ni Police Regional Office (PRO) V Director P/Chief Supt. Arnel Escobal, kinilala ang nasawing biktima na si Senior Chief Petty Officer Jesus Zaavedra, 55 taong gulang, at nakatalaga sa naval base sa lungsod ng Legaspi.

Sa ulat, dakong alas-4:10 ng hapon habang pauwi na ang biktima sa kanilang tahanan nang sunud-sunod na pagbaharilin ng suspek hanggang sa mapaslang sa isang lugar sa Brgy. Binodegahan sa bayang ito.

Nabatid naman kay Ensign Esteja Jane Sasil, Spokesperson ng Naval Forces Southern Luzon, ang biktima ay nakatakda na sanang magretiro sa serbisyo sa susunod na taon.

Nabatid na bago ang insidente ay nakatanggap ng death threat ang biktima mula sa grupo ng NPA rebels. *Joy Cantos*

7 ARMM students win in national, international contests

By **ALI G. MACABALANG**

COTABATO CITY - Seven students from the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) have won in different national and international competitions recently in what they described as a "result of the enhanced attention" of the Bangsamoro leaders on harnessing the potentials of resident school youths.

Yasser Malang of the Regional Science High School bested the 18-year and below category of the Southeast Asia Video Festival last November 24 in Manila, while Ricco Teraytay of the Camp Siongco National High School bagged a medal as finalist in the 2018 World Taekwondo Poomsae Championships on Nov. 15-18 in Taipei, Taiwan, the ARMM's Bureau of Public Information (BPI) announced on Thursday.

Five other victors, named only in a BPI statement as students of the Parang National High School, bagged the grand championship prize in the national Science Investigatory Project competition on Nov. 16 in Olongapo City.

ARMM Education Sec. Rasol Mitmug Jr. tendered a thanksgiving gathering for the seven students, who will likely become recipients of scholarships under the Maguindanao Program on Education Assistance and Community Empowerment of Governor Esmail Mangudadatu.

"I'm equally proud of the seven students because they are all from Maguindanao," Mangudadatu said.

At the sidelines of the recent celebration here of the 29th ARMM foundation anniversary, Malang presented his 15-minute video entitled "Super Guro" that earned for him the championship in children category of the Southeast Asian Video Festival in Manila last Nov. 24.

Malang's video footage depicted the resilience of a Moro teacher in hiking daily more than two kilometers of muddy road in a secluded rural school at barangay Landasan in Parang, Maguindanao just to teach in his classroom

for mostly Muslim elementary pupils.

"In my search of a subject for the contest theme - "Everyday's Hero," I chose and filmed a teacher known for his routine sacrifices for the future of children in a remote village. I am glad I made the right decision, not only for the contest award but because I believe that no people can turn professionals without teachers," Malang said in Filipino.

Malang's words drew resounding applause from audience, some of them clapping in between tears. The audience included dozens of active and retired teachers led by former education secretaries in ARMM, Dr. Janina Tito, Udtog Kawit and Baratocal Caudang. 13

Clan war displaces hundreds in NoCot-Maguindanao border

PIKIT, North Cotabato (PNA) — Police said a farmer was killed while six others were injured in a series of clashes involving Moro families at the border of North Cotabato and Maguindanao here on Thursday and Friday.

The violence also sent hundreds of families fleeing to safety, according to Chief Insp. Theng Bacal, Pikit police chief.

Pikit Mayor Sumulong Sultan said the municipal disaster risk reduction and management council office quickly attended to the needs of the displaced families.

"The affected areas are Barangay Kabasalan in Pikit, North Cotabato and Barangay Darampua in Sultan sa Barongis, Maguindanao, where some 300

families evacuated to safer grounds due to the fighting," Sultan said.

The families locked in the conflict were from the Kusain-Saligan and the Hadji-Nasser. Both have relatives who belong to the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the outlawed Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters, police said.

Both clans have for months been sporadically trading shots in Kabasalan, Pikit and Darampua, Sultan sa Barongis due to a land dispute.

Tahira Kalantongan, Pikit's MDRRMC officer, said the MILF has already sent emissaries to the warring clans "for them to stop firing guns and allow civilians to return home."

Kalantongan said town officials were already facilitating the return of the dis-

placed families as of posting time.

Family feud is one of the major concerns of the MILF that needs immediate attention once it assumes leadership of the expanded Bangsamoro political entity in Muslim Mindanao.

Through the Bangsamoro Organic Law, the MILF will soon take over the helm of the proposed Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) that will replace the current Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). (J)

INDOMALPHI completes maritime exercise

Ships from the navies of the Philippines, Indonesia and Malaysia have completed the fourth day of their trilateral maritime exercise on Saturday.

The maritime patrol exercise is under the Trilateral Cooperative Arrangement signed in 2017 in response to a series of kidnappings of foreigners by the Abu Sayyaf Group and its affiliates.

The exercise was aimed at enhancing their respective security and defensive capabilities while preventing piracy and abductions in their common maritime

borders.

In yesterday's trilateral security exercise, the three navies completed their combined maritime patrol and training activities.

The participating vessels were KRI SURA 802 of Tentara Nasional Indonesia-Angkatan Laut (TNI-AL), KDI FARI 3510 of Royal Malaysian Navy (RMN) and BRP General Mariano Alvarez (PS39) of the Philippine Navy.

They conducted several naval ship executions such as officer on watch maneuver, flashing lights and communications interoperability exercises as they sailed from Zamboanga to Tawi Tawi.

The trilateral event includes demonstration, day tour and sports activities involving the three navies.

All the activities were held in the area of Western Mindanao Command Headquarters in Zamboanga City.

The maritime patrol exercise is under the Trilateral Cooperative Arrangement signed in 2017 in response to a series of kidnappings of foreigners by the Abu Sayyaf Group and its affiliates.

The groups operate in waters along the common borders in the southern Philippines, a sea passage through which 16,000 international vessels and \$14 billion in goods pass annually.

KMB

Editorial

Never should children be caught amid warring forces

THE ARREST of former Bayan Muna party-list representative Satur Ocampo and ACT Teachers' party-list Rep. Francisca Castro comes as a shock to the public, despite the constant back and forth of accusations between the government and military on one hand, and the leftist or progressive movement on the other.

People were surprised at the nature of the charges leveled against Ocampo, Castro and their companions — human trafficking and kidnapping.

Ocampo, Castro and their party were apprehended at a checkpoint in Talaingod, Davao del Norte on Wednesday, allegedly with a group of 14 Lumad minors. The minors were supposedly students of the Salugpungan Learning Center, a Lumad school.

The group was on a "solidarity mission" to check on the plight of Lumad children. According to the activists, the school was allegedly shut down by a paramilitary group on suspicion that communists were using it to brainwash the Lumad children into rebelling against the government.

We harbor no illusions that the leftists running the school are teaching a standard curriculum. We do not swallow hook, line and sinker the Left's line that there is no brainwashing happening in the school. But it is also hard to accept fully the military's statement that the progressives are carrying out massive abuse of the Lumad children.

"Ka Satur" Ocampo, 79, is a familiar figure — a politician, activist, journalist, writer, a former *The Manila Times* journalist. He co-founded the National Democratic Front of the Philippines with Jose Maria Sison. He also founded Bayan Muna and led it in three successful elections in 2001, 2004 and 2007. He continues to march on the streets as an activist despite his advanced age.

Castro is an advocate for teachers, with an electoral mandate to pursue legislation on their behalf. Neither of them is known as a child trafficker or kidnapper. They were only invited to join the solidarity mission, according to the organizers. Thus, they should not, at the very least, be held to account for the entire conduct of the activity.

Their arrest on the spot at the Talaingod checkpoint has raised public curiosity over the fact it was carried out without a warrant. What the police had were alleged complaints by parents and tribal leaders.

The government and military's issue is with how the Lumad schools are run. Philippine National Police spokesman Chief Supt. Benigno Durana Jr. claimed, as reported, that the Salugpungan learning school, which is not accredited by the Department of Education, only served as a recruitment center for the Communist Party of the Philippines and its armed wing, the New People's Army.

Due process now requires Ocampo's group to be brought to public prosecutors and be allowed to freely refute the charges against them with the assistance of their counsels.

It is unfortunate that the Lumad people and their children are caught in a tug of war between the military and the Left. What seems to be forgotten here is the welfare, livelihood, health and education of the Lumad.

Both sides are to blame for making them pawns in a political struggle, rather than a people with self-determination and a free hand to chart their own destinies.

Editorial

Mandatory ROTC, no way!

BALAK ibalik ang Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) sa Grade 11 and 12. Ito ang malnit na isyu ngayon makaraang ipahayag ni President Duterte noong nakaraang linggo na mag-isyu siya ng Executive Order para maibalik ang ROTC kapag hindi kumilos ang Kongreso ukol dito. Noong nakaraang taon pa iginigiit ng Presidente na maibalik ang ROTC sa mga pribado at pampublikong eskwelahan.

Layunin ng Presidente sa pagbabalik ng ROTC ay para madisiplina ang kabataan na tingin niya ngayon ay nawalan na ng pagmamahal sa bansa. Isa pang dahilan ay upang maihanda ang mga ito para maipagsanggalang ang seguridad ng bansa. Kung maisasalalim umano sa ROTC ang mga kabataan, mangingibabaw sa mga ito ang pagiging makabayan.

Sinuportahan ng Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) ang pagbabalik sa mandatory ROTC pero nangangamba rin sila na ang pagbabalik nito ay maging dahilan ng paglabag sa karapatang pantao. May pangamba rin na ang pagbabalik ng ROTC sa campus ay maging dahilan muli ng pang-aabuso at hazing sa kadete. Pinangangambahan din ang muling pamamayagpag ng corruption kapag ibinalik ang ROTC.

Binuwag ang ROTC noong 2001 kasunod ng karumal-dumal na pagpatay sa UST cadet na si Mark Welson Chua. Pinalay si Chua ng mga kapwa kadete makaraang isiwalat nito ang korapsyon sa UST-ROTC unit na nilathala sa *The Varsity*, student paper ng unibersidad. Pagkaraang patayin, ibinalot sa carpet ang katawan ni Chua at itinaon sa Ilog Pasig. Nadakip ang mga pumatay at hinatulan ng habambuhay na pagkabilanggo.

Huwag ibalik ang mandatory ROTC. Hayaan na lamang ang mga estudyante na mamili kung nais nilang kumuha nito o hindi. Hindi lang naman sa pagkuha ng ROTC makikita ang pagiging makabayan. Hindi lang ito ang paraan para madisiplina ang mga kabataan. Huwag nang dagdagan pa ang pasanin ng mga estudyante sa pagkuha ng ROTC na wala rin namang naiduduiot kung tutuusin sapagkat pagmamartsa lamang ang naituturo na mali-mali pa ang mga hakbang.

ONLINE NEWS

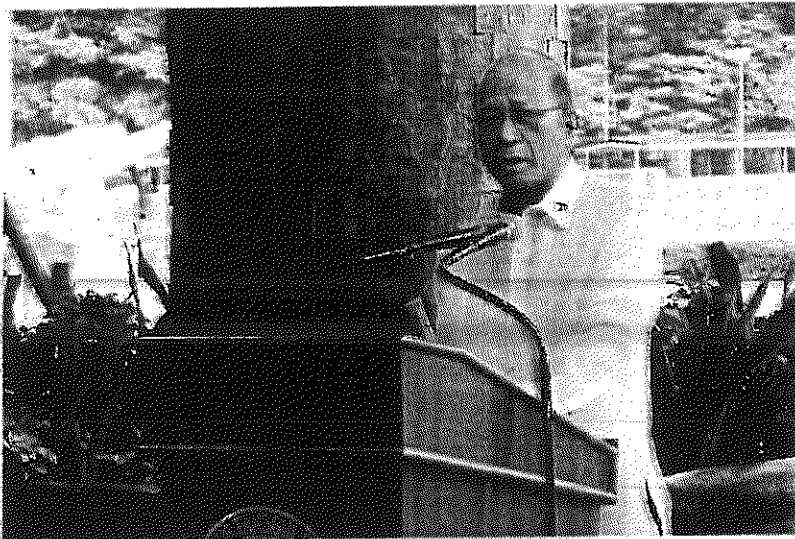
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Lorenzana says they will create another military division to send to Sulu

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said that they will create another military division to send to Sulu to once and for all rid the province of the terrorist Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG).

In an interview, Lorenzana said they will recruit more people to fill up the division and fulfill the mission of eradicating Sulu of the terrorist group.



Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana (photo courtesy of the Office of the Secretary of National Defense)

"We are going to create another division. We will have permanent presence in Sulu and eliminate once and for all the Abu Sayyaf," Lorenzana said.

"We are going to recruit more people for that division," he added.

President Rodrigo Duterte announced on Tuesday the imminent troop movement after expressing dismay with the violent clash between government forces and the Abu Sayyaf bandits in Patikul, Sulu several days ago.

The encounter, which left five soldiers dead and several others wounded, was considered a "flashpoint" by the President.

"We visited a wake at Cauayan. I was with (Defense) Secretary (Delfin) Lorenzana and

(Interior and Local Government) Secretary (Eduardo) Año. I talked to them and complained about why so many of my soldiers in Jolo are dying,” he said during a visit to a military camp in Bohol.

“By December 1, I told Secretary Lorenzana, ‘I want one division there’ so I will provide you with a Glock and three magazines,” he told the government troops.

The planned troop movement to Sulu comes amid the President’s decision to deploy more soldiers and cops to some parts of the country where incidents of lawless violence were reported.

Duterte earlier issued Memorandum Order No. 32 directing additional troops to the provinces of Samar, Negros Oriental, Negros Occidental, and the Bicol region to prevent the spread of violence.

The government forces have also been reminded to respect the constitutional rights of persons in performing their duty.

“No civil or political rights are suspended during the existence of a state of national emergency on account of lawless violence,” the order read.

Lorenzana, in the same interview, said it’s necessary to send additional forces in Samar, Negros Oriental, Negros Occidental and Bicol to prevent Communist New People’s Army Terrorists (CNTs) from further committing terrorist attacks in those provinces.

He also admitted that the enemy still is a force to be reckoned with in those areas, thus the need for troop deployment.

Earlier, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) announced that two battalions of soldiers were already deployed to Samar to fulfill its mission of stopping the attacks by the CNTs.

“The NPA keeps doing things like burning, killing people so this is a preemptive thing para masugpo sila (to stop them. We can pursue our build, build, build program,” Lorenzana said.

“Remember they burned the equipment of the contractors in the... so they are still there..And as per the information of the mayor of Legazpi there are still NPA collecting money, extorting money from businessmen,” he added.

Lorenzana said the movement of troops will only be temporary to help troops on the ground.