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**04 December 2018**

**Tuesday**



***Honor. Patriotism. Duty***

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# PALACE: IT'S A GO FOR FUEL TAX HIKE

The presidential spokesperson says economic managers have their reasons in withdrawing their initial recommendation to suspend the fuel tax increase, which amounts to P2.24 a liter—P2 excise and 24 centavos value-added tax.

By Julie M. Aurelio,  
Jovic Yee and  
Christine O. Avendaño  
@Team\_Inquirer

Malacañang is supporting the decision of government eco-

nomie managers to push through with the second round of fuel tax increases next month.

Presidential spokesperson Salvador Panelo said the economic managers had their rea-

sons in withdrawing their initial recommendation to suspend the fuel tax increase amid rising inflation.

"I'm sure they have basis to make that recommendation. They are competent and able to

explain themselves to the lawmakers," Panelo said at a press briefing on Monday.

Labor groups assailed Malacañang's backing of the economic managers' proposal to reimpose the second round

of the tax on fuel, saying it was proof of its "low regard" for the poor who are most affected by the administration's tax policies.

Last week, Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez III, Bud-

get Secretary Benjamin Diokno and Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Ernesto Pernia recommended the continuation of the next round of taxes.

They cited the recent decrease in crude prices as

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the reason for withdrawing their previous recommendation to suspend the next round of fuel tax increase.

President Duterte said on Monday night that he would hold a Cabinet meeting on Tuesday to discuss the recommendation to push through with the next round of increase in fuel tax.

Mr. Duterte told reporters to just wait for the outcome of the meeting, which will arrive at a consensus on the matter.

Asked whether there would be a decision on Tuesday, the President said: "Not necessarily. But I hope we can resolve it in the Senate."

He underscored the need for his economic managers to speak about the impact of the fuel tax on government projects and "the lack or sufficiency of mon-

ey in government to go on with the projects."

### P2 excise, 24 cents VAT

The Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion (TRAIN) Act imposes an additional tax of P2.24 a liter for diesel and gasoline, consisting of P2 excise and 24 centavos value-added tax (VAT), starting on Jan. 1.

An excise of P2.50 a liter was slapped on diesel and bunker fuel this year. This would go up to P4.50 in 2019 and P6 in 2020.

Excise on gasoline rose from P4.35 a liter to P7 in 2018, P9 in 2019 and P10 in 2020.

### Dubai crude price

Under the TRAIN law, the imposition of fuel taxes can be suspended if prices of Dubai crude exceed \$80 a barrel for three consecutive months.

Dubai crude as of Nov. 29 trading was fetching \$65.59 a barrel, down 28 percent from



**'LOW REGARD FOR WORKERS'** Despite declining gas prices, labor groups say the government's insistence on a second round of fuel tax shows its low regard for the welfare of the poor people affected by the tax policy. —GRIG C. MONTEGRANDE

\$84.12 on Oct. 3.

On Sunday, Sen. Sherwin Gatchalian, chair of the Senate economic affairs committee, said the passage of the 2019 na-

tional budget might be delayed if the economic managers would proceed with the next tranche of fuel taxes.

Three other senators have

warned that raising fuel taxes in 2019 might result in a new wave of inflation.

Asked to comment, Panelo said Gatchalian was only one of the 24 senators in the upper chamber and that the "passage of the budget would again depend on the call of members of Congress."

"His opinion or observation may not be shared by the 23 others," he said.

### Breathing space

The Nagkaisa labor coalition said suspending the second round of the fuel tax would have provided the poor breathing space after suffering from the high cost of basic commodities and services over the past few months.

"Pushing for its implementation depicts this government low regard for the welfare of the poor people affected by its tax policy that burdens them more," Nagkaisa spokesperson

Rene Magtubo said.

The group earlier blamed the high inflation rate, which reached a nine-year-high of 6.7 percent in September and October, to the fuel tax.

The Associated Labor Unions-Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (ALU-TUCP) said the government should not push through with the imposition of the additional tax as workers had yet to recover from the impact of this year's high inflation rate.

ALU-TUCP spokesperson Alan Tanjusay said a new round of fuel tax increases "will directly impact his (Mr. Duterte's) candidates in next year's midterm elections."

Sentro secretary general Josua Mata said he was not surprised by the economic managers' decision.

"Cloistered in their rich men's world, they no longer are capable of empathizing with the lot of the working people," Mata said. **INQ**

# 'Pardon for Kian killers? Only in a billion years'

December 2018

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BY ALEXIS ROMERO

## Duterte: I don't protect murderers

one million years from now, one billion years it would be OK," Duterte said.

On his previous statements, he clarified, "What I said was I will defend to death my soldiers and policemen if they commit acts which would be considered criminal but done in the performance of their duties. I won't leave them, otherwise my soldiers and police-

Duterte said his promise of protection covers only law enforcers who are "in the performance of their duties."

On Nov. 29, the Caloocan City Regional Trial Court (RTC) Branch 125 found Police Officer 3 Arnel

Turn to Page 2

The three police officers convicted of murdering teenager Kian Loyd Santos in a supposed anti-drug operation in Caloocan City will not get a pardon, President Duterte assured the public yesterday.

"Of course not. Maybe (in)

## Pardon

From Page 1

Autopsy results showed that Delos Santos sustained fatal gunshot to the head while he was on the ground kneeling and turning away from police.

Some sectors fear that Duterte will pardon the policemen, noting that the President had vowed to protect law enforcers involved in the war on drugs.

Autopsy results showed that Delos Santos sustained fatal gunshot to the head while he was on the ground kneeling and turning away from police.

Some sectors fear that Duterte will pardon the policemen, noting that the President had vowed to protect law enforcers involved in the war on drugs.

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## Pardon From Page 2

But Duterte said he would not defend those who violated the law.

Malacañang described the guilty verdict as a "triumph of justice," saying the court ruling proved that the justice system in the Philippines is working.

### Illegal search

The legal woes of Cruz and

Pereda are far from over as they face arraignment today - this time for violation of domicile and illegal search.

Caloocan Metropolitan Trial Court Judge Gloria Santos Jr. earlier found probable cause to try Cruz and Pereda for violation of domicile filed against them by Delos Santos' parents when they allegedly conducted a search of the household

without the owners' consent after accosting the teenager.

The policemen and their asset, Renato Loveraz, were found guilty of shooting Delos Santos during an anti-illegal drug sweep. Loveraz remains at large.

The domicile charge was refiled before the lower trial court last March after Caloocan RTC Judge Rodolfo Azucena Jr. dismissed the case for lack of jurisdiction.

In the domicile charge, Cruz

and Pereda were accused of entering the Delos Santos house without consent after Loveraz tagged the teenager as a drug runner, an allegation the family has denied.

The police officers also allegedly pointed their guns at Delos Santos' siblings while they were conducting an unwarranted search.

In a commitment order dated Dec. 3, Azucena ordered the three policemen to serve their life sentence at the New Bilibid

Prison in Muntinlupa City.

Sen. Leila de Lima described as "false and illogical" the claim of Public Attorney's Office chief Persida Acosta that there are no state-sponsored killings following the conviction of the three policemen for the death of Delos Santos.

De Lima made the statement after Acosta said the verdict handed down by the court on the policemen proved that there are no extrajudicial killings in relation to the ad-

ministration's war on drugs.

The senator said the conviction of the police officers "does not make the more than 23,000 summary executions committed by police and vigilante death squads any less state-sanctioned killings."

De Lima also called for the creation of an independent commission to look into the alleged police complicity in the killing of Delos Santos. -

With Marc Jayson Cayabyab, Cecille Suerte Felipe

## AFP, PNP back another year of ML

By MICHAEL PUNONGBAYAN

To make a "significant dent on terrorism," the military will recommend to President Duterte another year-long extension of the implementation of martial

law in Mindanao.

Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr., Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) chief, said local government units, regional peace and order councils and other agencies, including the Commission on

Elections (Comelec), are supporting the move.

He added that there is actually a clamor for such extension for at least one more year, considering the continuing threat "lurking"

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# AFP From Page 1

in Mindanao.

"We have recommendations already. We will be recommending... so that we can substantially make a significant dent on terrorism," Galvez told reporters in an interview in Camp Aguinaldo yesterday morning.

To prove that there is still a threat of terrorism in the entire island, Galvez cited the bombing incidents in the provinces of Basilan and Maguindanao, and in Isulan town in Sultan Kudarat and General Santos City.

"So there is really a need to constrict and limit the maneuver space of the terrorists to the maximum. We have a very weak terrorism law. So with that, martial law is needed to completely defeat terrorism," Galvez said.

The AFP recommendation for another year of martial law in Mindanao, he added, would be submitted to Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana and the new AFP chief by Dec. 12 — the day he retires from military service.

He stressed that the military's position would be to continue the implementation of martial law only in the Mindanao regions.

Philippine National Police (PNP) chief Director General Oscar Albayalde said the PNP is one with the AFP in seeking an extension, adding that this would greatly ensure peace and order in the coming plebiscite for the Bangsamoro Organic Law and the midterm elections in May next year.

Presidential spokesman Salvador Panelo said Duterte might be persuaded to seek another extension because of the support shown by various sectors, including the citizens of Mindanao, for the proposal.

"The President will always evaluate whatever recommendations the AFP and the PNP will give him. But given the support of martial law in Mindanao, even by a Catholic bishop and the citizens there, the President may be per-

suaded to grant, to approve their recommendation. But of course, again, that is the prerogative of the President," Panelo said at yesterday's press briefing.

The 1987 Constitution permits the president to impose martial law for up to 60 days, which can be extended by Congress "if the invasion or rebellion shall persist and public safety requires it."

But for Anak Mindanao party-list Rep. Maknood Mending, the AFP should first organize a briefing for the Senate and the House of Representatives to apprise their members on the need to extend anew martial law in Mindanao.

Senate President Vicente Sotto III said senators would most likely seek a full security briefing to make an intelligent decision on the recommendation.

He added that he is open to calling for a special session to decide on the matter should Duterte request for one. An extension requires the approval of Congress in joint session.

Duterte first placed the entire Mindanao under martial law on May 23, 2017 after Islamic State-linked terrorists laid siege to Marawi City. Close to 1,000 terrorists and more than 160 soldiers died in that incident, the longest urban war in the country since World War II.

Congress has already extended the military rule in Mindanao twice. The first extension lasted until Dec. 31, 2017 while the second will lapse at the end of the year.

Some religious leaders, including Ozamiz Archbishop Martin Jumoad, are supportive of martial law extension, saying the military rule had reduced crime and enforced discipline among the people of Mindanao.

Activists and left-leaning groups do not share that assessment though, as they worry that an extension will lead to more human rights violations and abuses. — **With Alexis Romero, Paolo Romero, Delon Porcalla, Edu Punay, Romina Cabrera**

## PALACE EVALUATING RECOMMENDATIONS

# MILITARY, POLICE MAY PERSUADE PRESIDENT TO EXTEND MARTIAL LAW IN MINDANAO—PANELO

By Julie M. Aurelio  
and Marion Ramos  
@Team\_Inquirer

President Duterte may be swayed by the recommendation of the military and the police to extend the imposition of martial law in Mindanao beyond Dec. 31, Malacañang said on Monday.

Presidential spokesperson Salvador Panelo said the President would "have to evaluate whatever recommendations" were given by the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the

Philippine National Police.

"Given the support [for] martial law in Mindanao, even by a Catholic bishop and the citizens there, the President may be persuaded to go on to approve the recommendation," Panelo said.

### President's prerogative

"But of course, again, that is the prerogative of the President," he added.

The Palace official made the remarks after AFP chief Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr. said the military was pushing for the exten-

sion of martial law in Mindanao for at least another year.

PNP Director General Oscar Albayalde said the police was also recommending the extension of military rule in the South beyond Dec. 31.

On May 23, 2017, Mr. Duterte declared martial law in Mindanao following the attack by the Maute terrorist group on Marawi City that lasted for five months.

Later that year, Congress approved the one-year extension of martial law in the region. It will expire at the end of 2018.

Panelo said the President would always consider the "safety of the people there" in evaluating the recommendations of the AFP and the PNP.

### Congress to decide

"If the threat remains and there is still an ongoing rebellion, then, constitutionally, the basis would be valid for the continuation of martial law," he said.

Malacañang, Panelo said, would leave to Congress whether to approve the extension of martial law in Mindanao should the President decide to

need the recommendation of the military and police.

But opposition lawmakers in the House of Representatives on Monday lambasted Galvez for recommending the extension of martial law.


Bayan Muna Rep. Carlos Zarate said he was no longer surprised with Galvez's decision as he knew that the military wanted martial law "ad infinitum."

"Truth to tell, this move to further extend martial rule can even be used to influence the elections in Mindanao and en-

sure the victory of administration bets," he said.

### Unconstitutional

Magdalo Rep. Gary Alejano warned that prolonging military rule was not only unconstitutional, but would also adversely affect the country's economy.

ACT Teachers Representatives Antonio Tinio and France Castro said extending martial law would only result in "more human rights violations and harassment by the military, paramilitary and the police." INQ 

# Martial law extension eyed

AFP recommending one more year of military rule in Mindanao due to clamor of stakeholders

By FRANCIS T. WAREFIELD

**O**utgoing Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Chief of Staff General Carlito Galvez Jr. Monday said the military will recommend a one-year extension of martial law in Mindanao.

Galvez said the military leadership made the decision following the recommendation submitted by Regional

Public Order Councils (RPOC), local government units (LGUs), and even the Commission on Elections (Comelec) and other agencies.

"We will be recommending, we will be recommending," Galvez told reporters following Monday's flag-raising ceremony in Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City.

"Yes. (For another year) so that we can substantially make ▶4

## Martial law extension...

◀1

significant... significant dent on terrorism," he added.

With the support from the military, police, and the residents of the region, Presidential spokesman Salvador Panelo said President Duterte might be "persuaded" to seek another extension of martial law in Mindanao.

Panelo said the President's main consideration for any martial law declaration would always be the safety of the people.

"Of course the President will always evaluate whatever recommendations the AFP (Armed Forces of the Philippines) and PNP (Philippine National Police) will give him but given the support of martial law in Mindanao, you have a Catholic bishop and the citizens there, the President maybe persuaded to grant the recommendation," Panelo said during a news conference in the Palace.

Galvez said extending martial law in Mindanao for another year will be their final position as there is really a clamor for its extension.

"Yun ang magiging ano, position namin (That will be our position) because there is really a clamor for the extension (of martial law) considering that terrorism is still lurking in the area," Galvez said.

The outgoing AFP Chief of Staff, who will retire from the military service at the age of 56 on December 12, 2018, cited the recent bombing in Basilan and encounters in Sulu as reasons for extending martial law.

"The Sulu problem still persists and also, we have also some bombings in Isulan and GenSan (General Santos) and also continuous bombing in Maguindanao. So there is really a need to constrict and limit the maneuver space of the terrorist to the maximum," Galvez said.

"We have a very weak terrorism law so with that, martial law is needed to completely defeat terrorism," he said.

Galvez said their recommendation to extend martial law in Mindanao will be submitted to the Secretary of National Defense (SND) Delfin Lorenzana.

He assured that martial law will not be extended to other parts of the country.

"And then most probably this (command) conference, this coming December 12 with the new Chief of Staff, we will be presenting the recommendation," Galvez said.

"Yes, it will not be expanded. It (martial law) will only be in Mindanao," he said. (With a report from Genalyn D. Kabilig)

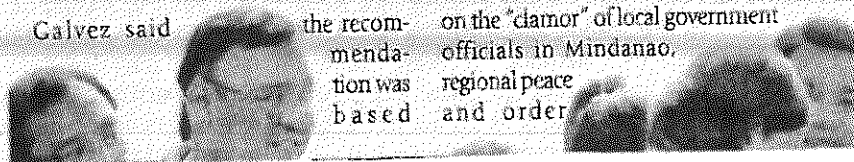
TO QUELL TERRORISM IN MINDANAO

# Military seeks 1-yr martial law extension

BY DEMPSEY REYES

**T**HE MILITARY is set to recommend another year of martial law in Mindanao, Armed Forces chief Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr. announced on Monday, citing the need to quell terrorists still "lurking" in the island.

Galvez said the recommendation was based on the "clamor" of local government officials in Mindanao, regional peace and order



councils and the Commission on Elections (Comelec).

"We will be recommending [another year for martial law]... so that we can substantially make a significant dent on terrorism," he told reporters in a chance interview after a flag-raising ceremony at Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon City.

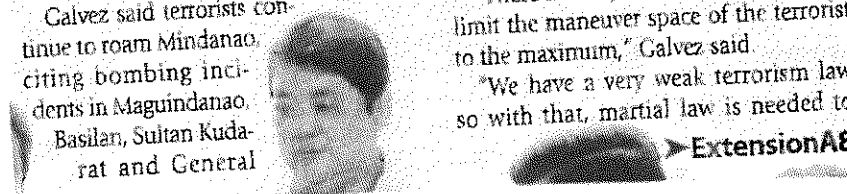
Galvez said terrorists continue to roam Mindanao, citing bombing incidents in Maguindanao, Basilan, Sultan Kudarat and General

Santos City, and the presence of the Abu Sayyaf group in Sulu.

He was referring to the deadly bombing in Lamitan City, Basilan which resulted in the deaths of 10 persons and wounding of seven others. This incident was followed by bombings in Isulan City, Sultan Kudarat and in General Santos City.

"There is really a need to constrict and limit the maneuver space of the terrorist to the maximum," Galvez said.

"We have a very weak terrorism law so with that, martial law is needed to



➤ Extension A8

■ EXTENSION FROM A1

## Military

completely defeat terrorism," he added.

The military chief had said terrorism was still a problem in the whole island despite the twice-extended martial law.

The recommendation will be presented by Galvez's successor during a command conference before Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana on December 12, or the day the military chief retires from service.

Philippine National Police chief Oscar Albayalde backed the military's move, saying martial rule would enable authorities to move against "lawless violence."

President Rodrigo Duterte declared martial law in Mindanao in May last year in response to the attacks made by the Islamic State-inspired Maute group in Marawi City, which lasted for five months.

Duterte issued Proclamation 216, placing the entire Mindanao under military rule.

The declaration was good for only 60 days but was extended by Congress until the end of 2017. The legislative branch further extended it until the end of 2018.

### Palace: Duterte 'may be persuaded'

The President "may be persuaded" to approve the recommendation of the military and police to extend martial law in Mindanao for at least one year, Malacañang said on Monday.

"Given the support of martial

law in Mindanao, even by a Catholic bishop and the citizens there, the President may be persuaded to go on to approve the recommendation. But of course, again, that is the prerogative of the President," Palace spokesman Salvador Panelo said.

Panelo said Duterte would consider the safety of the people in Mindanao in deciding whether or not to extend martial law in the south.

"Well, the basis *palagi* (always) would be the safety of the people there. If the threat remains and there is still an ongoing rebellion, then, constitutionally, the basis would be valid for continuation of martial law," Panelo said.

But the Palace official said it would still be up to Congress to heed the recommendation and extend military rule in Mindanao.

"Again, the Constitution grants them the authority to decide whether or not it will extend martial law. So we'll leave it to them," Panelo said.

House Majority Leader Rolando Andaya Jr. said the recommendation of the Armed Forces and the national police to extend the martial law in Mindanao for another year would likely push through once President Duterte backs it up.

"If the President will ask for it, then chances are it shall be given," Andaya said.

"The concurrence will be expedited if the military and the police will renew their commitment to respect the constitutional rights of every individual in the territory covered by the declaration,"

said the lawmaker from Camarines Sur.

WITH CATHERINE S. VALENTE  
AND GLEE JALEA

# ML plus 1 looms

*Terror  
still lurks*

**By Kristina Maralit  
and Hananeel Bordey**

After both the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Philippine National Police (PNP) indicated favoring a one-year extension of martial law in Mindanao, the Palace said President Rodrigo Duterte will likely seek it while the House gave an assurance that it will be granted.

Mr. Duterte said he is waiting for the recommendation to study it.

"The papers have not yet been submitted to me. The issue has not been raised. It might be (raised) during the Cabinet

**Turn to page 2**

Our position was based on a clamor for the extension considering that the terrorism is still lurking in the area

#### **From page 1**

meeting," the President said at the sidelines of the conferment of the Quezon Service Cross on the late Sen. Miriam Defensor Santiago.

"It will depend on the recommendation of the military and the police. They are the guys on the ground," Mr. Duterte said on the possibility of his seeking an extension.

Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) chief Gen. Carlito Galvez said the extension of martial rule for another year, the third time it will be stretched, is needed because of the "lurking" threat of terrorism.

He said the military's recommendation for a one-year extension would be forwarded anytime soon to Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana, who will then submit the proposal to Mr. Duterte.

**Concurrence will be expedited if the military and the police will renew their commitment to respect the constitutional rights of every individual in the territory covered by the declaration.**

"We have recommendation already... everybody — the local government units and even the Comelec (Commission on Elections) and other agencies are recommending for an extension of at least one year," said Galvez.

"Our position was based on a clamor for the extension considering that the terrorism is still lurking in the area," he added.

House Majority Floor Leader Rolando Andaya said the House

will support an extended martial law as long as Mr. Duterte asks for it.

#### **It shall be given**

"If the President will ask for it, then chances are it shall be given," Andaya said.

"The concurrence will be expedited if the military and the police will renew their commitment to respect the constitutional rights of every individual in the territory covered by the declaration," he added.

The lawmaker said that the inputs and views of the representatives of districts in Mindanao "will carry much weight during the deliberations."

**The President may be persuaded to grant to approve the recommendation.**

Philippine National Police (PNP) chief Dir. Gen. Oscar Abayalde said the PNP's position is consistent in that martial law in Mindanao is still needed.

Presidential spokesman Salvador Panelo said Mr. Duterte will "always evaluate whatever recommendations that the AFP and PNP will give him," but given the situation in the region and the views of the military and the police, "the President may be persuaded to grant to approve the recommendation."

Panelo said that the safety of the people in Mindanao will be Duterte's basis in making his decision.

Military rule in Mindanao expires at the end of the year. The region was placed under martial law in May 2017 after Islamic State (IS)-inspired terrorists laid siege on Marawi City that lasted for five months.

It was extended by Congress on 29 July to 31 December 2017. A second extension, this time for a full year, was granted by both chambers on 13 December 2017.

#### **Limiting terror space**

"There is a need to constrict

and limit the maneuver space of the terrorists to the maximum. We have a very weak terrorism law, so with that martial law is needed to completely defeat the terrorism," Galvez said.

The AFP chief, however, stressed that the military's recommendation is limited to Mindanao only.

"It will not be expanded, it will only be in Mindanao," he said.

Apart from the threat from terrorists, Galvez also cited the upcoming midterm elections in May 2019 as among the factors in the military recommendation.

#### **Consultations set**

Should Mr. Duterte accede to the security cluster's recommendations, he will once again course it through the House of Representatives and the Senate who, Panelo said, are the sole authorities to approve or turn down the proposed extension of military rule in Mindanao.

"Again, the Constitution grants them the authority to decide whether or not it will extend martial law. So, we'll leave it to them," the Palace official stated.

**There is a need to constrict and limit the maneuver space of the terrorists to the maximum.**

Senate President Vicente Sotto III have previously said Malacañang must be able to present strong, convincing arguments before the Upper and Lower Houses for lawmakers to yield to another request of extending martial law.

Galvez cited recent bombing attacks in Basilan, Isulan, Maguindanao and General Santos City and the encounter in Sulu as indications that the problem of terrorism still persists.

**With Kathleen Mae Buiquerin, Mario J. Mallari**



# Military wants 1-year extension of martial law

BY VICTOR REYES  
and JOCELYN MONTEMAYOR

THE military will recommend to President Duterte a one-year extension of martial law being implemented in Mindanao, Armed Forces chief Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr. said yesterday.

"We will be recommending (the one-year extension) so that we can substantially make a dent on terrorism... That is our position because there is really a clamor for the extension considering that

terrorism is lurking in the area," he said.

Galvez also noted that regional peace and order councils, local government units, the Commission on Elections, and other agencies which the military had consulted are also for the martial law extension.

The President, in a chance interview after an event in Malacañang, said he has yet to decide on the matter which he said will be discussed today during a Cabinet meeting in Malacañang.

Martial law is set to end on December 31.

Duterte declared martial law in Mindanao shortly after the Maute terror group occupied several barangays in Marawi City in May last year, leaving over a thousand terrorists and government troops dead.

The military rule has been twice extended by Congress, on the request of President, citing continuing threats from the terrorist groups. The last extension was in December last year.

House majority leader Rolando Andaya Jr. said the chamber will readily extend

martial law.

"If the President will ask for it, then chances are it shall be given," Andaya said.

Several senators have said another request for extension would be scrutinized.

PNP chief Albayalde last month said the PNP is for an extension of martial law. He said it is needed for the plebiscite for the Bangsamoro Organic Law plebiscite in Central Mindanao next month.

Galvez said there have been terror-

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## MILITARY

ist attacks recently in Mindanao, including the bombing in Lamitan City in Basilan, which left 11 persons dead, including a Moroccan bomber associated with the Abu Sayyaf.

"There is really a need to constrict and limit the maneuver space of the terrorists to the maximum. We have a very weak terrorism law... martial law is needed to completely defeat terrorism," he said.

Galvez said the recommendation will be submitted to the President, through Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana.

He said the recommendation will be tackled on December 12, during a command conference that will be presided by his still-to-be-named successor. Galvez is due to reach the mandatory retirement age of 56 on that day.

The President said his decision would depend on the recommendations of military and the police.

"They are the guys on the ground. I am here in Pasig River. I am not aware of the nitty gritty, happenings all over the country," he said that what he is sure of

is that lawless activities continue in some provinces like Negros and Bicol, where communist rebels are believed to have a stronghold.

Duterte also mentioned "Quezon City," which may have referred to Quezon province which is also a known stronghold of the New People's Army, the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines.

The President then joked he might have a clear decision after the "pot session" of the Cabinet.

Duterte, prior to the interview, said in a speech that he took marijuana to keep himself awake and active during hectic schedules for the Association of Southeast Asian Nation event last month. He later said it was a "joke" that only fools would believe to be true.

Justice Secretary Menardo Guevarra said any further extension of martial law "will depend on the continued existence of the factual basis for its proclamation, actual rebellion or invasion."

Guevarra also said his department has no role in the matter but it "may be called upon to help explain to Congress the legal and factual basis for any further

extension."

Andaya said congressional concurrence "will be expedited if the military and the police will renew their commitment to respect the constitutional rights of every individual in the territory covered by the declaration."

"The inputs and views of the congressmen from Mindanao, who represent the people directly affected, will carry much weight during the deliberations," he said.

AFP Chief Carlito Galvez Jr. said the AFP and the PNP will recommend Rep. Mackmod Mendig Jr. (PL, Anak Mindanao) said his vote on the possible extension will "depend on the threat assessment of Department of National Defense and AFP."

"Maybe it's time to call for a security briefing from them as well as an update on the implementation of the martial law," he said.

Rep. Robert Ace Barbers (NP, Surigao del Norte) said the government has to be able to justify the request "as a way of guaranteeing peace and security in the region.

Rep. Luis Raymond Villafuerte (NP, Camarines Sur), a vice chair of the committee on local government, said Congress should give

more weight to the inputs of the people in Mindanao in considering a request for extension.

"Mindanaoans are the ones experiencing what it's like to live under martial law for a year-and-a-half now, so they would have a better grasp of what is an acceptable option for them for continued peace and security," he said.

Left-leaning lawmakers fear an extension will only lead to more human rights violations and harassment by the military, paramilitary and the police.

Rep. Antonio Tiño (PL, ACT) said martial law in Mindanao "has been used to terrorize and harass innocent civilians, human rights defenders, humanitarian workers, Lumad communities, environmental advocates and activists."

Rep. France Castro (PL, Act Teachers), said "the only terrorism still lurking in the area is state terrorism, brought by elements of the AFP, paramilitary forces and the PNP that drive Lumad children out of their schools, illegally detain people without warrants of arrest, charge them with trumped-up cases and tag them as terrorists." — *With Wendell Vigilia and Ashzel Hachero*

# AFP backs ML extension; Duterte undecided

By Nat Mariano and Maricel V. Cruz

PRESIDENT Rodrigo Duterte on Monday said he has not decided yet on whether he will extend martial law in Mindanao, after receiving a recommendation from the Armed Forces that he do

"The papers have not yet been submitted to me. The issue has not been raised. It might be during the Cabinet [meet-

ing]," the President said in an ambush interview after the conferment of the Quezon Service Cross Award on the late Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

"It would depend on the recommendation of military and police. They are the guys on the ground. I am here in [the] Pasig River. I am not aware of the nitty-gritty happenings all over the country," he added.

The President said he knows rebels are active in some parts of the country, includ-

ing "Negros, then Bicol and Quezon City."

He did not elaborate on his statement, however.

The Palace said Duterte "may be persuaded" to approve the recommendation of the Armed Forces to extend martial law in Mindanao

Presidential Spokesman Salvador Panelo said Duterte would have to evaluate the recommendations given to him by the

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## AFP...

From A1

Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police

Panelo said the President might be convinced to further lengthen the duration of the martial rule in Mindanao given the public's support for its extension.

"Given the support of martial law in Mindanao, even by a Catholic bishop and the citizens there, the President may be persuaded to grant, to approve their recommendation," he said.

"But of course, again, that is the prerogative of the President."

The Palace official made the remark after AFP Chief Gen. Carlito Galvez said they moved for the extension of martial law due to the continuous bombings in several parts of the region.

"We have recommendations already because there is really a great clamor for the extension, considering that the terrorism is still lurking in the area. There is really

need to constrict, limit the maneuver space of the terrorist to the maximum," the outgoing AFP chief told reporters on Monday

PNP Chief Dir. Gen. Oscar Albayalde added that they already drafted the recommendation for "We are one with the Armed Forces of the Philippines. We are for the extension," he said in a separate press briefing.

Panelo said Malacañang would leave it to Congress to determine whether to approve the extension of martial law or not if the President recommends it.

"Again, the Constitution grants them the authority to decide whether or not it will extend martial law. So, we'll leave it to them," he said.

In May 2017, President Rodrigo Duterte put the entire Mindanao in martial law to fend off Islamic State-inspired terrorists during the Marawi siege.

In a bid to hold off extremism in the region, Congress then granted its extension twice in July and December 2017.

Unless it is extended, martial law in Mindanao will lose its effectivity on Dec.

31, 2018.

Galvez said the proposed extension is aimed at reducing or eliminating the threat of terrorism on the island.

Lawmakers on Monday urged government's security officials to provide Congress an update on the situation in Mindanao following the AFP and PNP recommendation to extend martial law.

At the same time, House Majority Leader Rolando Andaya Jr. expressed readiness on the part of the House of Representatives to grant an extension.

"If the President will ask for it, then chances are it shall be given," Andaya said.

"The concurrence will be expedited if the military and the police will renew their commitment to respect the constitutional rights of every individual in the territory covered by the declaration," he added.

Reps. Makmod Mending Jr. of Anak Mindanao Party-list, Luis Raymund Villafuerte of Camarines Sur, and Robert Ace Barbers of Surigao del Norte said they saw nothing wrong with an extension of martial law, if it is needed.

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## Martial law extension in South bucked

PARTY-list solons have expressed strong objection to the extension of martial law in Mindanao.

Akbayan Rep. Tom Villarin, ACT Teachers Rep. Antonio Tinio and Bayan Muna Rep. Carlo Isagani Zarate said there is no basis for the AFP to recommend another year of martial rule in the southern region.

According to Villarin, it is becoming a new normal and habit-forming for the military to take over civilian functions in addressing peace and order concerns.

"It is straining too much the constitutional limits and raison d'être of martial law. Since when has public clamor become a basis for imposing martial law? It's a

dangerous precedent and a militaristic mindset. Another extension is an admission that martial law has failed its objectives," Villarin said.

Villarin slammed the AFP for not providing Congress regular updates on the martial law in Mindanao.

"If the AFP and Department of National Defense (DND) return to Congress seeking another extension, they will have a lot of explaining to do other than bringing in public opinion surveys," Villarin said.

For Tinio, another extension and expansion of martial law will only lead to more human rights violations and harassment by the military, paramilitary and the police. **JPM**

## ML extension possible

MALACANANG is open to the possibility that President Rodrigo Duterte will push for a third extension of martial law in Mindanao, subject to Congress' approval.

Presidential spokesperson Salvador Panelo issued the remark yesterday after the Philippine National Police and Armed Forces of the Philippines affirmed their support for an extension with the military citing "lurking" threat of terrorism in the region.

AFP chief General Carlito Galvez Jr. said he would recommend to Duterte a one-year exten-

sion of martial law.

"The President will always evaluate whatever recommendations that the AFP and the PNP will give him," Panelo said at a news conference. "But given the support of martial law in Mindanao, even by a Catholic bishop and the citizens there, the President may be persuaded to grant, to approve their recommendation."

Panelo said public safety will be the primary consideration in deciding whether to push for another extension, which needed congressional concurrence.

"If the threat remains

and there is still an ongoing rebellion, then constitutionally the basis would be valid for continuation of martial law," he added.

The martial rule — declared on May 23 last year and extended twice already after securing majority support in Congress — is set to end on December 31, 2018.

The region was placed under martial rule following the attack of the ISIS-inspired Maute group on Marawi City, sparking a five-month battle that left more than 1,000 people dead, mostly terror fighters and displaced thousands of residents. EM

# Duterte may be 'persuaded' to extend ML in Mindanao

By GENALYN D. KABILING

President Duterte might be "persuaded" to seek another extension of martial law in Mindanao amid the support from the military, police, and residents of the region, Malacañang said yesterday.

Presidential spokesperson Salvador Panelo affirmed that the President's main consideration for any martial law declaration would always be the safety of the people.

"Of course, the President will always evaluate whatever recommendations the Armed Forces of the Philippines and Philippine National Police will give him but

given the support of martial law in Mindanao, you have a Catholic bishop and the citizens there, the President may be persuaded to grant to approve the recommendation," Panelo said during a news conference in Malacañang. "But of course, again that's the prerogative of the President," he added.

Asked about the President's considerations on the martial law proclamation, Panelo said: "The basis always will be the safety of the people there. If the threat remains and there is still an ongoing rebellion, then constitutionally the basis will be valid for continuation of martial law."

The military will reportedly recommend to the President the extension of martial law in Mindanao for another year reportedly to deal with lingering terror threats.

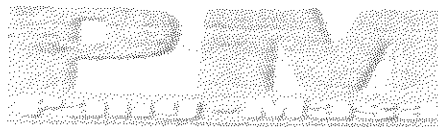
Outgoing Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr. said in Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City they made the decision following the recommendation submitted by Regional Public Order Councils, local government units, and even the Commission on Elections and other agencies.

"We will be recommending, we will recommending," Galvez told reporters. "Yes, for another year, so that we can substantially make

significant...significant dent on terrorism," he added.

Galvez said extending martial law in Mindanao for another year will be their final position as there is really a clamor for its extension. "Yun ang magiging ano, position namin because there is really a clamor for the extension of martial law considering that terrorism is still lurking in the area," Galvez said.

The outgoing AFP chief of staff, who will retire from the military at the age of 56 on Dec. 12, cited the recent bombing in Basilan and encounters in Sulu as reasons for extending martial law. **(with a report from Francis Wakefield)**



Rekomendasyon ng AFP kay Duterte...

MARTIAL LAW SA MINDANAO

PALAWIGIN

Inihayag ni Presidential Spokesman Salvador Panelo na posibleng palawigin pa ni Pangulong Rodrigo

Duterte ang pag-iral ng Martial Law sa Mindanao dahil sa may rekomendasyon ang Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP)

sa Pangulo para sa extension ng ML sa Mindanao. "The safety of the people in Mindanao is the basis of Duterte's

Nina RUDY ANDAL at JOY CANTOS

consideration on possible extension of martial law," dagdag ng presidential

spokesman.

Ayon kay AFP chief Carlito Galvez Jr., batay sa feedback ng iba't ibang ahensiya at sector mula sa Mindanao ay hinihiling nila ang patuloy na pag-iral ng Martial Law sa Mindanao.

Idineklara ng punong ehekutibo ang martial law

sa Mindanao noong Mayo 23, 2017 matapos naman ang Marawi City siege sa imbasik na terorismo ng Maute-Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terrorists kung saan ang krisis ay tumagal ng limang buwan.

Nasa 60 araw lamang ang martial law pero sa

pamamagitan ng botohan sa Kongreso noong Hulyo 22, 2017 ay pinalawig ito hanggang Disyembre 31, 2017 at muling pinalawig hanggang Disyembre 31, 2018 upang supilin ang rebelyon ng mga nalalabi pang terorista at pairalin ang peace and order.

## Inirekomenda ng AFP kay Digong **Martial Law, 1-year pa**

Posibleng palawigin pa ng isang taon ni Pangulong Duterte ang pag-iral ng Martial Law sa Mindanao matapos itong irekomenda ng Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP).

"The safety of the people in Mindanao is the basis of Duterte's consideration on possible extension of martial law," sabi ni Presidential Spokesman Salvador Panelo.

Ayon naman kay AFP chief Carlito Galvez, batay sa feedback ng iba't ibang ahensiya at sektor mula sa Mindanao ay hindi hingi ang patuloy na pag-iral ng Martial Law sa

**Nina RUDY ANDAL at JOY CANTOS**  
Mindanao.

"We have recommendations already, ang nakikita po namin ang lahat ng Regional Peace and Order Council (RPOC) and also the local government units and even the Comelec and other agencies are recommending for extension of at least one year," ani Galvez.

Ayon kay Galvez ang rekomendasyon ay kanilang isusumite kay Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana na siya namang magpapaabot nito sa Malacañang.

"There is really a clamor for the extension considering the terrorists are still lurking in the area," ani Galvez na sinabing hindi palalawigin ang martial law sa iba pang mga lugar sa bansa maliban sa Mindanao.

"The Sulu problem still persists and also, we have also some bombings in Isulan and General Santos and also continuous bombing in Maguindanao so there is really a need to constrict and limit the maneuver space of the terrorist to the maximum", ani Galvez.

"We have a very weak terrorism law so with that martial law is need to completely defeat terrorism (in the region)," sabi pa

ng Chief of Staff.

Sinabi rin ni Galvez na kailangan pa rin ang martial law sa rehiyon kaugnay naman ng gagananing plebisito sa Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL) sa Enero 21 at Mayo 18 midterm polls sa 2019.

Idineklara ng Pangulo ang Martial Law noong Mayo 23, 2017 matapos ang Marawi City siege ng Maute-Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terrorists na tumagal ng limang buwan.

Nasa 60 araw lamang ang martial law pero sa pamamagitan ng botohan sa Kongreso noong Hulyo 22, 2017 ay pinalawig ito hanggang Disyembre 31, 2017 at muling in-extend hanggang Dis. 31, 2018.



# Rescued minors came from different parts of Mindanao

By ANTONIO L. COLINA IV

DAVAO CITY – The minors, who were alleged to have been taken by progressive groups without the consent of their parents, came from different parts of Mindanao, namely Davao del Norte, Bukidnon, Zamboanga City and North Cotabato, according to Department of Social and Welfare and Development-Region II (DSWD II) project development officer Alma D. Acera.

In an interview, she said four came from Talaingod, Davao del Norte where the Salugpongang Ta'nan Igtanugon Community Learning Center (STTCIC) was ordered closed by the Department of Education (DepEd), while two others were from Zamboanga Peninsula.

The other details on the rest of the 14 minors, who were brought to separate DSWD II centers in Davao City and Tagum City, could not be provided because these were not readily available as of press time, Acera said.

Also, only one of the children has



NO TO OUTSIDE INFLUENCE - Indigenous Peoples, or Ijumad, from the Ata-Manobo communities in Talaingod, Davao del Norte stage a protest November 30 against Salugpongang schools, which authorities have tagged as fronts for the New People's Army (NPA). (PNA)

been returned to the custody of his parents.

She said the children will undergo a psychosocial intervention before they can be released to their parents.

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 Salugpongang school last Wednesday.

Authorities charged the militant leaders, that included former Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo and incumbent ACT Teachers party list Rep. France Casuro, with child abuse, kidnapping and human trafficking.

She said at least 10 parents have come forward to claim their children since Saturday, but the agency could not just release the children pending the completion of the parental and community capability assessment report (PCCAR) of the Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office or the City Social Welfare and Development Office.

### Outreach program

BUTUAN CITY - The 16th Infantry (Maglilingkod) Battalion (16th IB) under the command of Lt. Col. Rey Pasco, undertook a free medical and outreach program where more than 600 residents benefited. First Lt. Edelyn E. Glarian, Civil Military Operation (CMO) officer of the 16th IB told The Manila Bulletin on Monday. In a statement, The 16th IB CMO officer said, the activity on Saturday, in partnership with the local government units (LGUs) and Davao del Norte State College-High School Barch '98, with the theme: "Tulongin Tayo Para sa Pagbabago", was able to deliver medical services to beneficiaries, mostly children and the elderly, from Barangay Tibulac, Carmen town, Davao del Norte. Some of the services availed of by the villagers were free medical and cholesterol check-up, uric acid test, ECG, feeding to children, distribution of books, school supplies, slightly used clothes, and shoes, free medicines such as antibiotics, pain reliever, multivitamins, and free haircut. (Mike U. Crismundo) 15

**Bike for Peace**

**BUJUAN CITY** - The officers and men of the regional command of Northeastern Mindanao Police Regional Office 13 (PRO 13) headed by PRO 13 Regional Director Chief Supt. Gilberto DC Cruz, joined the Sikadyahan (Bike for Peace) organized by the Caraga Conference for Peace and Development (CCPD) in cooperation with Regional Peace and Order Council (RPOC) Caraga last weekend. Around 100 bikers composed of bike enthusiasts and peace advocates from Philippine National Police (PNP), Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP), other government agencies and civilians joined the activity. The participants gathered at the Guingora Park here and negotiated an almost 15-km route going to Sarangay Lumbocan, also this city. (Mike U. Crismundo)

# Balangiga bells to peal again in Eastern Samar on Dec. 15

**O**RMOC CITY, Leyte (PNA) - The historic Balangiga bells will return to its home on December 15 in time for the start of Christmas tradition of nine-day dawn masses. Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana announced on Monday.

Lorenzana said the three bells will arrive at the Villamor Air Base in Pasay City, Metro Manila on December 11.

"We will look at the availability of President Duterte, but the target is to bring back the bells to Balangiga town by December 15 in time for the Misa de Gallo," Lorenzana told Eastern Visayas officials during the joint meeting of regional councils on development, disaster management, and peace and order held in this city.

Misa de Gallo is a devotional nine-day series of masses practiced by

Roman Catholics in the country in anticipation of Christmas Day.

Lorenzana said he got a call from the office of US Defense Secretary James Mattis about the schedule of the bells' arrival in the country.

The official said refurbishing of the bells is already completed and the artifacts are now ready for transit to the Philippines.

"This is my good news to you that after 117 years, the bells will come where they should belong," he said.

On August 9, Secretary Mattis notified US Congress of its intention to return the Balangiga bells to the country.

The decision followed a year-long consultative process with associated veterans' organizations and government officials to ensure appropriate steps are taken to preserve the history associated with the bells.

Over a century ago, American soldiers took the bells from Balangiga town's church as war trophy.

The bells' ringing signaled the attack by the villagers against the invaders.

The Balangiga Encounter happened on Sept. 28, 1901, when town residents led by Valeriano Abanador initiated an attack against US soldiers.

The villagers killed 54 American soldiers using bolos. It was the biggest defeat of the foreign troop during the Philippine-American war.

Around 2,500 Filipinos were killed by the US retaliatory attack.

The Americans took the Balangiga bells after they turned the town into a howling wilderness.

Balangiga is about 98 kilometers east of Tacloban City.

It is a fourth-class town in Eastern Samar, with a population of 14,085.

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## Balangiga bells back in PH on Dec. 15

### —Lorenzana

THE Balangiga bells will be back to its original place on Dec. 15, in time for the start of Christmas tradition of nine-day dawn Masses, Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana announced on Monday.

The National Defense chief said the three bells will arrive at the Villamor Air Base on Dec. 11 with a simple military ceremony.

"We will look at the availability of President Duterte, but the target is to bring back the bells to Balangiga town by Dec. 15 in time for the *Misa de Gallo*," Lorenzana told Eastern Visayas officials during the joint meeting of regional councils on development, disaster management, and peace and order held in this city.

*Misa de Gallo* is a devotional nine-day series of Masses practiced by Roman Catholics in the country in anticipation of Christmas.

The country's defense chief said he got a call from the office of US Defense Secretary James Mattis about the schedule

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Balangiga town is about 98 kilometers east of Tacloban City. It is a fourth-class town in Eastern Samar, with a population of 14,055. PNA

## Bells ring in Misa de Gallo

The historic Balangiga bells will be back in its original belfry at the Eastern Samar town church on 15 December in time for the start of the Christmas tradition of nine-day dawn Masses, Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said yesterday.

Lorenzana said the three bells will arrive at Villamor Air Base on 11 December with a simple military ceremony.

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We will look at the availability of President Duterte, but the target is to bring back the bells to Balangiga town by 15 December

From page 1

"We will look at the availability of President Duterte, but the target is to bring back the bells to Balangiga town by 15 December in time for the Misa de Gallo," the Defense chief told Eastern Visayas officials during the joint meeting of regional councils on development, disaster management, and peace and order held in Ormoc City, Leyte

The traditional Misa de Gallo officially marks the start of the yuletide season through a series of Masses observed by Roman Catholics in the country leading to Christmas day.

### Polished new

He said he got a call from the office of his US counterpart, James Mattis, about the schedule of the arrival of the bells in the country.

Mattis said refurbishing of

the bells was completed and "the artifacts are now ready for transit to the Philippines."

"This is my good news to you that after 117 years, the bells will come where they should belong," he told Lorenzana.

On 9 August, Mattis notified US Congress of its intention to return the Balangiga bells to the country.

The decision to return the bells followed a year-long consultative process with associated veterans' organizations and government officials.

### Major US setback

Over a century ago, American soldiers took the bells from Balangiga town's church tower as war trophies. The bells' ringing signaled the villagers' assault against the foreign troops.

### On 9 August, Mattis notified US Congress of its intention to return the Balangiga Bells.

An encounter happened on 28 September 1901 when town residents led by Valeriano Abanador initiated an attack against the US soldiers.

The villagers killed 54 American soldiers using bolos. It was the biggest defeat of US forces during the Philippine-American war.

Around 2,500 Filipinos were killed by US retaliatory attacks.

CL

## Balangiga bells in Manila next week

BY VICTOR REYES

THREE bells taken by Americans soldiers from Balangiga town in Eastern Samar during the Philippine-American war in 1901 are set to arrive in Manila next week.

"Tentatively, the arrival of the bells is set on the 11th of December," said Arsenio Andolong, spokesman of the Department of National Defense.

He said the Balangiga bells will be transported by a US Air Force plane to Villamor Air Base in Pasay City where turnover ceremonies will be held.

Two of the bells will come from the Warren Air Force base in Wyoming where these were displayed as part of the US memorial to the 46 American soldiers killed by Filipinos in Balangiga town in 1901. The other was displayed at Camp Red Cloud, headquarters of the

US Army 9th Infantry Regiment, in South Korea.

Officials of the US Department of Defense and US Pacific Command will hand over the bells to Philippine defense officials during the handover ceremony, a source said.

The source said the bells will later be airlifted to Samar by a Philippine Air Force plane for their handover to Church officials in Balangiga town in Samar on

December 15.

The source said President Duterte, who had strongly advocated for the return of the bells, may attend the ceremony in Balangiga. B2

Earlier yesterday, Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana told Samar residents the bells are "coming back home" on December 11 and will be brought to Balangiga in time for the start of the Misa de Gallo on December 15.

# CHR: Army execs liable for rights violation

## Military officials say 2017 clash that killed 7 Cotabato tribe members 'legitimate'

By Bong S. Sarmiento  
@inqmindanao

LAKE SEBU, SOUTH COTABATO—The Commission on Human Rights (CHR) has held two military commanders in Mindanao liable for rights abuses in connection with the killing of seven tribe members in a remote village here last year.

Erlan Deluvio, CHR regional director in Soccsksargen (South Cotabato, Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, Sarangani and General Santos), said Lt. Col. Harold Cabunoc, commander of the 33rd Infantry Battalion (IB) based in Sultan Kudarat, and Lt. Col. Benjamin Leander, former commander of the 27th IB based in South Cotabato, were cited for their roles in the Dec. 3, 2017 clash at Barangay Ned, where a tribal leader and six community members were killed.

"[They are] liable for human rights violations for their utter failure to exert earnest efforts in distinguishing combatants from noncombatants under the principles of distinction of International Humanitarian Law," Deluvio said in a resolution on Oct. 5 that was obtained by the Inquirer only on Monday.

### Reconsideration

Datu Victor Danyan Sr., chair of the T'boli Manobo S'daf Claimants Organization, a group based in Sitio Datal Bonlangon, and six community members were killed in what human rights and militant groups had described as a massacre.

Leander, who was replaced as 27th IB commander in January,



PROTEST: In this photo taken last year, indigenous peoples groups and their supporters gather in front of the 27th Infantry Battalion headquarters in Tupi, South Cotabato, to protest against the killing of Datu Victor Danyan and six others. —BONG SARMIENTO

and Cabunoc had filed a motion for reconsideration on the findings of the CHR regional office.

In their defense, they said a legitimate encounter between soldiers and the New People's Army (NPA) rebels broke out in the area, resulting in the death of the tribal chieftain and six others.

Two soldiers were also killed in the clash, they said.

Cabunoc said the court would eventually decide on the merits of the case.

"I will never falter in performing my constitutional mandate of protecting the people against armed aggression by the ... NPA and their auxiliary forces, like the group of [Danyan]," he told the Inquirer on Monday.

"If Datu Victor was fighting for his rights, I am also obliged

to defend the ... workers of Dawang Coffee Plantation against the planned attack by NPA [rebels] who supported [Datu] Victor's armed followers in seizing lands from [plantation owners]," he added.

### Plantation attack

In the CHR's nine-page resolution, Cabunoc and Leander claimed the military operation was triggered by intelligence reports that the NPA's "Platoon Arabo" and "Platoon My Phone" had merged at Sitio Datal Bonlangon allegedly to launch an attack against coffee producer Silvicultural Industries Inc.

Witnesses presented by the military claimed that Danyan and the rebels were allegedly hatching a plan to attack the plantation on Dec. 30 last year,

in line with the tribe's bid to reclaim the lands.

But Deluvio said a CHR investigation showed that Danyan's community was not a guerilla base. He said the supposed NPA camps identified by the military were detachments of government militiamen and company guards.

### 'Inconsistency'

Autopsy results on the seven bodies showed that five died from bullet wounds, one from a "blunt force and traumatic injuries to the head and body," and the other from a stab wound.

"It appears to the commission that the cause of death of the two victims seems to show inconsistency with the claimed encounter by the respondents," Deluvio said. INQ A12



# 'Don't take Du30 seriously on death squad'

By DJ Yap and Jeannette I. Andrade @Team\_Inquirer

No one in government is authorized to kill—not even President Duterte, according to one of his top allies in the Senate.

Sen. Aquilino Pimentel III on Monday dismissed the President's widely criticized threat of forming the government's own death squad to hunt down communist rebels and their sympathizers, saying this was impossible under the law.

"Don't take that seriously. That cannot be done," said Pimentel, president of Mr. Duterte's ruling Partido Demok-

ratiko Pilipino-Lakas ng Bayan. "No one is authorized to kill. Even government is not authorized to kill," Pimentel said at a press briefing in his Senate office.

### 'My own sparrow'

The former Senate President said the debate over the revival of the death penalty was proof that the government did not have the power under the country's judicial system to order anyone killed.

Last week, Mr. Duterte announced he would form "my own sparrow," referring to the special partisan unit of the New People's Army (NPA) that gained notoriety in the 1980s



President Duterte

for assassinating government targets in urban areas.

"They will do nothing but look for idlers who are prospective [NPA] members and take



Aquilino Pimentel III

them out," the President said of the government's death squad.

His instructions to what he called the "Duterte death squad," the President said, is

"get one or two" rebels.

The comment drew condemnation from critics, including the political opposition and human rights advocates.

### Response to killings

Armed Forces of the Philippines chief Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr. on Monday said the President's desire to create a death squad was in response to the killings of 136 policemen, soldiers, tribal leaders and government officials by the NPA's hit teams in the past three years.

"There is really a need to counter this [NPA unit]. And to counter this is to make our personnel vigilant, and we need to

counter this with the organization of a counter-sparrow force," Galvez said.

But the AFP chief would rather drop "death squad" in favor of a different name for the special government unit. He also stressed that the unit's task should be left to security forces and not involve civilians.

In an interview after Monday's flag-raising rites at Camp Aguinaldo, Galvez said the squad that would pursue the NPA's assassination unit would be called "counter-sparrow force."

The force, he said, would focus primarily on intelligence-building and gathering to hunt down NPA rebels. INQ 18

# Communist death squads still active in some regions – AFP

By **MICHAEL PUNONGBAYAN**

Armed Forces of the Philippines chief Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr. expressed support yesterday for the creation of a unit that will counter the operations of the assassination squad of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and its armed wing, the New People's Army (NPA).

He told reporters yesterday that communist rebels now tagged by the government as terrorists definitely have assassination squads called "sparrow units" targeting military and police personnel.

"What we see is that the assassination squads of the CPP-NPA are very active in Bicol, in the area of Eastern Mindanao, also in Western Mindanao and some areas in Samar and also in Negros," Galvez said.

However, he said the anti-sparrow unit that could be formed by the government to counter such assassination groups should be composed of police and military personnel and not civilians.

"What the President is saying is that because there are more than 136 persons that have been killed and assassinated by the CPP-NPA terrorist group, there

is really a need to counter this," Galvez explained.

"And to counter this is to make our personnel vigilant and we need to counter this with the organization of counter sparrow force with the intelligence and our special units," he said.

On whether such unit should be called the Duterte Death Squad as mentioned by President Duterte, Galvez said the name should be more like a "counter sparrow unit" operating based on intelligence, training and "specialized to hunt these people."

"I believe let's not involve

the civilians, it's more on the military and the police intelligence special units," he said.

Philippine National Police (PNP) chief Director General Oscar Albayalde has backtracked on his statement that NPA sparrow units have long ceased to exist, clarifying that the current leadership of the CPP still maintains hit squads.

Albayalde's statement comes as he said in a radio interview over the weekend that the NPA sparrow units have been phased out and that the last incident monitored was three years ago.

He clarified that authorities

have recorded that CPP-NPA hit squads are responsible for 136 deaths in the past three years.

Albayalde claimed that the CPP still has these sparrow units that undertake special operations such as "liquidation, murder or assassination as directed by the regional party committee" in rural areas.

Albayalde said that the government should also set up a specialized unit as there is "strong possibility" that the communist hit squads would stage more assassinations of vulnerable targets.

"This specialized capability of the CPP-NPA should

be addressed with an equally specialized countermeasure to reduce the potential for further acts on soft targets. There is also a likelihood that some misled guerrilla fronts and enterprising commanders may offer services for political assassination," he said.

Still, Albayalde said that they have not received any directive from Malacañang regarding the plan to establish the government's own death squad.

He said they still have to coordinate with the AFP on how to create and supervise this special unit.

— With Romina Cabrera

## Civilians not allowed in death squad - Galvez

ARMED Forces chief Carlito Galvez Jr. on Monday ruled out the inclusion of civilians in the formation of a death squad against the New People's Army's (NPA) "Sparrow" units.

"Let's not involve the civilians. It's more on the military and the police," Galvez told reporters in a chance interview after the flag-raising ceremony at Camp Aguinaldo, the military's headquarters in Quezon City.

However, Galvez suggested that the group be called "Counter-Sparrow Unit" instead of "Duterte Death Squad."

The group, he said, would focus on intelligence operations to counter the Special Partisan Unit

(SPARU) of the NPA.

"This is a unit that will specialize to hunt these people," the military chief said.

Last week, President Rodrigo Duterte eyed the formation of his own death squad that would "match the talent" of the Sparrow units.

Galvez said the Sparrow units continue to carry out liquidation missions targeting government security forces.

"The assassination of these groups is still very active especially in Bicol, Eastern Mindanao and in Western Mindanao, and in some areas in Samar and also in Negros [Islands]," he said.

A3

DEMPSEY REYES

SECRETARY'S TWEET CALLS CHARGES IDIOTIC

# PALACE SAYS LOCSIN OUTBURST OVER SATUR ARREST A PERSONAL SENTIMENT

By **Christine O. Avendaño**  
@10avendanoINQ

Malacañang is unfazed by Foreign Secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr.'s outburst over the arrest and detention of his friend, former Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo, for alleged kidnapping and human trafficking.

"We view the comment of

Secretary Locsin as a personal sentiment given the fact that he and former Congressman Satur Ocampo are friends and were both together in [the House of Representatives]," presidential spokesperson Salvador Panelo told reporters on Monday.

"It's not reflective of the view of the administration," Panelo also said.

Locsin tweeted last week his disgust of Ocampo's arrest, calling the charges "idiotic."

### Humanitarian mission

Ocampo, ACT Teachers Rep. France Castro and 16 other left-leaning activists were arrested by the police on Wednesday in Talangod town, Davao del Norte province, as they were rescuing

teachers and "tumad" schoolchildren from alleged harassment by a paramilitary force that shut down their community school.

Police filed kidnapping and human trafficking charges against them, but the provincial prosecutor's office rejected the kidnapping charge and released them on bail.

Panelo also issued a state-

ment saying Locsin's remarks were "personal sentiments supportive of a friend."

"Friendship, however, does not give birth to the conclusive conclusion that a person charged of a crime is innocent nor does a charge sheet automatically make such individual guilty thereof. That is precisely why the Constitution grants every citizen the

presumption of innocence and burdens the State to prove the guilt of the accused beyond reasonable doubt," he said. **A4**

Panelo noted that the prosecutor's office in Tagum City had granted the request of Ocampo's group to have a preliminary investigation and to proffer evidence and that they were released after posting bail. **INQ**

# PNP to refile kidnap raps vs Satur et al.

**By Jeannette I. Andrade and Daphne Galvez**  
@Team\_Inquirer

The Philippine National Police will refile the kidnapping charge it had brought against ACT Teachers Rep. France Castro, former Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo and 16 other left-leaning activists but was rejected by the provincial prosecutor of Davao del Norte last week.

Castro, Ocampo and other activists were arrested by the military and the police in Talaingod town, Davao del Norte, on Wednesday night after they rescued teachers and schoolchildren from alleged harassment by a paramilitary force called Alamara.

The authorities detained the activists and filed kidnapping and human trafficking charges against them.

The provincial prosecutor in Tagum City rejected the kidnapping charge but found probable cause to prosecute them for child abuse.

Castro, Ocampo and the activists were released on bail of P80,000 each. They returned to Manila on Sunday.

### Complaints from parents

The PNP said on Monday that the kidnapping charge would be refiled, following the filing of complaints by the parents of five of the schoolchildren.

PNP Director General Oscar

Albayaalde said the prosecutor may have rejected the kidnapping charge because "the case might be weak."

But the prosecutor might accept a refiled case, as "there are already complaints from the parents," Albayaalde said.

Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr., chief of staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, told reporters on Monday that the arrest of Castro and Ocampo for alleged child trafficking was proof that "they are active members" of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and its armed wing, the New People's Army (NPA).

"The last bastion of the CPP-NPA is the [lumad] because indigenous people are the most vulnerable sector that they can trick," Galvez said.

Ocampo on Monday denied that he was an active member of the CPP and that he was recruiting minors to fight for the NPA.

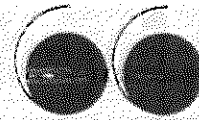
There was no immediate comment from Castro.

"There is a rule in the CPP-NPA against recruitment of minors. So definitely that could not be a part of the program of the NPA," Ocampo said in a television interview.

### Respect lawmakers

Speaker Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo on Monday said members of the House of Representatives should be accorded respect.

"The House is a body of



**There is a rule in the CPP-NPA against recruitment of minors. So definitely that could not be a part of the program of the NPA**

### Satur Ocampo

Former Bayan Muna Representative

elected representatives of the people, and ... all its members, such as Rep. France Castro, are entitled to a certain level of dignified and respectful treatment in situations such as this," Arroyo said in a statement.

Arroyo, however, did not comment on the charges brought against Castro and the other activists.

Ocampo did not deny that the NPA was present in Davao del Norte and that there were indigenous people who had joined the insurgents.

"The communities of the

my



NINO JESUS ORETA

lumad are in the hinterlands so [these] become [battlegrounds]. It is not surprising that the NPA [organizes] the people in the struggle for their welfare," Ocampo said.

"So it doesn't deny that there are lumad who joined the NPA, but they are not minors," he added.

#### Independent now

Ocampo said he was no longer a member of the CPP-NPA and that he acted independently of the communist movement.

"It's a rule that after a long imprisonment or once a supposed leader of the CPP-NPA is arrested, he loses all the titles and the duties in the revolutionary movement," he said.

A Marxist, Ocampo was arrested and imprisoned during the martial law rule of the dicta-

tor Ferdinand Marcos.

He was ordered released in 1986 together with CPP founder Jose Maria Sison by then President Corazon Aquino, who was swept into power in the Edsa People Power Revolution that brought down Marcos.

Ocampo said he had the choice of rejoining the revolutionary movement, but opted to "stay aboveground and to join the open legal protest mass movement."

"All my activities are aboveground," he said.

Ocampo also denied Albayalde's claim that lumad schoolchildren in Davao del Norte were being taught by the rebels to sing a different national anthem.

"As far as I know, I don't know of an instance where a different version of the national anthem is taught in lumad schools," he said.

#### Produce evidence

Ocampo challenged Albayalde to produce evidence to prove his claim.

"I don't know [Director] General Albayalde's source. He has to produce evidence. That would be a ground," he said.

Alamara gunmen shut down the lumad school Salugpongan Ta'tanu Igkanogon Community Learning Center at Barangay Palma Gil on Wednesday.

Police said the Department of Education (DepEd) ordered the school closed because it was sus-

pected to be a front for the NPA.

The DepEd denied ordering the school closed.

"We [did] not issue a closure order. The Division of Davao del Norte has no authority to issue [closure orders]. If there is, the order should be issued by the DepEd central office in Manila," Josephine Fadul, the division superintendent, said in an interview on Sunday.

Fadul said the Salugpongan community schools were recognized by the DepEd and they had a regular curriculum.

#### Military harassment

Enrollment in these schools has been falling, however, because of the harassment of teachers and students by the military, she said, reporting a complaint from Meggie Nolasco, executive director of the Salugpongan community school.

Fadul said she had written to the military for comment, but had yet to receive a reply.

On Monday, Davao del Norte Gov. Anthony del Rosario appealed to leftist groups to stop exploiting the lumad of Talaingod and work with the government instead.

Del Rosario said the arrest of Ocampo and his group had "exposed the wiles of the leftist organizations in using the [lumad] to push their agenda." —WITH REPORTS FROM VINCE F. NONATO AND MART SAMBALUD INQ

## Arrest of Satur, others proof they're NPA — AFP chief

By MICHAEL PUNONGBAYAN  
and ALEXIS ROMERO

The arrest of former Bayan Muna party-list lawmaker Satur Ocampo and ACT Teacher's party-list Rep. France Castro in Talaingod, Davao del Norte last week was proof that they were active members of the New People's Army (NPA), Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) chief Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr. said yesterday.

Ocampo and Castro, along with 16 other individuals caught transporting 14 minors aged 14 to 17 last week, Galvez said, were themselves carrying out the task of recruitment because they no longer have enough people on the ground.

"We know they're active members of the NPA, that's why they were charged in Ormoc, Leyte over Oplan Ahos," Galvez told reporters at Camp

Aguinaida, referring to the rebel purge in the 1980s.

President Duterte yesterday said law enforcers did the right thing in arresting Ocampo's group. He said children cannot be removed from their communities without consent of their parents.

"That is actually kidnapping. The victims are complaining. You heard they were lectured upon by the *lumads*. And it's like controlling the

lives of the natives. That's the problem with communists — they use the *lumads*," he said, vowing to protect police from counter-charges.

Galvez denied allegations Ocampo and the others were held on trumped-up charges.

"These are true, true realities," he said.

Galvez added the people should know that *lumad* schools in Talaingod like the Salugpungan and Alcadev

are breeding grounds for NPA guerrillas.

He said Ocampo and his militant supporters bring indigenous peoples (IPs) to Manila purportedly for exposure because the latter are the "most vulnerable sector *na kaya nilang lokohin* (that they can fool)."

AFP spokesman Brig. Gen. Edgard Arevalo earlier noted that the military has always believed in the rule of law and that it is now up to the courts

to look into the charges lodged against Ocampo and company.

He said the minors were taken without permission from their parents and "at the dead of the evening, in the dead of night."

Malacañang, meanwhile, distanced itself from foreign affairs secretary Teodoro Loain Jr.'s criticizing the filing of kidnapping charges against Ocampo and the others.

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# AFP chief: Ocampo, Castro 'active' NPAs

**A**RMED Forces chief Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr. on Monday publicly tagged former Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo and Rep. Francisca Castro of ACT-Teachers party-list as "active members" of the New People's Army (NPA).

He also insisted that the child trafficking and kidnapping charges filed against Ocampo, Castro and 16 others were based on facts.

On Wednesday, joint forces from the Philippine Army and the Philippine National Police (PNP) arrested Ocampo's group for allegedly transporting 14 students of a Lumad (natives) school during a "solidarity mission" in Talaingod, Davao del Norte. However, the former lawmaker and the others were released after posting bail.

"The people should know, that the *Salugpungan* and Alcadev (Lumad schools) are breeding grounds for NPA. What Satur did before is an exposure of this. There were those who surrendered from Alcadev and other areas of the Indigenous Peoples," Galvez told reporters in a chance interview with reporters after the flag-raising ceremony at Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City.

"This proves that Castro and Satur Ocampo, they are active members of the CPP-NPA; we all know that that is why they have charges in...Leyte," he said.

CPP stands for Communist

Party of the Philippines.

The military chief also described Ocampo as a "propagandist" for the CPP-NPA, following his arrest in Talaingod, Davao del Norte for the alleged kidnapping of the students.

"These are not trumped-up charges, these are true realities. We have to look for the truth, this is the truth," he added.

He also pointed to the previous arrests of National Democratic Front consultants Adelberto Silva and Vicente Ladlad.

"[The CPP-NPA] does not have anyone to use anymore, Satur Ocampo is now [being used] because they have no one already to command. And as far as we are concerned, the last bastion of the CPP-NPA are the indigenous peoples since they are the most vulnerable sector," Galvez also said.

## Duterte backs arrests

President Rodrigo Duterte on Monday backed the move of police to arrest Ocampo and Castro for conducting a solidarity mission in

Davao del Norte, saying they "did the right thing."

He said that Ocampo and Castro should know that what they did during the solidarity mission was "kidnapping."

"You should be aware that you cannot move children from one community to another without the consent of the parents. That is actually kidnapping. The natives complained, you heard they were lectured upon by the Lumad, [they] are controlling [their] lives," Duterte said.

"I think the police did the right thing, respective of the intention. You know, we might have been motivated by all the good intentions in the world but there is the intent which is criminal in bringing out the transferring children from one area to another, especially using them in the struggle. That is what the communists are doing. Why should we fool ourselves?" he added.

## 'Titles, duties lost'

Ocampo and Castro denied the charges.

"It's a rule that after a long imprisonment or once a supposed suspected leader of the CPP-NPA is arrested, he loses all the titles and the duties in the revolutionary movement," Ocampo said in a television interview.

"I am not a member of the CPP-NPA, Galvez. You are putting my

life in danger. Whatever happens to me, Galvez, I will hold you accountable," Castro said.

"I advocate for the welfare of teachers. That is what I am fighting for. We already know what happens to those who are being red-tagged by the military. Whatever happens to me, it will surely be the AFP's fault," the lawmaker said.

On Saturday, Tagum City Executive Judge Ariene Palabrica issued a supplemental order to release Ocampo, Castro, and 16 others after they each posted P80,000 cash bond.

Other members of the "Talaingod 18" who were named in the order were Meggie Noiasco, Pastor Edgar Ugal, Rev. Ryan Magpayo, Pastor Eller Ordeza, Rev. Jurie Jaime, Jesus Modamo, Maryro Poquita, Maria Concepcion Ibarra, Jenveive Paraba, Merhaya Talledo, Maricel Andagkit, Marcial Rendon, Ariel Ansan, Mariane Aga, Nerfa Awing, and Wingwing Daunsay.

"Section 17 (c) of the Criminal Procedure provides: Any person in custody who is not yet charged in Court may apply for bail with any Court in the province, city or municipality where he is held," the order read.

"As the above-named respondents are still presumed innocent and no Information have been filed against them, their supreme right to liberty must be upheld," it added.

**DEMPSEY REYES  
AND GLEE JALEA**

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## Satur, solon tagged CPP-NPA members

**BY VICTOR REYES  
and WENDELL VIGILIA**

ARMED Forces chief Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr. yesterday tagged former Bayan Muna party-list Rep. Satur Ocampo and Rep. France Castro of the party-list group ACT Teachers as active members of the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army.

Castro accused Galvez putting her life in danger by tagging her and Ocampo as CPP-NPA members.

"I'm in danger. If anything bad happens to me, the AFP is behind

it. I'm not a member of the NPA, Galvez. I'm just making it clear to you," she said. "If anything happens to me, I will hold you accountable, General Galvez."

Speaker Gloria Arroyo took the cudgels for Castro, saying that like other House members, she should be "entitled to a certain level of dignified and respectful treatment in situations such as this, particularly since our judicial system is based upon the principle of presumption of innocence."

Arroyo also said she has known

See SATUR ► Page B3

## SATUR

Ocampo personally "and I pray that he, Rep. Castro, and their co-respondents are well and will continue to be so until this matter is resolved."

Ocampo was among the staunchest critics of Atroyo when she was president.

President Duterte said it is public knowledge that Bayan and Bayan Muna, along with other militant groups like the Kilusang Mayo Uno and Gabriela, are fronts for the Communist Party of the Philippines which he said is out to topple his government.

He said these militant groups often bring in young people to certain areas under the guise of immersion programs.

"Bayan is a front of the Communist Party of the Philippines. You know there is war going on, kung magkaroon barilan diyan (if there is a shooting there) you put their lives in jeopardy," said Duterte who revived peace negotiations with the communists after he assumed the presidency in 2016 but cancelled the formal peace

talks last year because of continued attacks by the NPA.

Duterte also said Ocampo's group violated laws, including transporting the minors without their parents' consent and placing the children in danger.

Ocampo and Castro were among 18 people arrested last week by the police and military for taking 18 students from the Salugpungan School, a special learning center put up by the Left in Talaingod town in Davao del Norte.

The 18 were charged with violation of Republic Act 7610 or the Special Protection of Children against Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act after their arrest on Wednesday. Each posted an P80,000 bail and were released from detention last Saturday.

Prosecutors did not accept the PNP case of kidnapping against the group but PNP chief Oscar Albayalde said the kidnapping case will be re-filed, based on affidavits of some of the parents of the children.

Galvez said Ocampo and Castro are behind the establishment of the Salugpungan School, which

is allegedly teaching communist ideals, and similar schools in areas of indigenous peoples, and turning their students into members of the NPA, the communist party's armed wing.

Galvez said five of the students from these communist schools who became NPA members surrendered to the Armed Forces in Northern Luzon this year.

"This really proves that Castro and Satur Ocampo are active members of the CPP-NPA. We all know that. And they have charges before in Leyte, in connection with Oplan Ahas," said Galvez.

Galvez was referring to the purging operation of the communist movement in Inopacan, Leyte in the 1908s. The remains of the victims -- who are rebels and civilians suspected as military spies -- were exhumed by the military in 2006.

Galvez said the latest case filed against Ocampo and Castro are not trumped-up charges, disputing Ocampo's allegations that he and his group were just rescuing the children from military harassment.

Galvez described Ocampo as a

"propagandist" of the CPP-NPA, which President Duterte classified as terrorist organizations last year. Peace talks between the communists and the government have been terminated by the President.

Chief Presidential Legal Counsel Salvador Panelo said criticisms made by Foreign Affairs Secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr. through social media against the arrest of Ocampo's group is the secretary's "personal position" and "does not reflect the official view of the administration on the issue."

"We therefore consider the remarks of Secretary Locsin as personal sentiments supportive of a friend, being former colleagues with Mr. Ocampo in Congress. Friendship, however, does not give birth to the conclusive conclusion that a person charged of a crime is innocent nor does a charge sheet automatically make such individual guilty thereof," Panelo said.

Locsin served as representative for the first district of Makati from 2001 to 2010 while Ocampo was the Bayan Muna representative during the same period. — *With Jocelyn Montemayor*

# Castro, Ocampo deserve dignified treatment, Arroyo says

By Maricel V. Cruz, Francisco Tuyay and Nat Mariano

SPEAKER Gloria Macapagal Arroyo on Monday urged the authorities to treat ACT Teachers Party-list Rep. France Castro and former congressman Satur Ocampo with dignity and respect, after the two were arrested on Nov. 28 in Davao del Norte.

"They entitled to a certain level of

dignified and respectful treatment in situations such as this, particularly since our judicial system is based upon the principle of presumption of innocence," Arroyo said in a statement. "This is my position regarding any member of the House, regardless of political or ideological alignment."

"At the same time the House will always uphold the law and its processes. I understand that they have been given

10 days to file their counter affidavits in order to refute the charges against them, and I would urge a speedy resolution of the matter within the framework of our judicial system," she said.

"I have long known former Rep. Satur Ocampo personally, and I pray that he, Rep. Castro and their co-respondents are well and will continue to be so until this matter is resolved."

*Next page*

## Castro, Ocampo...

From A1

Arroyo said she learned of their arrest through Gabriela Reps. Arlene Brosas and Emmi de Jesus, who called on her to look into their situation.

The leftist Makabayan bloc in the House said they would file charges against Armed Forces chief Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr. for accusing Castro of being a member of the Communist Party of the Philippines and its armed wing, the New People's Army.

"We will file a case sa Ombudsman against the military," Anakpawis Party-list Rep. Ariel Casilao, a member of the bloc, said at a news conference.

"This very dangerous and baseless statement," he added.

Casilao said Galvez was quoted as saying that Ocampo was as a "propagandist" of the CPP-NPA, and that the Salugpongan Tatanu Igkanugon Community Learning Center in Talaingod, Davao del Norte, and the Alternative Learning Center for Agriculture Livelihood Development are "breeding grounds" of the NPA.

Castro denied she is an NPA member. Castro, Ocampo, and 16 others have been charged with kidnapping and human trafficking for allegedly taking custody of minors during their solidarity mission in Talaingod, Davao del Norte, on the evening of Nov. 28.

All of them were released from detention on Saturday night after they each posted P80,000 bail for their charges.

Philippine National Police chief Oscar Albayalde rejected a challenge from a legislator that he visit the Lumad school that the military and police say is a communist breeding ground.

"There's no need to visit them because when you get there, they'll be teaching something else," he said in Filipino. "That's not what our IPs (indigenous people) say. We believe them. You could just imagine, they were exploited there and their minds were poisoned. Even their children."

Earlier, Castro dared Albayalde and the police to visit Lumad schools to check on their condition.

But Albayalde said he had no interest in visiting a Lumad school, where he said IP students were being brainwashed by the communists.

"What they are teaching is how to rally and other ways to help the [communist] movement," he added.

Albayalde rejected suggestions that Castro and Ocampo were arrested on trumped-up charges.

"We cannot fabricate charges because that won't stand in court. We can never fabricate charges. If there is no complainant, there are no charges," he said, citing the complaint filed by parents and relatives of the children.

Castro said Albayalde's refusal to visit Lumad schools reflects his ignorance.

Ocampo, meanwhile, denied allegations that the communists were recruiting minors through the Lumad schools.

In an interview with ANC Headstart, Ocampo said the communists had "a rule against recruiting minors."

"The NPA operates in the hinterlands. It so happens that most if not all of the communities of the Lumads are in the hinterlands, so they become battleground areas. It is not surprising that the NPA has its main objective of organizing the people in the struggle for their own welfare," he said.



## SATUR, CASTRO AKTIBONG NPA REBELS-AFP CHIEF

Pinatutsadahan ni Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Chief of Staff Gen Carlito Galvez Jr. na mga aktibong miyembro at propagandista umano ng Communist Party of the Philippines - New People's Army (CPP-NPA) sina dating Bayan Muna Partylist Rep. Satur Ocampo at ACT Teachers Partylist Rep. France Castro na nahuli ng mga otoridad sa checkpoint habang kasama ang 14 menor de edad na mga katutubo sa Talaingod, Davao del Norte noong nakalipas na linggo.

Nasa 74 katao kabilang sina Ocampo at 14 kabataang estudyante ang lulan ng pitong van na naharang ng mga pulis.

Sina Ocampo at Castro at mga kasamahan ng mga

ito ay pansamantalang nakalaya matapos na magpiyansa ng P14M sa korte noong Sabado kaugnay ng kasong child trafficking at kidnapping.

"Yung lima (NPA rebels) na nag-surrender dito sa North na galing dum sa Alcadev sa areas ng mga IPs (Internally Displaced Persons) ay pinatnayan na talagang itong si Castro at saika itong si Satur Ocampo ay aktibong miyembro ng CPP-NPA", pahayag ni Galvez. J

"Ang nakikita natin is 'yung Talaingod, 'yung Salugpungan at Alcadev, ginagamit talaga yan The people should know 'yung Salugpungan at Alcadev is breeding ground for the NPA," git ni Galvez na ang tinutukoy ay ang eskuwelahan ng mga lumad

o katutubo.

Sinabi nito na dinadala nina Ocampo at Castro sa Manila ang mga katutubo kung saan ginagamit ang mga ito sa exposure tulad ng mga rally laban sa gobyerno.

Sa katunayan, ayon pa sa Chief of Staff ay may kaso rin ang grupo nina Ocampo sa Leyte na walang iba kundi ang Oplan Aho/Missing Link kung saan nahukay ang bangkay ng halos 100 katao sa mass grave sa bayan ng Inopacan ng nasabing lalawigan noong 2006.

Aktibo rin umanong nagre-recruit sina Ocampo ng mga kabataan para sumama sa armadong pakikibaka laban sa pamahalaan at maging aktibo sa mga kilos protesta - Joy Cartos.

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## Lumad leaders kina Ocampo at Castro: 'Huwag na kayong aapak sa aming lugar'!

Upang matigil na ang kaguluban ay sinabihan ng Lumad lider sina dating Bayan Muna Partylist Rep. Satur Ocampo at ACT Teacher Partylist Rep. France Castro na huwag na muli pang aapak sa kanilang tribu o lugar.

"Iwangan niyo ang aming mga kabataan at kumin na lamang ang inyong mga guro na walang itinuturong kabutihan kundi ang labanan ang pamahalaan. Ayaw na namin pang muling may mamatay sa aming lahi," wika ni Lumad lider Bai Pilar.

Nabatid na ang Salugpungan Learning Center

ay matagal ng pinasara ng local unit ng Department of Education o DepEd dahil na rin sa kahilingan ng mga lider ng tribu dahil wala naman daw itong itinuturo sa mga batang Lumad kundi ang magrebelde sa pamahalaan.

Ikinagalit din ng mga lider ng Lumad ang pagtanggap sa 14 na kabataan mula sa Salugpungan Learning

Center sa Davao del Norte ng grupo sina Ocampo na naharang noong Miyerkules ng gabi sa bayan ng Talaingod, Davao del Norte.

Inihayag pa ni Bai Pilar na mismong ang New People's Army (NPA) ang siyang nakakapanggulo sa kanilang tribu at ginagamit lamang sila upang labanan ang pamahalaan. **Rudy Andul**

## Lumad leaders kinastigo sina Satur at Castro

Itinagalit umano ng mga Lumad lider ang pagtanggap ng grupo nila dating Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo at ACT Teachers Partylist Rep. France Castro sa 14 na kabataan mula sa Salugpungan Learning Center sa Davao del Norte.

Ang grupo ni Ocampo at Castro kasama ang labing lima pa ay naharapang ripong Miyerkules ng gabi sa bayan ng Talaingod, Davao del Norte kasama ang 14 na menor de edad mula sa nasabing paaralan ng mga Lumad.

Sa mismong istasyon ng pulis sumugod ang mga magulang at Lumad lider na si Bai Pilar upang iastiguhin ang langkang pang-aagaw ng kanilang mga anak at kabataang Lumad.

Inihayag ni Bai Pilar na mismong ang New People's Army (NPA) ang siyang naka-kapanggulo sa kanilang tribu at ginagamit lamang sila upang labanan ang pamahalaan.

"Bakit ninyo kukunin ang aming mga kabataan samantalang wala namang kaguluhang nangyayari sa aming lugar? Noon pa man magsimula ng

kayo ay nakihalo sa amin, merami na ang mga namatay. Kapag umaakyat kayo sa aming mga bundok siguradong may patayan, dahil kayo ang unang pumapatay ng mga sundalo, panayag ni Bai Pilar sa harap nila Ocampo at Castro at ng kanilang mga kasamahan.

Sinabihan ng Lumad Lider sina Ocampo at Castro na huwag na muli pang aapak sa kanilang tribu o lugar upang mabigal na ang kaguluhan.

"Wanan niyo ang aming mga kabataan at kunin na lamang ang inyong mga guro na walang hinutulong kabutihan kundi ang labanan ang pamahalaan, ayaw na namin pang muling may namatay sa aming lahi," pagbigli ni Bai Pilar sa grupo ni Ocampo at Castro.

Ang Salugpungan Learning Center ay malagal ng pinasara ng local unit ng Department of Education o DepEd dahil na rin sa kahilingan ng mga lider ng tribu dahil wala namon daw itong hinuturo sa mga batang Lumad kundi ang magrehelede sa pamahalaan. (Rudy Andal)

# 14 na kabataan "tinangay" **SATUR BAWAL SA LUMAD 'AREA'**

NI PAUL M. GUTIERREZ

**IKINAGALIT** ng mga lider ng mga katutubo sa Mindanao (Lumad) ang anila'y "pagtanggap" ng grupo ni dating Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo at ACT Teachers Partylist Rep. France Castro, sa kanilang 14 na kabataan mula sa Salugpungan Learning Center sa Davao Del Norte noong isang linggo, kasabay ng panawagan na huwag nang muli pang papasok ang kanilang grupo sa teritoryo ng mga Lumad sa Mindanao.

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## **SATUR...**

From Page 1

Ang grupo ni Ocampo at Castro kasama ang 15 pa ay naharang noong Miyerkules, Nobyembre 28, 2018, dakong alas-10 ng gabi sa bayan ng Talaingod, Davao del Norte kasa-

ma ang 14 na kabataan mula sa nasabing paaralan ng mga Lumad.

Sa mismong istasyon ng pulis sumugod ang mga magulang at Lumad lider na si Bai Pilar upang kasiguhin ang tangkang pang-aagaw ng kanilang mga anak at kabataang Lumad.

Inihayag ni Bai Pilar na

mismong ang New People's Army (NPA) ang siyang nakakapanggulo sa kanilang tribu at ginagamit lamang sila upang labanan ang pamahalaan.

"Bakit ninyo kukunin ang aming mga kabataan samantalang wala namang kaguluhang nangyayari sa aming lugar? Noon pa man magsimula nang kayo ay nakihalo sa amin, marami na ang mga namatay."

"Kapag umaakyat kayo sa aming mga bundok sigurdong may patayan, dahil kayo ang unang pumapatay ng mga sundalo," pahayag ni Bai Pilar sa harap ni Ocampo, Castro at iba pa nilang mga kasamahan.

Sinabihan ng Lumad lider sina Ocampo at Castro na huwag na muli pang sapak sa kanilang tribu o lugar upang matigil na ang kaguluban.

"Iwanan niyo ang aming mga kabataan at kunin na lamang ang inyong mga guro na walang itinuturong kabutihin kundi ang labanan ang pamahalaan. Ayaw na namin pangmuling may namatay sa aming lahi," ang paggigili-

ni Bai Pilar sa grupo ni Ocampo at Castro.

Ang Salugpungan Learning Center ay matalagal nang pinasara ng local unit ng Department of Education o DepEd dahil na rin sa kahilingan ng mga lider ng tribu dahil wala naman daw itong itinuturo sa mga batang Lumad kundi ang magrebeldes sa pamahalaan.

Nakitaan naman ng "probable cause" ng piskalve ang mga reklamang mihain ng awtoridad sa grupo ni Ocampo sa ilalim ng RA 7610 o paglabag sa batas na nagbabawal sa pang-aabuso sa mga kabataan.

Pinayagan naman ng korte na makapaghain ng piyansa sina Ocampo para sa kanilang pansamantalang kalayaan.

Sa bukod namang pahayag, sinabi ng mga militanteng grupo sa Kongreso na magbahain sile ng resolusyon upang imbestigahan ang anila'y naging mga "paglabag" naman ng mga awtoridad sa mga karapatan sina Ocampo, partikular na ni Castro na isang aktibong mamabatas.

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### **NPA child warriors surrender in E. Samar**

At least 26 child warriors of the New People's Army (NPA) in Eastern Samar surrendered over the weekend.

The rebels are with the NPA's Militang Bayan, which is tagged in extortion targeting farming communities, according to the 14th Infantry Battalion (IB).

Lt. Col. Jimmy Jimenez, 14th IB commander, said Mayor Norman Germino of Can-avid town and barangay officials helped in the negotiations for the surrender of the rebels.

In Ifugao, two young rebels identified only as Ilyong and Cindy were rescued following an encounter with soldiers in Barangay Namal, Asipulo on Friday. The rebels were turned over to their families.

- John Unson, Artemio Dumlaog

# 20 NPAs yield in Eastern Samar

By MARIE TONETTE GRACE MARTICIO

TACLORAN CITY - Twenty New People's Army (NPA) have surrendered to the 14th Infantry (Avenger) Battalion in Oras, Eastern Samar on Sunday.

Lieutenant Colonel Jimmy Jimenez, 14th IB commander said two regular NPA members, IB Millisyang Bayan (MB) of Underground Mass Organization (UMO) members surrendered to the military.

The official noted that the surrender is a result of the unit's effective Community Support Program (CSP) operation, aggressive civil military operations and

intelligence operations coupled with other lines of operations and efforts to further pressure the rebels and their supporters in Eastern Samar.

"This development will surely destroy if not, cut-off the support system of the NPA and their mass base in the far-flung and isolated villages of the province," Jimenez said.

Mayor Norman Germino shared that for the past years, members of the rebel group carried out extortion activities in Barangays Pandol, Boco and Balagon.

"The surrender will further improve the peace and order situation in the mu-

nicipality of Can-avid," Germino said.

Jimenez added that Pandol Village forms part of the Guerrilla Base of Front 3, sub-regional committee (SRC), "Arctic", Eastern Visayas Regional Party Committee (EVRPC) unit of the NPA operating in Can-avid and its nearby municipalities in Eastern Samar.

"Said village is categorized as influenced and a stronghold of the NPAs since early 90's. The clearing of the influenced barangays in our area of operation has been the priority of the 14th IB in its operational campaign to degrade and further defeat our combatant threat," Jimenez said.

## NPA killed in Sarangani clash with military

By JOSEPH JUBELAG

ALABEL, Sarangani - A New People's Army (NPA) rebel was killed in a firefight with soldiers who were providing security to medical personnel dispatched to contain a measles outbreak in a mountain village in Malapatan town.

First Lt. Leah Canseran, civil military operations officer of 1002nd Infantry Brigade, said soldiers belonging to 73rd Infantry Battalion were escorting personnel from the Integrated Provincial Health Office to Barray Upper Suyan, Malapatan when they were waylaid by five suspected Communist rebels in hinterland village of Barangay Kihan, Malapatan over the weekend.

Canseran identified the slain NPA rebel as Sue Boding, an alleged member of NPA Guerilla Front 71 and a resident of Barangay Little Baguio, Malita, Davao Occidental.

"The firefight lasted for 20 minutes which resulted in the death of one NPA rebel," Canseran said.

Troops recovered a .45 caliber pistol from the slain suspect.

Sarangani Governor Steve Solon had earlier sought the assistance of the military to serve as escort for the medical personnel he dispatched to contain an outbreak of measles in Barangay Upper Suyan which had killed at least 20 children and hospitalized 100 others.

Provincial officer Arvin Alejandro said some 1,500 children in Barangay Upper Suyan have been vaccinated to prevent the spread of the epidemic to nearby villages.

**Attack repulsed**

CAMP DATU LIPUS MAKAPANDONG, Awa New Leyte, Prosperidad, Agusan del Sur - An attempt by New People's Army (NPA) to attack a patrol base of the Philippine Army (PA) was repulsed by government security forces. Capt. Francisco P. Gareilo, Jr., Civil Military Operation Officer of the Army's 36th Infantry (Valor) Battalion told The Manila Bulletin on Monday. The 36th IB CMO officer said elements of the First Platoon of the 13th Surigao del Sur OAA Company's Lindoy Patrol Base engaged the Communist rebels from the Northeastern Mindanao Regional Committee. "The terrorists disengaged after sensing that they were outgunned, outnumbered and outpositioned," said Gareilo, who added that there was no casualty on the side of the government forces. (Mike U. Grisundo) 15

## Albayaalde: NPA hit squad still exists

By AARON B. RECUENCO

National police chief Director General Oscar Albayaalde clarified yesterday that the New People's Army (NPA) still maintains a group of hitmen.

The hitmen, according to Albayaalde, are responsible for the death of 136 soldiers, policemen, local officials and even rebel returnees in the past three years.

"These hit squads are now popularly referred to as the Sparrows. But they are not based in urban areas like the former Sparrow Unit, but only gets out from the red area (normally rural area) to do special partisan operations like liquidation, murder or assassination, as directed by the Regional Party Committee," said Albayaalde.

The latest assassinations carried out by the NPA hit squad, according to Albayaalde, was the killing of two Army soldiers at the Las Navas public market in Northern Samar last Nov 27, the assassination of Philippine Navy Sr. Chief Petty Officer Jesus Zaavedra in Pio Duran, Albay and the botched assassination in Cathalogan City of ex-Mayor Aran Boller of Matuginao, Samar.

Over the weekend, Albayaalde had said that the Special Partisan Unit or SPARU of the NPA has long been gone.

But Albayaalde, in yesterday's press briefing clarified that he was referring to the notorious hit squad, which is the defunct Alex Boncayao Brigade (ABB) of the Manila-Rizal Regional Party Committee of Filemon Lagman, belonging to the rejectionist wing of the CPP/NPA/NDF (Communist Party of the Philippines/New People's Army/National Democratic Front) led by Arturo Tabara and Romulo Kintanar.

He said that it was disbanded by the pro-Sison wing of the CPP/NPA/NDF in early 1990's during its second Rectification period.

"But since then, the pro-Sison reaffirmist wing also adopted its Sparrow-like operations against perceived enemies reportedly including the assassinations of Popoy Lagman, Arturo Tabara and Romulo Kintanar in early 2000," said Albayaalde.

"There is strong possibility that it will stage more hits depending on how the communist movement would want to utilize the Special Partisan Unit/Special Operations Group specialized capability for small unit missions against vulnerable targets," he added.

The issue about the NPA squad was revived after President Duterte was quoted as saying that he wants to create a government version of hit squad targeting communist rebels.

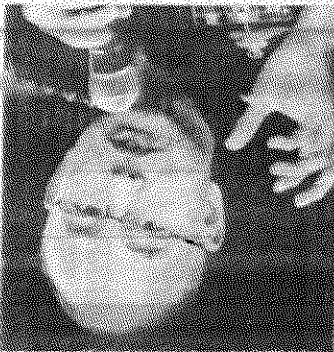
# 'Sparrows' still exist

## Albayalde: NPA



public market in Northern Samar last Nov 27, the assassination of Philippine Navy Sr. Chief Petty Officer Jesus Zaavedra in Pio Duran, Albay, and the botched assassination in Catbalogan City of ex-laborer Aran Boler of Matuginao, Samar. Over the weekend, Albayalde said that the Special Partisan Unit or SPAT-1 of the NPA has long been gone.

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**NATIONAL Capital Region Police Office Director General Oscar Albayalde**

The latest assassinations carried out by the NPA hit squads, according to Albayalde, was the killing of two Army soldiers at the Las Navas

After declaring that liquidation squads of the New People's Army (NPA) no longer exist, national police chief Director General Oscar Albayalde clarified that the New People's Army (NPA) still indeed maintains a group of hitmen.

These hitmen, according to Albayalde, are responsible for the death of 136 soldiers, policemen, local officials and even rebel

turnees in the past three years. "These hit squads are now popularly referred to as the Sparrows. But they are not based in urban areas like the former Sparrow Unit, but only get out from the red area (normally rural area) to do special

operations like liquidation, murder or assassination, as directed by the Regional Party

Tabara and Romulo Kintanar. He said that it was disbanded by the pro-Sison rearmist wing of the CPP/NPA/NDF in early 1990s during its 2nd Rectification period.

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The issue about the NPA squad

was revived after President Duterte was quoted saying that he wants to create a government version of hit squad targeting communist rebels.

Both Defense Secretary Delin Lorenzana and Albayalde are in favor of Duterte's plan, but they said they are yet to receive a formal directive from Malacanang.

"This specialized capability of the CPP/NPA/NPA should be addressed with an equally-specialized counter measure to reduce the potential for further attacks on soft targets," said Albayalde.

For his part, Lorenzana said that the government's hit squad must be composed of soldiers in order to ensure accountability if abuses would be committed.

## Ata-Manobos want 'salugpungan' schools out

WITH their thirst for education, members of Ata-Manobo communities in Talaingod, Davao del Norte once welcomed schools known in their communities as "*salugpungan*," the local term for unity. But they soon found out that what they thought was a blessing, brought with it a curse.

In a protest action recently, they called for closure of the schools.

Datu Lumansad Sibogan, spokesman of the Talaingod Tribal Council of Elders, admitted he had a part in putting up the *salugpungan* schools some years back. He thought that having them especially in far-flung Sitio Nasilaban, Barangay Palma Gil, would be good for the young Ata Manobos who then had no schools

### NPA-influenced

In two interviews with the Philippine Information Agency (PIA), Sibogan said he had faith in the *salugpungan* but this changed when he found out New People's Army (NPA) commanders were dropping by the

schools and the teachers were receiving them well. He said he knew them because he was once an NPA recruit himself.

Despite this, he noted that the students were learning but also worried about the mindset that such schools were developing among the young people, having once observed them being taught how to dismantle firearms during a night session.

"They're taught the right curriculum during the day but differently at night. Upon graduating, they'd have chaotic mindsets," he said in an interview before his group staged a protest action against the school.

### Absence of tribal consent

His group is also protesting activities of nongovernment organizations (NGOs) that do not have tribal consent, citing the recent report on the alleged entry in Talaingod of NCO workers in eight vans with children onboard identified as

*salugpungan* school students.

Sibogan expressed concern over mothers looking for their children later found among those on board the vans held at a checkpoint by the Talaingod Municipal Police Station.

He cautioned the NGO personalities "not to come back otherwise something will happen to them."

Meanwhile, Abenad Bago, 20, who was at the protest rally said an NGO personality being held at Talaingod was among those running the *salugpungan* schools.

### Abuses on young IPs

Bago was furious about how he and other young Ata-Manobos were sent to join protest rallies against the government, how they were made to believe in twisted education and in false information. He also confided that he was sexually abused by a gay *salugpungan* teacher.

"In our culture, we could execute him for having violated our human rights," he said referring

to the NGO personality and the gay teacher.

On the other hand, Manuel Salangani, 24, confessed to having the same experience as Bago and added that he was made to join protest rallies as a school requirement.

"We were taken wherever. What was supposed to be important was for us to still get grades for joining rallies," he told the PIA.

Later he found out that he had no grades, not even school records. He was not accepted in a public school for failure to present the necessary document required of transferees.

"That school [*salugpungan*] is not helping me," he said.

Sibogan, Bago and Salangani were among some 300 Ata Manobos who joined the November 30 activity that became a venue for expressing their disgust. They called for self-governance and demanded that NGOs stay out of their place. They wanted their children to go through the generally accepted system of education, armed with the right knowledge, unarmed and not harmed. *A7*

JEAN ABANGAN/PIA-11

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December 2018



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## DU30: Kids abducted

By Kristina Maralit, Elmer N. Manuel  
and Mananuel Bordey

President Rodrigo Duterte defended yesterday the police in arresting the group of former Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo and Alliance of Concerned Teacher (ACT) partylist Rep. France Castro saying they engaged in kidnapping. Ocampo's group was accosted in the company of 14 minors.

"You must be aware you cannot remove children from one community to another without

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the consent of the parents," Mr. Duterte said on the incident.

"That is actually kidnapping," he said in an interview after bestowing the Posthumous Quezon Service Award to the late Senator Miriam Defensor-Santiago.

"That is the usual problem with communist rebels, they use the Lumads which is now the reason why many members of the tribe are dead," he said.

Retiring Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Chief of Staff Gen. Carlito Galvez described the Saluggungan Community Learning Center and ALCADDEV Lumad School where the tribal children were being taken as breeding grounds for New People's Army (NPA) rebels.

"What we saw in Talaingod (Davao del Norte) is how Saluggungan and ALCADDEV are used as breeding grounds for the NPA. What they do is they bring the children here in Manila, which is an exposure. The five who surrendered in the north came from ALCADDEV and from indigenous communities and this only proves that Ocampo and Castro are active members of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP)," Galvez explained.

He added his claim was already vouched for by Lumad leaders: "Now, we see that the last bastion of the CPP-NPA is the indigenous peoples (IP), because they are the most vulnerable sector whom they can deceive."

Ocampo's group was accused of violating Republic Act 10364 or The Expanded Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2012 and Article 270 of the Revised Penal Code, which defines and provides penalty on the offense of kidnapping and failure to return a minor.

Ocampo and Castro claimed they were part of a humanitarian mission in Talaingod, Davao del Norte due to reports that students of these Lumad schools were fleeing the area following their closure.

#### Mind-conditioning sessions

The Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) also commended the Philippine National Police (PNP) and the local government unit of Talaingod for rescuing 14 minors and arresting the alleged perpetrators of kidnapping and child-trafficking led by Rep. France Castro of ACT Party-list, Ocampo and other suspects in Davao del Norte last week.

"We laud our law enforcement agencies for their quick response to parental complaints of child disappearances and the immediate arrest of Castro, Ocampo, and company," Interior Secretary Eduardo Año said.

**That is the usual problem with communist rebels, they use the Lumads which is now the reason why many members of the tribe are dead.**

He explained that the DILG "will make certain that all those guilty for these abhorrent acts against the vulnerable and innocent will face the full effect of the rule of law."

The DILG chief also deplored the brainwashing of the youth by the CPP-New People's Army (NPA)-National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) and their communist front organizations.

He said the mind-conditioning of these organizations were meant to instill hate toward their fellow Filipinos "under the guise of nationalism and humanitarian missions."

"We do not condone such reprehensible behavior against minors and condemn the communist and their allies for their sins against the youth such as kidnapping, child trafficking and other illegal treatment of children," Año added.

#### Trust courts

Ocampo, his companions and their supporters will have to trust the legal process and not jump into premature judgment, Presidential spokesman Salvador Panelo added.

"That is what the rule of law is all about. The law hears before it convicts, and it hears before it acquits as well," Panelo stated.

He added the Palace did not have a hand in the arrest of the left-leaning group.

Ocampo along with ACT Teacher's party-list Rep. France Castro and 70 others were arrested last 29 November in Davao del Norte on allegations of human trafficking and kidnapping.

They have since been allowed to post bail for their temporary freedom and was granted their request to have a preliminary investigation to refute the accusations and present evidence to support their defense.

The legal proceeding was proof that Malacañang is not meddling in the case and those accused "are being accorded due process."

**The last bastion of the CPP-NPA is the indigenous peoples because they are the most vulnerable sector whom they can deceive.**

"We thus reiterate our advice to all parties to trust the process without hasty and premature judgments. Let the legal mechanism work as it should," he said.

#### Personal view

Panelo added Foreign Affairs Secretary Teodoro Locsin's remarks criticizing the arrest of Ocampo "does not reflect the official view of the administration."

The Foreign Affairs chief called accusations against Ocampo as "bullsh\*t."

Locsin and Ocampo served in the House of Representatives at the same time, reason why the country's top diplomat said he "knows Ocampo" and added that the House "protected him against warrants."

Locsin, a former media man, was Makati 1st District representative from 2001 to 2010, while Ocampo led the Bayan Muna Party-list group in three successful elections, 2001, 2004 and 2007. He also served as Deputy Minority Leader in the 14th Congress.

However, Malacañang views Locsin's defense of Ocampo as "personal sentiments supportive of a friend being former colleagues," according to Panelo.

"Friendship however does not give birth to the conclusive conclusion that a person

charged of a crime is innocent nor does a charge sheet automatically make such individual guilty thereof," he expressed in a press statement.

"That is precisely why the Constitution grants every citizen the presumption of innocence and burdens the state to prove the guilt of the accused beyond a reasonable doubt," Panelo further said.

#### Resolve case quickly

For her part, Speaker Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo said the case filed against Ocampo's group should be resolved quickly.

"I understand that they have been given 10 days to file their counter affidavits in order to refute the charges against them, and I would urge a speedy resolution of the matter within the framework of our judicial system," Arroyo said in a statement.

The former chief executive said that she was called on by Gabriela Party-list Representatives Ariene Brosas and Emmi de Jesus to look into the situation of Castro, Ocampo and 17 others who were charged in Davao del Norte.

"My position regarding Rep. Castro is that the House is a body of elected representatives of the people and that all its members such as Rep. France Castro are entitled to a certain level of dignified and respectful treatment in situations such as this, particularly since our judicial system is based upon the principle of presumption of innocence," Arroyo explained.

She said that this is her position regarding all members of the Lower House regardless of their political or ideological alignment.

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# THE DAILY tribune

## Sex scandal cadets dismissed

By Elmer N. Manuel and Kathleen Mae Bulquerin

Philippine National Police (PNP) Director General Oscar Albayalde on Monday confirmed the dismissal of the three cadets who were tagged as principal accused in an oral sex scandal inside the police academy.

The order came less than a month after President Rodrigo Duterte expressed his disgust on the incident and ordered that the cadets be immediately kicked out from the PNP Academy.

Albayalde said the Philippine Public Safety College has recommended the dismissal of the three students from cadetship after forcing two underclassmen to perform oral sex on each other.

"The order for their dismissal is already for signature and it will be signed today," Albayalde said in a press briefing.

### Sacred cows

The three dismissed PNPA cadets, however, can still appeal their case within 15 days, the PNP chief explained.

He also stressed that they will not have any sacred cows in their organization.

"We should really show no mercy on cadets doing this act, because it will become a precedent," said Albayalde.

One of the three cadets is said to be the son of a PNP general, who is reportedly assigned in Region 6. The father of one of the victims is an official of the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology.

**The order for their dismissal is already for signature and it will be signed today.**

The incident took place last 6 October at the barracks of the PNPA campus in Silang, Cavite.

The senior cadet allegedly ordered the plebes to perform oral sex on each other while the two other cadets watched.

### Command responsibility

Then PNPA director Chief Superintendent Joseph Adnol was sacked for command responsibility.

It was also during Adnol's watch when nine cadets were beaten up by six upperclassmen after their graduation rites in March.

The cadets were found guilty of violating Rule 5 of PNPA cadet guide on sexual misconduct, undesirable traits and conduct unbecoming of an officer or acts inimical or prejudicial to good order or discipline.

### Death squad

Meanwhile, Albayalde backpedaled from his earlier declaration and insisted that the New People's Army (NPA) still has a special death squad unit.

Albayalde clarified that the NPA 'sparrow unit' that he was referring to that no longer exists was the notorious Alex Boncayan Brigade (ABB) led by Filemon Lagman, Arturo Tabara and Romulo Kimtanar.

"It (ABB) was disbanded by the pro-Sison wing of the CPP/NPA/NDF in early 1990's during its 2nd rectification period" he explained.

But since then, the pro-Sison wing also adopted its Sparrow-like operations against their perceived enemies," Albayalde continued.

"Over the past three years, there had been 136 hits on soldiers, policemen, rebel returnees, local officials and tribal leaders by attributed to its special partisan unit based in the 'red areas.'"

These hit squads are now popularly referred to as the Sparrows," he added.

## PREPARING FOR PLEBISCITE

## LANAO LEADERS SUPPORT BANGSAMORO CREATION

**MADALUM, LANAOS DEL SUR** — Traditional leaders from two Lanao provinces have pledged their full support for the implementation of the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL) as those living within the Bangsamoro territorial jurisdiction were expected to vote for its ratification in a plebiscite on Jan. 21.

During their assembly at Barangay Poblacion here on Nov. 29, 500 leaders from Lanao del Sur and Lanao del Norte said they wanted to have the BOL ratified so the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) could be established.

**Support**

The BARMM will replace the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao

Sultan Usman Sarangani Sr., the Sultan of Uya-an and reigning paramount sultan of Mindanao, said the gathering was a venue for them "to amplify and ventilate salient provisions of the organic law to make them understand and appreciate it and encourage them to support the measure."

Among those who attended the assembly were leaders of the 16 royal houses and the 28 legislative councils, or the "mubabaya ko taritib" of the two Lanao provinces.

Sarangani said the assembly, with the theme "Unity, Solidarity and Teamwork," was the first of its kind in Lanao.

He said they hoped the BOL ratification and the establishment of the BARMM would lead

to a "better and comfortable life for the Bangsamoro people."

**Promoting peace**

The BOL, he said, had recognized the importance of traditional leaders in Bangsamoro society, making it mandatory for them to play a pivotal role in promoting peace and order, preventing conflict, and in campaigning for the law's ratification.

"[We] will also work for the unification of the traditional leaders and encourage the search for solution to [their] differences," he said.

Adan Abdullah, who represented Ghadzali Jafaar, first vice chair of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front's (MILF) central committee and chair of the Bangsamoro Transition Com-

mission (BTC), said he would convey to the MILF leadership what had been agreed upon by the traditional leaders, especially on their support for BOL ratification.

He said the traditional leaders "have the responsibility to support governance," as he thanked the freedom fighters for "helping push the idea of self-governance and self-determination."

"No tribe of the Bangsamoro will be left behind," Abdullah added. 12

Speakers in the assembly included Aleem Rasad Bacaraman, president of the Haitul Ulama Bangsamoro; Commissioner Said Sheik of BTC; and Ali Solaiman, second vice chair and MILF central committee member. —JIGGER JERUSALEM INQ

# Army supports Duterte's plan to deploy more forces in BaSulTa

By DENALYN D. KABILING

**T**he Philippine Army (PA) Monday said it fully supports the intention of President Rodrigo Duterte to establish a solid force, possibly a division size, to conduct focus and intensified operation against threat groups in the BaSulTa (Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi) provinces.

In a statement, Army spokesman Col. Louie Villanueva said they believed the plan of upgrading forces in those areas will hasten the neutralization of the Abu Sayyaf Group and other threat groups operating there.

He added that sending additional troops will also hasten delivery of essential basic services as part of its support plan in collaboration with other government agencies.

"Currently we don't have a division in the BaSulTa area. What we have right now is Joint Task Force (JTF) Basilan and JTF Sulu," Villanueva said.

Villanueva said hundreds of troops were already deployed in the area in efforts of neutralizing the enemy.

Meanwhile, Lt. Col. Gerry Besana, spokesman of the Armed Forces of the Philippines-Western Mindanao Command (AFP-WestMinCom), said there are still more than 300 remaining ASG terrorists in the BaSulTa areas based on the Joint AFP and Philippine National Police (PNP) Intelligence Coordinating Council.

He added that based on their latest count, the Abu Sayyaf was still holding six hostages -- four Filipinos, one Dutch and a Vietnamese national -- all

being held in Sulu.

Besana said troops were already scouring the area to rescue the remaining victims.

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana earlier said they will create another military division to send to Sulu to once and for all rid the province of the 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

"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 Duterte announced last week the imminent troop movement after expressing dismay over a deadly clash between government forces and the Abu Sayyaf bandits in Patikul, Sulu more than a week 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. 15

*dx*

## Quevedo calls for more dialogues to promote lasting peace

By ALI G. MACABALANG

COTABATO CITY - Retired Cardinal Orlando Quevedo on Sunday called for continuing dialogues to promote true understanding and lasting peace in the country, especially in Mindanao's troubled communities.

In a statement issued in time with the observance of Mindanao Peace Week, Quevedo urged the conduct of more dialogues that are "not merely intellectual discussion (but characterized by) all listening humbly and respectfully to the other."

"Dialogues should entail listening with one's ears, but most importantly lis-

tening with one's heart," said Quevedo, the country's eighth cardinal who retired on November 6, and was replaced by Jolo Bishop Angelito Lampson.

He cited as example the kind of dialogues that made peace possible between the forces of the government and Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

He said Mindanao was already on the "threshold of definitive peace," referring to the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL) that stemmed from two major peace accords forged by the government and the MILF in 2013 and 2014.

The BOL, officially known as R.A. 11054, seeks to create the Bangsamoro

Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) in lieu of the 29-year-old Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM).

It calls for the conduct of a plebiscite on Jan. 21, 2019 in ARMM and other areas proposed for inclusion in BARMM, namely the cities of Cotabato and Isabela, six towns in Lanao del Norte and 39 villages in six North Cotabato towns.

After his retirement, Quevedo had vowed to continue advocating peace dialogues relative to the BOL implementation stages.

He had earlier told The Manila Bulletin he would rally actively for the

inclusion of this city into the BARMM, unlike in 1989 and 2001 when church leaders played key roles in the residents' disapproval of inclusion in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM).

Quevedo attended here on Sunday the launch of MILF Vice Chairman Mohager Iqbal's book entitled "Negotiating Peace: An Insider's Perspective to the Bangsamoros' Struggle for Self-Determination."

The book compiles Iqbal's chronologically-arranged speeches delivered from 2005 to 2016 as the MILF engaged in peace negotiation with the Philippine government.

## 16 suspects in slay of 3 farmers arrested

KIDAPAWAN CITY - Assisted by Muslim and Christian residents advocating peaceful coexistence, police operatives arrested 16 suspects in the killing of three Moro farmers in an ambush in Matalam, North Cotabato over the weekend.

The 16 suspects were collared one after another in a police pursuit operation launched an hour after they allegedly waylaid a convoy of motorcycles bearing some ethnic Muslim farmers. Three of them died on the spot along Barangay Kibudoc in Matalam, a town adjacent here, on Saturday; the provincial police office here announced Sunday.

The three fatalities were identified as George Dilangalen, Daring Panga and Mohammad Angeles, who were said to be members of a Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) faction led by the late Dimas Ambil, a field leader

of MNLF founding chairman Nur Misuari.

Taher Gulambangan Solaiman, a North Cotabato-based official of the Mindanao Human Rights Action Center, called for a thorough probe of the ambush-slay, not only to give justice to the fatalities and their families, but also to prevent a repeat of bloody fighting between Moro natives and Christian settlers in the province in 1970s.

The arrested ambush suspects were led by Joel Bolante, 41, whose Ilongo family has been locked in a land dispute with relatives of the fatalities, Matalam police investigators said.

Also detained at the town police station pending formal criminal charges were Romar Prado, 29; Redmar Samson, 32; Reynaldo Mosquera, 41; Efren Mosquera, 51; Warlito Mosquera, 37; Danilo Mercado, 25; Lando Heiera, 43;

Jonathan Viajante, 42; Alvin Villarín, 30; Dennis Olvido, 34; Johnny Patria, 27; and four minors, all Visayan residents of Matalam's Barangay Estado.

The three fatalities were traveling together aboard separate motorcycles on Saturday when their attackers emerged from the roadside, and peppered them with shots from mostly vintage rifles, which reportedly belonged to Visayan kin-members of the paramilitary Citizens Armed Forces Geographical Unit (Cafgu), initial investigations said.

Four companions of the fatalities named as Jomer and Datu Ali, both surnamed Sultan, and siblings Samsudin and Suharto Dilangalen were first reported missing. They were eventually located in nearby villages where they fled as the assailants pursued them. (Ali G. Macabalang)

# 16 suspects in ambush slay of 3 farmers nabbed

By ALI MACABALANG

KIDAPAWAN CITY — Sixteen suspects tagged in the ambush slay of three Moro farmers have been arrested in Matalam, North Cotabato.

Police nabbed 41-year-old Joel Bolante whose Ilongo family has been locked in a land dispute with

relatives of the victims.

Also detained at the town police station pending formal criminal charges were Romar Prado, 29; Romar Samson, 32; Reynaldo Mosquera, 41; Eiren Mosquera, 51; Warlito Mosquera, 37; Danilo Mercado, 25; Lando Helera, 43; Jonathan Vajante, 42; Aivin Villarín, 30; Dennis Olvido, 34; Johnny Patria, 27; and four minors.

all Visayan residents of Matalam's Barangay Estado.

The suspects were picked up one after the other, an hour after they allegedly waylaid a convoy of motorcycles carrying some ethnic Muslim farmers in Barangay Kibudoc.

The fatalities were identified as George Dilangalen, Daring Panga, and Mohammad Angeles, alleged to be members of a Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) faction led by the late Dima Ambil, a field leader of MNLF founding chairman Nur Misuari.

Taner Gulambangan Solaiman, a North Cotabato-based official of the Mindanao Human Rights Action Center, called for a thorough probe of the ambush-slay not only to give justice the fatalities and their families but also to prevent a repeat of bloody fighting between Moro natives and Christian settlers in the province in 1970s.

Police said the suspects were armed by vintage rifles, which reportedly belonged to Visayan kin-members of the paramilitary Citizens Armed Forces Geographical Unit.

Four companions of the fatalities named as Jomer and Datu Ali, both surnamed Sultan, and siblings Samsudin and Suharto Dilangalen survived the ambush.

## ARMM officials optimistic of new law

**COTABATO CITY:** Officials of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) are optimistic that the incoming leaders of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) will bring out the best among students under their watch.

The BARMM will replace ARMM if the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL), the enabling measure for such a change, is ratified via a plebiscite on Jan. 21, 2019.

Rasol Mitmug Jr., Department of Education (DepEd)-ARMM secretary, said the upcoming BARMM political entity would be proud of how students in the present autonomous region are at par with those in the Visayas, Luzon and in Metro Manila.

Mitmug said seven students from public schools recently brought honor to ARMM at competitions in Metro Manila and abroad.

Ricco Teraytay of the Camp Siongco National High School in Datu Odin Sinsuat, Maguindanao was a finalist in the 2018 World Taekwondo Poomsae Championship held from November 15 to 18 in Taipei, Taiwan with 59 countries participating.

Yahser Malang of ARMM's Regional Science High School, was one of two grand finalists in the Southeast Asia Video

Festival held on November 24 in Manila.

"The DepEd-ARMM and our regional governor, Mujiv Hataman, are glad of the honor they brought home, all seven of them," Mitmug said.

Aside from Teraytay and Malang, five more students of the Parang National High School in Parang, Maguindanao were champions in the Science Inventory Project contest held on November 16 in Olongapo City.

Meanwhile, Hataman said he was certain the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), which will lead the BARMM, would sustain the education programs of the present autonomous regional government.

The MILF will lead the transitory team that would oversee the transition from ARMM to BARMM pending the election of its pioneering set of regional officials.

"We don't have an iota of doubt on the capability of the MILF to pursue the education and extra-curricular advancement of ARMM's Muslim, Christian and lumad elementary, high school and college students. That's why we will vote in favor of the Bangsamoro Organic Law during the plebiscite next year," he said.

**A7 JULMUNIR I. JANNARAL**



**EDITORIAL**

## Utterly unacceptable

**R**umors that he ran a death squad to crack down on crime when he was mayor of Davao City has hounded President Duterte for years. His campaign threats to fatten the fish in Manila Bay with the corpses of drug users might have hinted at his atavistic instincts for solving social problems, but his allies and supporters have typically dismissed such talk as the usual bragadocio of a tough-talking politico.

Last week, Mr. Duterte once again seems to have confirmed killing as a preferred policy, when he announced that he was forming his own hit squads to deal with communist rebels or sympathizers. "I will create my own Sparrow," the President said, referring to the New People's Army's (NPA) unit that targeted police, military and government officials in urban areas during the 1980s.

"(The death squads) will do nothing but look for idlers who are prospective (NPA) members and take them out," the President said, adding that his instructions to the "Duterte Death Squad"—armed civilians not from the community, to be posted in public places like transport terminals—would be "to get one or two" rebels.

Critics and horrified observers were quick to denounce Mr. Duterte's plan for a presidential team of assassins, calling it downright illegal. It is more than that. It is a reprehensible, utterly unacceptable idea, one that should never be legitimized in a society that calls itself, or aspires to be, democratic and governed by the rule of law.

Mr. Duterte's announcement came barely a week after he had issued Memorandum Order No. 32, which deployed additional police and military forces in Samar, Negros Island and the Bicol Region to deal with what Malacañang described as "lawless violence." The monumental irony in the President's death-squad proposition, however, is that it is the very definition of lawless violence—men empowered

to act above, or to arrogate unto themselves, the law.

How would these vigilantes go about their job targeting loiterers, "prospective" NPA recruits and just about anybody they suspect of being a communist sympathizer? Would psychic powers be a qualification to join such a force, for the killers to divine which Filipinos are wont to harbor sentiments and ideas deemed undesirable by this administration?

The appalling implications of the President's words were typically lost on presidential spokesperson Salvador Panelo, who said civilians should even be "relieved" that such a hit squad meant to defend soldiers and civilians from communist violence is being considered. Justice Secretary Menardo Guevarra, meanwhile, tried to explain them away as signature Duterte hyperbole. "We should always understand that kind of statement to mean: Use reasonable force to apprehend suspected assassins."

Like-minded people, however, unsurprisingly seemed to know exactly what the President meant. Former police chief and now senatorial aspirant Ronald "Bato" dela Rosa came out swinging for Mr. Duterte's proposal, on the grounds that "*Yung mga NPA lang ba ang puwedeng sige, patay nang patay ng government troops? Di ba unfair 'yan? So ang gohyerno maghanap din ng paraan para makabawi din sa kanila 'di ba. Tagal na yung problema natin sa insurgency na 'yan dahil palaging nakatali 'yung kamay natin* (Isn't it unfair that only the NPAs are allowed to kill government troops? The government must have a way to get back at them. We've had an insurgency problem for so long because our hands are tied)."

Alas, the only thing revealed by Dela Rosa's remarks, aside from his unqualified loyalty to his boss, is how, even after formal education and years of experience in the police force, he has apparently yet to grasp a fundamental principle: that the entire rubric of law and regulation and protocol that supposedly ties the hands of the police is what makes them officers of the law in the first place. Dela Rosa is not a cop because of his gun, but because of his badge—the symbol of the state authority that deputizes him as an enforcer of the law. Without the rule of law behind him to justify his use of a gun, he would be no different from a bandit—or, for that matter, from the prospective gang of hitmen he's now championing unthinkingly. **A14**

How many more cops and men with guns may end up seduced by the siren call of impunity from on high? Caloocan City Judge Rodolfo Azucena Jr., who recently convicted three policemen for the murder of teenager Kian delos Santos, has a stark warning for the government and his fellow Filipinos in his decision: "A shoot first, think later attitude can never be countenanced in a civilized society."

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#MINDANAO

# The South starts to 'Sulong'

By JOHN TRIA

**N**EW large property developments in the last two weeks in Northern and Southern Mindanao are a fresh batch of private sector investments that will dovetail with government infrastructure programs and create further opportunity in areas never thought possible.

Developers like Ayala Land and Cebu Landmasters Inc. (CLI) are betting big on Mindanao. Ayala's Habini Bay, a 526-hectare master-planned estate located within the municipalities of Alubijid and Laguingan, Misamis Oriental.

Located near the midpoint of Cagayan de Oro and Iligan, bring a new wave of investments to the Cagayan Iligan corridor, and pull up growth in the Lanao and Bukidnon provinces.

Meanwhile, publicly listed CLI brings the 20-hectare Davao Global Township, a central business district that will bring in investors to build properties to spur further growth in the two southern Mindanao regions, as Socksargen and Davao, currently on the crest of 8 and 11% growth, respectively.

As peace and order issues continue to subside while martial law remains in place, the rise of the south is clear.

### Sulong's top is agriculture:

#### Continuing martial law in top 10

In the consolidated actionable recommendations of the recent "Sulong Pilipinas" multisectoral regional consultations in Clark, Davao-Cebu, and La Union, agricultural productivity and raising farmers' incomes through education and technologies emerged as No. 1.

This is followed by the need to build more physical infrastructure such as seaports, airports, and mass-based transport systems; and simplifying requirements for loans with reasonable interest rates for SMEs and the rural sector.

Other recommendations in the top 10 include improving access to education; stricter profiling of the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) recipients, monitoring their expenses and providing them livelihood training; and speeding up the issuance by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) licenses.

Still, other proposals in the list are proper planning of infrastructure projects to reduce business disruptions, simplifying processes at the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR), and improving peace and order by ensuring police and military visibility in rural areas, intensively monitoring illegal trade activities in coastal areas, and continuing the implementation of martial law in Mindanao.

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These recommendations build on the previous lists and gains of the last two "Sulong."

Doubtless, some recommendations may raise the eyebrows of many of Manila's pundits, but these being results of consultations, and high growth numbers undeniable with the moves of investors to place their bets on the island shows a continuing growth that their eyebrows cannot deny.

The signal is the need to ensure deeper inclusivity of less capable sectors, particularly in the rural areas, to build on previous infrastructure gains by boosting food production and processing and training.

The need for continuing Martial Law in Mindanao was not a surprising outcome, as high regional economic growth in several Mindanao regions are seen as a result of it.

Growth in the south is the key to unlocking the country's growth potentials. Inclusion of previously excluded sectors makes this possible. Without it, local businesses will not have the markets for their products. That said, the South has nowhere to go but up.

#### **The Maroons have already won**

Across all campuses of the State University and social media accounts of students and alumni, Maroon fever is on! The entry of the once ignored University of the Philippines Fighting Maroons to the UAAP basketball championship has won more hearts than they hoped to get.

Watch parties sprouted in bars and restaurants all over the country, alumni and politicians weighed in favor of the deep underdogs from Diliman. Mall theaters from Metro Manila to Davao featured the game for free.

Once a lonely chant, "UP Fight!" suddenly became a viral phenomenon swelling chests with pride.

Yet the real draw were the UP Maroons themselves. How can you not fall for them? From perennial cellar dweller, this team now boasts championship capabilities.

The real expectation for this season was but a semifinals slot – something they almost lost. Beating expectations and winning from below is the real story. Filipinos love the underdog and how they clash with the perceived powerful. How the once excluded can now eat at the leaders table is a scene many love to watch. The Maroons just showed how it can be done.

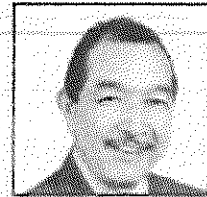
For reactions: [facebook.com/john-triapiage](https://www.facebook.com/john-triapiage)

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CHAFF FROM THE GRAIN

# The road to autocracy



B. HECTOR R. R. VILLANUEVA

*"He fell in love with himself at first sight and it is a passion to which he has always remained faithful."*

— Anthony Powell

**P**RESIDENT Rodrigo Roa Duterte has the best of intentions in pursuing peace in the country, achieving economic growth, and improving the welfare of the people through his motives and authoritarian style of governance are generating disquieting uneasiness and economic and political uncertainty among investors and the ruling elite of society.

To paraphrase Shakespeare's Hamlet, "Though this be madness, yet there is method in't," and thus we dare to ask what is PDU30 really up to in the emerging scheme of things?

Is democracy the best route to a strong republic and First World industrial economy, or will authoritarianism

or autocracy do a better job?

With ambivalent masses fixated on poverty, a feeble opposition, an ineffectual Congress, and an increasing military capability and ubiquity, what does the future auger for the Philippines?

First, it is recalled that, for various reasons and political morass, the former economic "Poster Boy" of East Asia after World War II has since then been overtaken and eclipsed by Japan, South Korea, China, Taiwan, Singapore, Indonesia, Thailand, Hong Kong, Vietnam, and Brunei, and if the Philippines does not shape up, it might find itself lagging behind Myanmar, Laos, and Cambodia.

Though the observation is water under the bridge, so to speak, there are urgent challenges to be resolved, such as Communist insurgency, Islamic terrorism, population growth, job generation, food security, SCS, and climate change *pari-passu* with the endless war against drugs, corruption, criminality, and other issues that call for extraordinary leadership, a different

political system, a transformed patriotic populace, and a strong disciplined Armed Forces.

Second, we find President Rodrigo Roa Duterte gingerly walking a tight rope between what he wants without too much fuss and legalese while adhering ostensibly to the rule of law, Congressional foot dragging, and social media.

In the process, in his effort to remain popular, Pres. Duterte resorts to legalistic shortcuts and autocratic behavior to get what he wants, and invariably achieves the desired results, to the consternation of civil society.

In conclusion, it is evident that to achieve rapid economic growth and bring the country to the next level of development, the country may succumb to authoritarian rule and diminished liberties under President Rodrigo Roa Duterte or his successors.

There is always a price to pay.

Autocracy is not an ideal remedy but it is a harsh alternative to a weak republic.

You be the judge. 13

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## China's nemesis stumped

**F**IFTY years from now, people will not talk about new Chief Justice Lucas Bersamin or retired Teresita de Castro whom he replaced, but about Senior Associate Justice Antonio Carpio, one of the best chief justices we never had.

After President Duterte said he appointed De Castro to restore seniority at the Supreme Court and would follow the tradition in selecting her replacement, Carpio no longer refused his automatic nomination.

But he was roundly rebuffed by Duterte's shameless double-talk by even carping that Carpio had previously rejected his nomination as chief justice.

This comes after the much-ballyhooed state visit here of Chinese President Xi Jinping.

Duterte most probably was talked into reversing his planned appointment of Carpio by his billionaire-business friends and by the president of the Salim Group, the fourth wealthiest man in Indonesia, who gathered at Malacanang for Xi's state banquet. The Salim Group led here by Manny Pangilinan is reportedly close to Xi due to deep family ties between the Chinese royal family and the Indonesian magnate.

As chief justice, Carpio will turn out to be the nemesis of China, applying the might of the country's highest court against the continued intrusions of China into our territorial waters and as a formidable force against Malacañang's temerity to enforce an international ruling.



*Duterte has made him more illustrious and coveted...*

### BLESSING THE TIDES

DODY LACUNA

Carpio will not let up on his devout vigilance against any constitutional infirmities in a major deal for the joint exploration of the West Philippine Sea, as well as in all the various business and government deals with Beijing. One of his shining moments once again proved he was a cut above the rest; when he refused the nomination to succeed ousted Chief Justice Lourdes Sereno, saying he did not want to benefit from the quo warranto petition against her which he opposed.

Teresita de Castro became the most likely successor to her boss whom she publicly vilified in leading the moves at the SC and before Congress for Sereno's humiliating removal. Unlike Carpio, she thought nothing of it and proudly basked in her appointment as new CJ.

Carpio's personal and moral gratifications are not distinct from

each other and only come after the tests of his genuine character. And because his satisfaction rests on indisputably deep and upright moorings, it is not easily eroded by pride and personal ambition. In denying him the post of chief justice, Duterte has unwittingly made a profound choice to make Carpio's name more illustrious and coveted than his.

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The Christmas season beckons with a spirit of pride and selfishness more than anything else. More and more people do not think of exempting themselves from the worsening traffic by acquiring new cars and SUVs. The latest LTRFB data says more than 240,000 vehicles are purchased each year with more than 30 percent of them in Metro Manila. Countless Filipinos just feel so entitled for new furniture, new wardrobes, new gadgets and tons

of food and drinks, as well as for travels abroad.

White Metro Manila may be abuzz with loud displays of the merriest time of the year, there are several places that are not, such as orphanages, prisons and hospitals. Inmates and patients receive only token donations from government officials and politicians who relish the days only because of the media and political mileage they bring. There are, of course, unquestionably committed and generous donors who do not mind parting with a hefty sum or substantial donations.

But, the calm is not inviting and almost palpable at hospitals where HIV/AIDS patients lie wasting away. San Lazaro's Pavilion Four has about 50 such patients, most of them had been abandoned by their families and friends. To them, Christmas does not decree a special moment for renewed compassion and fellowship. Only their "lovers" are found comforting them at their death beds.

This government has done little to prevent the rapid spread of HIV/AIDS. Some 1,200 new patients were found afflicted with HIV in Luzon during the first semester of the year. While relishing a nearly open lifestyle of sex with men, almost half of the current patients at San Lazaro did not feel any dread for the deadly disease. Some even thought it would be curable due to advanced medical technology. More than medication, they need the real spirit of Christmas that money cannot buy - companionship, comfort and fervent prayers.

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# Bring back the ROTC

**“ Critics of the ROTC-CMT program argue that... the entire program is a profitable enterprise for the ROTC-CMT officers who are alleged to receive a commission from the sale of military uniforms and supplies.**

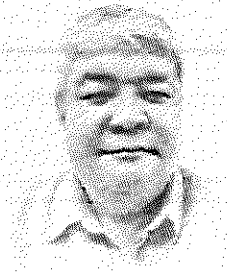
It used to be called the Reserve Officers Training Corps or ROTC program from the Commonwealth era all the way to the proclamation of martial law in the Philippines in September 1972. Conceived as a training ground to prepare able young college men to defend the country in the event of a war, the ROTC program was in every university and college co-curricular list.

The program had two phases: the basic and the advance courses.

Every able-bodied male college student in the Philippines was required to take the basic course, which consisted of four semesters of what was then called “military science and tactics.” The students were required to wear a khaki or fatigue uniform, sport a prescribed haircut, observe strict rules of military discipline, march in cadence under the sun, read maps, carry a firearm or at least know how to handle one, and rough it up in the campus grassland or at a similar place elsewhere.

Graduates of the basic course are considered part of the reserve force of soldiers who may be called upon if war breaks out.

Those who choose to take the advance course continued with four more semesters of the same thing, or something more complicated than that.



**THE SCRUTINIZER**  
Victor Avecilla

The students enrolled in the advance program become cadet officers tasked with handling the military training of their fellow students.

Upon completion of the advance phase, the student concerned becomes a reserve officer in the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP).

A commandant is in charge of the program. He is usually a sergeant or a probationary second lieutenant from the AFP.

Upon the proclamation of martial law in 1972, the ROTC nomenclature was renamed the Citizens Military Training (CMT) course. The new name was more descriptive of the program considering that not everyone who takes the course ends up as an officer in the reserve corps of the AFP. Besides, the program was all about training college students to be part of a citizen army.

Critics of the ROTC-CMT program argue that the military training is superficial because it is just about marching and parades, and that any training beyond that, like the use of firearms and map reading, is useless in a nuclear war. They also argue that the entire program is a profitable enterprise for the ROTC-CMT officers who are alleged to receive a commission from the sale of

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military uniforms and supplies.

The ROTC-CMT program experienced a setback in 2001 when a scandal rocked the corps of cadets in the University of Santo Tomas in Manila. A cadet officer was found dead after he allegedly exposed corruption in the corps.

That incident prompted Congress to enact Republic Act 9163, which replaced the ROTC-CMT program with the National Service Training Program (NSTP). Under the NSTP law, military training became optional for university and college students.

As many had predicted, enrollment in the ROTC-CMT program declined drastically. Nobody wanted to sport a military haircut on campus, march under the hot sun, and be shouted at by a foul-mouthed sergeant.

Many parents also saw the ROTC-CMT program as a useless expense and welcomed its abolition.

The NSTP program may have an ROTC option, but as long as it is an option, its consequence on the Filipino youth will not be felt.

Seventeen years since the abolition of the ROTC-CMT co-curricular requirement, many of today's young Filipinos do not know what to do in the event of a war hitting Philippine shores, much less discharge a firearm.

If they had at least taken the ROTC-CMT program, then they will know to what camp they are to report to, and they will at least know how

to handle a firearm. More importantly, they will have the requisite nationalism, inculcated in them in the ROTC-CMT program, to resist enemy invasion without fear or favor.

“*The solution is not to abolish the program, but to institute safeguards against corruption and abuse.*”

This writer is an alumnus of the CMT program of the University of the Philippines (UP) from 1977 up to 1979. Each cadet was taught military discipline and courtesy which, in a way, contributed to one's personality development. The drills also taught each cadet the importance of command and, more importantly, command responsibility. Each cadet had to know how to handle a real firearm, and got to fire one at the firing range at Fort Bonifacio. The discipline taught in the ROTC-CMT made better persons of every cadet. In retrospect, this writer is grateful for what he learned in the UP ROTC-CMT program.

Of course, the ROTC-CMT program is prone to corruption and abuse by scoundrels and scalawags. The solution is not to abolish the program, but to institute safeguards against corruption and abuse. †

Seventeen years is too long a wait and an experiment on the NSTP. It's time to reinstate the ROTC-CMT program.

# Unbelievable Red excuse

**“What ‘solidarity’ mission could this have been for them to take it upon themselves to evacuate these schoolchildren?”**

Despite these aboveground Reds' complaint against the police for arresting, detaining and charging them on alleged kidnapping and trafficking of minors in a Lumad school, it is pretty accurate to say that these commies and propagandists and their sympathetic yellow media loved their arrest. This provides them with more opportunities by way of propaganda to spread among their and the usual rights groups' to try and cement their portrayal of President Duterte as a dictator and violator of human rights.

As usual, the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) that uses the agency for clearly partisan political purposes, as well as virtually joining the Reds and, of course, the usual yellows' anti-Duterte propaganda, to put down the President entered the picture.

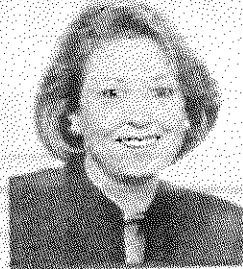
Naturally, as the CHR joined the Reds' chorus there was that warning again from this agency, saying that due process in making the arrests must be observed and should equally apply to human rights defenders, as an agency official referred to the detention of former Bayan Muna Party-list Congressman Satur Ocampo, party-list Rep. France Castro and 16 others in Davao del Norte.

Naturally, for more media mileage, especially since Friday and Saturday were very slow news days, Ocampo and his commie colleagues threatened to file charges against the police for their arrest supposedly on child trafficking and kidnapping charges.

Yet, for all their propaganda against Duterte, they sought the help of the President's special assistant, Bong Go, for their release from police custody.

These Reds, as usual, want to have it both ways.

But it did look -- at least initially -- as if the police made the arrest on the very flimsy ground of kidnaping and trafficking of schoolchildren. Most thought so -- until, of course, another



**FRONTLINE**  
Ninez Cacho-Olivares

side to the story came around, with angry Lumad tribal leaders confronting the arrested aboveground Reds, their usual leftist activists and teachers at a police station in Talaingod, Davao del Norte on Thursday for supposedly delivering their children to New People's Army (NPA) rebels to fight government forces.

That's a pretty serious criminal offense, if the

Lumad tribal leaders can prove this. It is, however, very possible for these Reds and their leftist teachers and supporters to be engaged in recruiting minors in their war against government. The Reds certainly have armed members in the New People's Army defecting to the government's side and, even when they refuse to admit it, these local and self-exiled commies are trying to fight a useless war against the Duterte government.

Children are, after all, easily manipulated by these commies to be taught that government is evil and must be fought.

The Lumad tribal leaders were quoted as asking why their children were being taken by these Red groups when there is no conflict occurring in the area.

“Why are you taking our children when there is no conflict happening in our place? Ever since you (Reds) started mungling with us, many have died. When you go up to our mountains, surely there will be killing, because you are the first ones to kill soldiers,” Bai Pilar Libayao at Datu Andigao Agay told Ocampo,

Castro and teachers of the Saluggungan Learning Center (SLC).

“Leave our children alone and take your teachers who teach no good things, except to fight the government. We don't want someone from our tribe getting killed anymore,” Bai Pilar added.

The tribal leader also stressed that it is the NPA that is disrupting their community and using them to fight the government.

The Lumad leaders warned Ocampo, Castro and the SLC teachers against setting foot into their area.

It is apparently not the first time that these tribal leaders have complained about commies teaching their children to fight government.

The reports said that the school had long been ordered closed by the local Department of Education on the appeal of tribal leaders who had earlier claimed the groups have been teaching their children to rebel against the government.

Ocampo had a different claim, saying that they were blocked by the cops after they fetched Lumad students and teachers who were supposedly forced to evacuate their school after it was padlocked by the paramilitary group Alamara.

But it has to be questioned why Ocampo and his leftist group took it upon themselves to supposedly evacuate their school. The schoolchildren were not their children and it may as well be asked, too, why these Reds and their leftist groups were at the same time on their claimed solidarity mission to bring food to these students. What “solidarity” mission could this have been for them to take it upon themselves to evacuate these schoolchildren?

These Red “saviors,” as they want to portray themselves to avoid jail time, certainly are not the parents of these schoolchildren. However, they quickly claimed that they had the parents' permission to take the children out of the school.

**“Children are, after all, easily manipulated by these commies to be taught that government is evil and must be fought.”**

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Can you believe this  
crap of an excuse? All  
the parents asked these  
commies, including  
the teachers, for these  
Reds to evacuate these  
schoolchildren? Who in  
his right mind would  
believe this commie claim,  
especially since no parent  
of these schoolchildren  
were around to bring their  
children home, instead of  
having these commies and  
their leftist human rights  
groups evacuate them and  
find sanctuary in a church  
that was closed?

Satur and his Red group  
with the support of the  
yellows and their media, as  
well as white-robed activists,  
apparently believe that  
Filipinos were born yesterday.

# ONLINE NEWS

## 04 DECEMBER 2018

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### PRRD to study AFP, PNP's proposal to extend martial law

By Jelly Musico

**MANILA** -- Malacañang on Monday said President Rodrigo Duterte will evaluate the recommendation of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and Philippine National Police (PNP) to extend martial law in Mindanao for a year.

"Of course, the President will always evaluate whatever recommendation that the AFP and PNP will give him," Presidential Spokesperson Salvador Panelo said in a Palace media briefing.

Earlier, outgoing AFP chief-of-staff, Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr. said the AFP's decision was based on recommendations from Regional Peace and Order Councils, Commission on Elections, local government units and other agencies to extend martial law "at least one year" in Mindanao.

"Given the support of martial law in Mindanao even by the Catholic bishop and the citizens there, the President may be persuaded to grant, approve the recommendation," Panelo said.

"But of course, that's the prerogative of the President," he added.

Panelo said the safety of the people in Mindanao is always the basis of any extension of martial law.

"If the threats remain and there is still an ongoing rebellion, then constitutionally, the basis would be valid for continuation of martial law," Panelo said.

Duterte placed Mindanao under martial law on May 23, 2017 following attacks launched by the terrorist Maute Group in Marawi City.

At the height of the six-month Marawi conflict in July last year, the House of Representatives granted Duterte's request for martial law extension until Dec. 31, 2017.

The House and the Senate granted anew the President's request for the extension of martial law and the suspension of the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus for a year, from Jan. 1 to Dec. 31, 2018.

Panelo said it would still be up to the two houses of Congress whether or not to extend martial law.

"Again, the Constitution grants them the authority to decide whether or not it will extend martial law. So, we leave it to them," Panelo said. *(PNA)*

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# Galvez wants 'almost 2-year term' for AFP chief

By Priam Nepomuceno

**MANILA** -- Outgoing Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) chief-of-staff Gen. Carlito Galvez, Jr. is hoping that the tenure for the military's highest position will be set for "almost two years" to ensure continuity in their programs and reforms.

"(We are hoping that) a tenure of almost two years for (AFP) chief-of-staff (will be set so that) magkaroon talaga ng continuity, that is what we are asking. *Magkaroon sana ng ganoong* (That we have such) tenure (the AFP chief-of-staff), to (plan and see into fruition) the reforms that we can make for two years," Galvez said.

He also expressed confidence that the AFP can defeat all security threats within the term of President Rodrigo Duterte.

"I'm very, very confident that we can finish all the conflicts in two to three years' time, with the kind of President that we have, a very supportive President, we are very confident that we can finish all threats in his time," Galvez added.

The outgoing AFP chief is a member of Philippine Military Academy Class of 1985 and will step down on Dec. 12 upon reaching the mandatory retirement age of 56.

Galvez also said he is very fulfilled with his 30 years of military service, especially during his term as AFP chief.

"I'm very fulfilled *kasi yung lahat ng gusto kong mangyari sa* (everything that I wanted to happen for the) Armed Forces, with the help of our superiors, *yung mga predecessors ko* (my predecessors), we were able to instill discipline and *tinatawag nating* (what we call) institutional reforms. As of now, the Armed Forces have enjoyed good image wherein our legitimacy and our purpose of serving the people and the state has been recognized by the Filipino people," he said.

Galvez added he wants troops to remember him as the AFP chief who helped make the military's financial institution very strong and imbued an integrity program aside from helping weed out corruption in the institution. (PNA)

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# AFP to conduct more intel ops vs. NPA hit squads

By Priam Nepomuceno

**MANILA** -- The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) will beef up intelligence operations to foil New People's Army (NPA) hit squads from attacking off-duty military personnel.

This was disclosed by AFP spokesperson, Brig. Gen. Edgard Arevalo in a message to reporters Monday.

"While it still remains an idea (to form a unit tasked to hunt or neutralize NPA hit squads) of the President as of this time, we will continue to step up our intelligence some more, continue to remind our troops to be extra vigilant during 'Liberty', Rest and Recreation', or otherwise non-combat activities to prevent them from falling prey to treacherous NPA attacks," Arevalo said.

Arevalo said the creation of the new unit highlights President Rodrigo Duterte's determination to stamp out the NPA liquidation squads.

The President earlier mulled the idea of creating the AFP's own liquidation squad to specifically go after NPA hit squads targeting security personnel.

"I do not want to second guess what's in the mind of the President by calling it Duterte Death Squad (DDS). But to us, it could've carried his name with it to show that he is personally resolved and determined to stamp out this terrorist NPA's liquidation squads," he added.

If the AFP is to be asked, Arevalo said the military can call it by another name like Team Counter-NPA Liquidation Squad and other similar names.

"We advocate a creation of teams comprised of elite soldiers to form that Team and we do not want its success to be referred to as the death squad of the President whose only intent as the Commander-in-Chief is to realize his care and compassion to the men and women of the AFP (and the welfare of their families) who may be victimized by the NPA," the AFP spokesperson said. *(PNA)*

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# AFP chief insists Lumad schools used as NPA breeding ground

By Priam Nepomuceno

**MANILA** -- Outgoing Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) chief-of-staff, Gen. Carlito Galvez said the Salugpungan Community Learning Center and ALCADEV Lumad School are being used as breeding grounds of the New People's Army (NPA).

This was emphasized by the military chief in an interview with reporters shortly after flag-raising ceremony in Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City Monday.

"*Ang nakikita natin (sa) (What we see in) Talaingod (Davao del Norte), yung (the) Salugpungan, at saka (and) ALCADEV, ginagamit talaga yan (are being used). The people must know that the Salugpungan at saka yung (and the) ALCADEV is a breeding ground for NPA, yung ginagawa nila (former Bayan Muna Representative) Satur Ocampo na dinadala dito sa (What they do is that they bring them here in) Manila. This is an exposure. 'Yung lima na nag-surrender dito sa north na galing dun sa ALCADEV at saka galing din dun sa areas ng mga (The five who surrendered in the north who came from ALCADEV and those who came from the areas of the) IPs (Indigenous People). Ito yung talagang nagpapatunay na talagang itong si (This really proves that) (ACT-Teacher Partylist Representatives France) Castro at saka itong si (and) Satur Ocampo, they are active members of the (Communist Party of the Philippines) CPP-NPA," he added.*

Galvez also said this claim is already attested by Lumad leaders.

"*So ngayon, nakikita natin ang last bastion na lang ng CPP-NPA is yung IPs kasi yung mga Indigenous People ito na lang ang pinaka-vulnerable sector na kaya nilang lokohin (Now, we see that the last bastion of the CPP-NPA is the IPs because the Indigenous People are the most vulnerable sector whom they can deceive)," he added.*

Ocampo, Castro and several others were accused of violating Republic Act 10364 or The Expanded Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2012 and Article 270 of the Revised Penal Code which defines and provides penalty on the offense of kidnapping and failure to return a minor.

Ocampo and Castro claimed they are part of a humanitarian mission in Talaingod, Davao del Norte due to reports that students of these Lumad schools were fleeing the area following their closure. **(PNA)**

[www.pna.gov.ph](http://www.pna.gov.ph)

## Reds maneuvering truth on Ocampo arrest: DavNorte gov

By Earl Jed Roque

**MANILA** – Davao del Norte Governor Anthony del Rosario on Monday said leftist organizations use indigenous people (IPs) “to push their own agenda,” and accused them of maneuvering the truth.

This, after former Bayan Muna party-list lawmaker Satur Ocampo and his companions were charged Friday with kidnapping and human trafficking over the transport of minors in Davao del Norte.

In a statement, del Rosario denied Ocampo's allegations that a paramilitary group forcibly closed the Salugpongan Ta'Tanulgkanogon Community Learning Center, Inc. (STTICLCI) in Dulyan, Palma Gil village, Talaingod, Davao del Norte.

“The so-called ‘right defenders’ exploited the issue to demonize the government and raise funds for their benefit,” he said.

He said it was the local government unit and tribal leaders who pushed for the closure after seeing Salugpongan schools being used as platforms by leftist groups for anti-government propaganda and armed struggle.

“We cannot allow a few cunning individuals to mar our development momentum in the Lumad municipality,” del Rosario said.

Del Rosario called on the leftist groups to stop exploiting the Lumads and start working closely with the government instead.

“The incident revealed how the age-old conflict between the government and those who seek to overthrow it took its toll on our innocent and disadvantaged IP brothers and sisters,” he said.

“Time and again, we have proven that genuine pro-poor governance is the key to alleviating the lives of our Indigenous People,” he added.

Ocampo and 17 others, tagged as ‘Talaingod 18’, were arrested last Wednesday evening for violating Republic Act No. 10364 or the Expanded Anti-Trafficking of Persons Act of 2012 after allegedly holding 14 minors without parental consent and permit from the LGU.

The leftist group, however, defended this move, saying it is part of a fact-finding mission on the Salugpongan schools’ closure. **(PNA)**