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OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

# NEWS CLIPPINGS

06 December 2018

Thursday



*Honor. Patriotism. Duty*

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# LACSON: P2.4-B PORK FOR ARROYO'S DISTRICT



December 2018

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According to the senator, the Speaker and Congressman Andaya appear to have the biggest chunks of pork in the spending bill the House of Representatives has approved, as they are allotted a total of P4.4 billion worth of projects. **A**



Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo

In Camarines Sur," he said Andaya represents the province's first district. Lacson said Pampanga's second district was originally allotted P76 million in the national expenditure program proposed by the Department of Budget and Management, while P360 million was earmarked for the Camarines Sur congressman's district.

The House approved the spending bill on second reading on Oct. 3, "but between Oct. 3 and date of transmittal to the Senate, they touched the budget and made changes without going back to plenary," the senator said.

**Extra P1.7 billion**

Under House rules, the period of amendments is supposed to occur before the voting on second reading.

By the time the spending

million. But some blessed few got more," he said.

Last week, House Majority Leader Rolando Andaya Jr. admitted that Arroyo had directed the allotment of at least P60 million worth of government projects to each House member.

But Andaya insisted the allocations were all itemized and not pork or postenactment lump-sum appropriations, which the Supreme Court declared unconstitutional in 2013.

**'Congresswoman'**

Though Lacson did not name Arroyo, only calling her "the congresswoman," it was immediately clear he was referring to the former President after he showed a slide of projects in the towns of Lubao, Floridablanca, Porac and Guagua.

All these municipalities are in the second district of Pampanga, which Arroyo represents in the House.

"Which district is that, who is the district representative? [But] I cannot absolutely say it's hers. There may have been others who inserted funding for that district. But logic dictates who it was," Lacson told reporters.

"Of course, you take care of your district, right?" he said.

As for the congressman's identity, Lacson only offered a

Representative Andaya, but it's

look at the GAB. It's in Camarines Sur. I'm not saying it's

"It's in the books. Take a

Speaker Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo may be getting the lion's share of a pork bonanza in the House of Representatives, as Pantilo Lacson has been allotted P2.4 billion worth of projects after last-minute realignments in the proposed national budget for 2019.

That includes P500 million in farm-to-market roads alone, said Lacson, who on Wednesday disclosed a snippet of his initial scrutiny of the P3.5-trillion general appropriations bill (GAB) on the second day of Senate debates on the budget.

Besides Arroyo's hometown, the district of a favored congressman from Camarines Sur would be getting P1.9 billion worth of projects next year, the senator said, sharing more details of an allegation he first made on Monday night.

**Blessed few**

Lacson would not disclose the identity of either lawmaker, but he said the two House members were among the "blessed few" representatives whose districts or constituencies were allocated much bigger funds than the P60-million pork pruned by the Speaker to each of them.

"I'll say most of them or all of them (legislators) got P60

FROM A1

By DJ Yap @deejayap1ND

bill was passed on final reading, Arroyo's district share had ballooned with extra P1.7 billion in funding, while the unidentified congressman's district received an additional P1.5 billion, Lacson said.

All told, the congresswoman's district was to be given P2.4 billion, while the congressman's district was to get P1.9 billion, he said.

Lacson presented a slide show of his findings of the House insertions.

"There is P500 million for farm-to-market roads in just one district alone," he said.

"Whose is that?" asked Sen. Loren Legarda, chair of the finance committee who was sponsoring the spending bill.

"I'll whisper it to you later," Lacson replied. "I don't know who's from Lubao... But it's all in the budget books. All you need to do is scrutinize."

Arroyo is a resident of Lubao.

#### House responds

Compostela Valley Rep. Maria Carmen Zamora, chair of the House appropriations committee, denied that the House arbitrarily inserted P1.5 billion worth of road projects in the budget for Arroyo's district, saying it was the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) that realigned the funds.

Responding to Larson's claims on Wednesday night, Zamora said none of the 292 members of the House received a huge increase in the allot-

ments for their districts.

She reiterated that the funds were not pork.

Zamora, however, admitted that Arroyo's district got an additional allocation.

But it was "not so big," she said.

Pressed about the actual amount, Zamora said it was around P500 million, not P1.5 billion as Lacson claimed.

Zamora said this brought to P1.9 billion the DPWH funds earmarked for the second district of Pampanga.

#### Pork projects

Pork barrel is a program that channels funds to congressional districts. It is used in the budget to give lawmakers lump-sum allocations to finance their projects after the appropriations law has been approved. It is a source of kick-backs.

In the past, this was done through the Priority Development Assistance Fund or PDAF, which the Supreme Court struck down in a landmark 2013 ruling.

The Senate is working 12-hour days in the next two weeks to try to enact and ratify the spending bill before yearend to prevent a reenactment of the current national budget. But there may not be enough time, according to some senators.

Congress is supposed to have its last session day on Dec. 12, but it may extend the legislative calendar to accommodate the budget measure. INQ

# House panel tackles scrapping of fuel tax hike

By JESS DIAZ

Lawmakers yesterday began tackling measures scrapping taxes on oil products or at least suspending some of them, with opposition Rep. Edcel Lagman warning of street riots similar to those ignited in Paris by rising fuel taxes.

"We should not wait for a similar French experience. The French government was forced to suspend its fuel tax hikes because of violent riots. We should be able to avert that

and Inclusion (TRAIN) law.

He said the House and the senate should pass a joint resolution forgoing next year's increase in taxes on diesel, cooking gas, gasoline, kero-

*Inflation slows to 6% in November. Story on B1.*

situation," Lagman said.

The House ways and means committee, chaired by Nueva Ecija Rep. Estrellita Suansing, started yesterday deliberations on seven measures aimed at scrapping or suspending fuel excise tax increases under the Tax Reform for Acceleration

sense and other oil products.

Lagman said that while inflation had eased to six percent last month, the rate was still the highest among countries belonging to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Turn to Page 2

## House From Page 1

"The closest to us is Vietnam, where inflation is 4.5 percent. The rest of ASEAN is below two percent," he added.

On Tuesday evening, President Duterte and his Cabinet agreed to push through with next year's increase despite a previous decision to forgo it.

The panel created a technical working group (TWG) to consolidate the measures.

Lagman said the referral to a TWG "is an indication of the committee's inclination to endorse the proposal to suspend next year's fuel tax increase."

"A TWG is created usually when there is consensus to recommend the course of action the pending bills are seeking," he said.

The Albay congressman and his opposition colleagues authored a joint resolution suspending the 2019 adjustment.

Marikina Rep. Romero Quimbo and members of his Liberal Party bloc are the authors of a bill scrapping levies on diesel and kerosene.

Answering questions from Quimbo, Finance Assistant Secretary Ma. Teresa Habitan said the Bureau of Internal Revenue and the Bureau of Customs have reported collections of nearly P70 billion in fuel taxes from January to

October this year.

Of that amount, she said P37.2 billion, or more than half, represented increases imposed under the controversial TRAIN law.

She said the Department of Finance is confident of attaining its P53.7-billion revenue target this year from TRAIN.

She added that suspending next year's increase would mean a P40-billion revenue loss.

Habitan also said out of this year's P37.2-billion collections from TRAIN taxes, P18.3 billion came from gasoline, P10.7 billion from diesel and P258 million from kerosene.

Based on the DOF data, Quimbo remarked that the government could afford to suspend levies on diesel and kerosene since these two oil products account for a small part of incremental revenues.

Rep. Tom Villarin of Akbayan said the decision of the President and his Cabinet to push through with the 2019 fuel tax increase would "trigger an inflationary push."

"It is clear that inflation was caused by these excise taxes, not because of increases in pump prices of oil," he said.

Bayan Muna Rep. Carlos Zarate said the decision "will definitely jack up prices anew

because the excise tax on diesel and bunker fuel will jump to P4.50 liter from P2.50, while gasoline will have a P9 per liter tax or a P2 increase."

"The Duterte administration, instead of heeding the strong clamor of our people to abolish the regressive taxes brought by TRAIN, is again gambling with the prices of goods with the continued implementation of the TRAIN law, and this would definitely hit our consumers hard," he said.

### 'Premature'

For Sen. Risa Hontiveros, President Duterte's decision to proceed with the collection of the second round of excise tax on petroleum was "premature and impulsive."

Hontiveros said the decision has exposed the government's "wobbly policy" in dealing with the negative impact of unstable oil prices on consumers.

"President Duterte claimed that we are powerless to respond to the impact of the rise of oil prices in the world market. He also said that we are at the mercy of the international oil market," she said. "Then why lift the suspension on the fuel excise tax collection, one of the few safety nets that protect the public from the volatility of the international oil market?" Hontiveros asked.

"If the government failed to foresee the depth and grav-

ity of the impact of volatile international oil prices on our inflation rate, what makes it think that the overall economic environment is turning around for the better? Isn't it more prudent to continue to allow the safety nets, such as the suspension of the fuel excise tax, to take full effect to shelter the people in an uncertain economic climate?" Hontiveros said.

The senator said that there is solid basis to suspend the second round of excise tax on petroleum. She explained that value added tax (VAT) revenues from various petroleum products have risen and have exceeded projected revenues for 2018.

She also argued that despite the series of oil price rollbacks, the peso cost of petroleum products has been and remains quite high as a result of the depreciation of the peso and the still high international price of petroleum products.

"During the Oct. 24 hearing of the Senate committee on economic affairs, the Department of Finance (DOF) admitted that the excess in VAT revenues is indeed substantial. Why then collect more indirect tax revenues via the petroleum industry?"

For 2019, Hontiveros estimated that excess VAT collection would probably be around P10 billion given the lower expected oil prices.

She also said that the wind-fall revenue from the VAT on transactions related to high-priced petroleum was never contemplated when the TRAIN law was passed.

"What our economic managers should do is defer the second round of excise tax on petroleum. The deferment will be for as many months as necessary to return and neutralize the unintended 2018 and 2019 VAT collections on petroleum-related transactions," Hontiveros said.

### **Inflation, not crude cost**

Sen. Paolo Benigno Aquino IV said there is no basis for the government to take back its previous commitment to suspend the tax hike.

Aquino said the six percent inflation showed the country was still in the "middle of a crisis of high prices, so this decision to add to existing excise tax is wrong."

He said the government should have based the suspension of excise tax on fuel on the inflation rate and not on world crude prices.

Sen. Francis Escudero, for his part, filed a resolution formally asking Duterte to suspend the P2 per liter increase or at least consider its immediate suspension when inflation becomes uncontrollable again any time in 2019.

"It is best to suspend the implementation of the second tranche of fuel excise tax right

away or that the suspension be swift in 2019 so as to effectively address inflation, before it again directly affects the lives of every Filipino," Escudero said in Senate Resolution 964.

Sen. Joseph Victor Ejercito told reporters "we're hoping for some sensitivity on the part of the economic managers, who should allow our countrymen to have some breathing space (from high prices)."

"During the TRAIN debates, it's on record that we were not remiss in reminding them of the possible increase in oil prices," he said.

Senate President Pro Tempore Ralph Recto said that while inflation has gone down to six percent, "it's still high" and could inflict more hardship on consumers if taxes on petroleum are raised further.

"If the executive increases taxes on oil next year it clearly will increase prices and stoke inflation," he said.

Sen. Sonny Angara said the government must fulfill its promise to implement safety nets for the poor to mitigate the effects of TRAIN.

The lawmaker was referring to the unconditional cash transfer and Pantawid Pasada programs, which were provided as "social welfare benefits" under the tax reform law.

- With Cecille Suerte Felipe



06

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# 'MOU on oil exploration with China constitutional'

By EDU PUNAY

There is no need for the Senate to review the agreement forged by the Duterte administration with China on oil and gas development in the West Philippine Sea, the Department of Justice (DOJ) said yesterday.

Justice Secretary Menardo Guevarra said the memorandum of understanding (MOU) signed during the recent state visit of Chinese President Xi Jinping does not require concurrence of Senate under the 1987 Constitution.

"It's not a treaty and therefore does not require any Senate concurrence or review," Guevarra said in an interview.

The DOJ chief made the statement after Senate President Pro Tempore Ralph Recto called for a legislative review of the MOU following concerns that it could compromise the country's sovereignty or lead to a debt trap.

Guevarra said he has examined the MOU and did not

find any violation of the laws.

"There are no sovereignty issues whatsoever as the MOU merely expresses a mutual desire to agree on specific cooperation arrangements within 12 months," he stressed.

Guevarra further explained that the agreement expressly stated that it "shall be without prejudice to the respective legal positions of the two governments and does not give rise to any rights or obligations under international or domestic law."

"It's just an MOU, it's non-committal, non-obligatory and non-binding from a legal standpoint. It's a mere expression of mutual desires," he pointed out.

This is contrary to the opinion of former solicitor general and opposition senatorial candidate Florin Hilbay that the MOU may be unconstitutional.

Hilbay argued that the agreement is "incompatible with the full control and su-

pervision standard or clause."

"It is clear that we own the West Philippine Sea and it is against the Constitution if we allow China to jointly explore with us its natural resources like oil and gas jointly," he claimed.

Senior Associate Justice Antonio Carpio, a vocal advocate against China's claims in the West Philippine Sea, also said the MOU is "safe" as it included a service contract provision.

"I don't have any objection with that kind of arrangement because if China comes in through our service contractors, those service contracts expressly recognize that the area falls within Philippine sovereignty or sovereign rights," he said.

Still, Carpio stressed that joint exploration and exploitation with China would violate the Constitution because the West Philippine Sea is part of the exclusive economic zone of the country.

Carpio stressed that "joint

exploration and exploitation" as defined in the law "will diminish our 'full control' and thus violate the Constitution."

### **Respect the people's opinion**

A majority of Hong Kong nationals believe it is important for governments to follow the opinion of the people in settling the disputes in the South China Sea, a recent survey conducted by The University of Hong Kong (HKU) showed.

The Survey on South China Sea Disputes showed 58 percent of respondents considered it important for a government to follow its people's opinion in settling these disputes.

Almost half of them or 47 percent considered it important for a government to follow public opinion in the world in settling these disputes.

Half of the Hong Kong people (51 percent) were aware of the ruling of an international tribunal in 2016 regarding the

South China Sea disputes.

Those who said it is not important to heed people's opinion and public opinion in the world were registered at 18 percent and 30 percent respectively.

The poll was conducted from Nov 1 to 6, using telephone interviews of 1,000 Hong Kong residents, 18 years old and above.

The survey also found 70 percent of respondents who were aware of the disputes, with 16 percent claiming to have extensive/adequate knowledge of the disputes.

The survey has sampling error margin of plus or minus 3.2 percentage points.

Results of the HKU poll were published on the website of the Social Weather Stations (SWS) yesterday.

An SWS survey, taken from Sept. 15 to 23, found 84 percent of Filipinos saying it is not right for the Duterte government to leave China alone with its infrastructure and military presence in the Philippine-claimed territories.

In 2016, the Permanent Court of Arbitration based in The Hague, Netherlands ruled in favor of the Philippines, invalidating China's "historical maritime rights" over contested areas in the West Philippine Sea.

President Duterte had set aside the Philippines' victory in the arbitration case against China to improve ties between the two nations.

Meanwhile, presidential spokesman Salvador Panelo said yesterday there is no need to provoke Beijing by further pushing the issue on weather stations put up by China in the South China Sea following Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana's statement that the military could not confirm such.

"Well, because you need to go inside the territory that this particular country claims that it's theirs. So you may have some problems there, may even provoke something that we don't want," Panelo said.

—With Helen Flores, Christina Mendez

# 'No need for Senate review of MOU between China, PH'

By Rey E. Requejo

**T**HE Department of Justice on Wednesday said there is no need for the Senate to review the agreement entered between the Duterte administration and China on oil and gas development in the West Philippine Sea since it is not in the nature of a treaty.

Justice Secretary Menardo Guevarra said that the memorandum of agreement signed during the recent state visit of Chinese President Xi Jinping does not require concurrence of Senate under the 1987 Constitution.

"It's not a treaty, and therefore does not require any senate concurrence or review," Guevarra said, in an interview.

The Justice Secretary issued the statement after Senate President Pro Tempore Ralph Recto called for a legislative review of the MOU following concerns that it could compromise the country's sovereignty or lead to a debt trap.

According to Guevarra, he has examined the MOU and did not find any violation of the laws.

"There are no sovereignty issues whatsoever as the MOU merely expresses a mutual desire to agree on specific cooperation arrangements

within 12 months," he explained.

Guevarra also pointed out that the agreement expressly stated that it "shall be without prejudice to the respective legal positions of the two governments and does not give rise to any rights or obligations under international or domestic law."

"It's just an MOU, it's non-committal, non-obligatory, and non-binding from a legal standpoint. It's a mere expression of mutual desires," he maintained.

Guevarra disputed the opinion of former Solicitor General Florio Hilbay that the MOU may be unconstitutional.

Hilbay argued that the agreement is "incompatible with the full control and supervision standard or clause."

"It is clear that we own the West Philippine Sea and it is against the Constitution if we allow China to jointly explore with us its natural resources like oil and gas jointly," he said.

However, Senior Associate Justice Antonio Carpio, a vocal critic on China's claims in the West Philippine Sea, rebutted Hilbay's position, saying that the MOU is "safe" as it included a service contract provision.

"I don't have any objection with that kind of arrangement because if China comes in through our service contractors, those service contracts expressly recognize that the area falls within Philippine sovereignty or sovereign rights," Carpio said.

The magistrate even suggested that the service contractor in the Philippines' Recto Bank (Reed Bank), Forum Energy, could tap a Chinese firm as a subcontractor.

Businessman Manuel V. Pangilinan's PXP Energy Corp., through its London-listed unit Forum Energy Plc, holds an exploration permit covering Recto Bank.

Carpio said China "can come in as a subcontractor of Forum Energy or it can buy into equity of Fortan Energy, or it could do both."

The MOU entitled "Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation on Oil and Gas Development between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and Government of the People's Republic of China" was signed during Xi's visit recently.

# Zambo Sur town councilor slain in gun attack

By ROEL PAREÑO

**ZAMBOANGA CITY** – Unidentified motorcycle-riding men gunned down a municipal councilor in Ramon Magsaysay, Zamboanga del Sur on Tuesday.

Romeo Mainar Sr., 54, a resident of Purok 3, Barangay Lantawan, Sominot, was driving his motorcycle on his way to Pagadian City when he was shot at around noon, according to Chief Superintendent Emmanuel Luis Licup, Zamboanga peninsula police director.

Licup said the incident occurred in Purok 4, Barangay Bobongan.

Witnesses said the assailants alighted from their motorcycle and fired more shots when the victim fell from his motorbike.

The gunmen reportedly fled toward Molave town.

Residents rushed the victim to the Zamboanga del Sur Medical Center, where he was declared dead on arrival.

A manhunt for the assailants is ongoing.

## 'Deploy soldiers in La Union'

Meanwhile, the Commission on Elections (Comelec) has been asked to place La Union under military protection amid recent killings of politicians.

In a letter to Comelec Chairman Sheriff Abas on Nov. 20, La Union second district Rep. Sandar Eriguel said the military should intervene

to ensure peace and order in the province, particularly in the towns of Agoo, Bauang, Caba and Tubao.

"To wait for the start of the election period may be too late... The augmentation of... Army personnel... will provide a strong deterrent against evil forces roaming our... province. The presence of soldiers will also give confidence to our people to exercise their freedom of expression and right to suffrage without fear of threat and violence," Eriguel said.

She also asked the Comelec to provide security for her and her family members, saying they continue to receive death threats.

Eriguel's husband Eufraño, a former congressman, was gunned down while addressing barangay lead-

ers in Capas, Agoo last May, two days before the barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan elections.

Three other persons were killed and several others were injured in the gun attack.

"At the time of my husband's murder, our... security details, including those of my daughter Agoo Mayor Stefanie Ann Eriguel, were pulled out which left us vulnerable to any attack," Eriguel said.

She also cited the killings of Sudipen Mayor Allan Buquing and Balaoan Vice Mayor Alfred Concepcion in recent ambushes.

"Several local leaders were also gunned down in Bauang and Tubao but these were not reported in the media," Eriguel said.

— With Jun Elias

GAWAD KALASAG

PAMPANGA IS BEST IN DISASTER RESPONSE

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO— Pampanga, one of three provinces that struggled to overcome the impact of Mt. Pinatubo's 1991 eruptions and lahar flows, was chosen as the country's best Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (PDRRMC).

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana conferred the 20th Gawad Kalasag national award to Vice Gov. Dennis Pineda, vice chair of the Pampanga PDRRMC, at the Armed Forces of the Philippines Amphitheater on Tuesday.

The Pampanga PDRRMC earned the national award after it won the regional Gawad Kalasag Hall of Fame for five consecutive years. In 2016, it was second in the 18th National Gawad Kalasag.

Breakthroughs

Cultivating the collaboration between government and the private sector has been one of the strengths of the Pampanga PDRRMC, its action officer, Angelina Blanco, said.

Among its breakthroughs are the construction of three permanent evacuation centers; the land banking of 67.7 hectares, which are intended for future relocation sites, and a house tag-

ging mechanism to prioritize the rescue of the elderly, persons with disabilities and children.

Pampanga reported organizing a wide network for information dissemination in disaster preparedness composed of 550 public school teachers and 9,760 community volunteers who assisted village leaders.

Humanitarian aid

It was certified to be well-equipped for rescue missions and medical emergencies, counting the five backhoes used to extract silt and deepen creeks and rivers year-round.

The council conducted humanitarian assistance for victims of Super typhoon "Yolanda" (international name: Haiyan) in November 2013, in Tacloban City and Samar province, Typhoon "Lando" (international name: Koppu) in Nueva Ecija province in October 2015, and flashfloods in Bataan province and Olongapo City in 2018.

Apart from holding training sessions and drills in evacuation management, it led the planting of mangroves and bamboo in coastal communities to create a natural shield against storm surges from Manila Bay. —TONETTE OREJAS INQ

# PUT LA UNION UNDER MILITARY PROTECTION, SOLON ASKS COMELEC

POLL VIOLENCE

La Union Rep. Sandra Eriguel has asked the Commission on Elections (Comelec) to put her province under military protection "as soon as possible," even before the start of the election period, following the killings of local politicians this year, including her husband, former Rep. Butrario Eriguel.

"To await the start of the election period might be too late for us. The augmentation by Army personnel in our area will provide a strong deterrent against the evil forces that are currently roaming our beloved province," she said in a Nov. 20 letter to Comelec Chair Sheriff Abbas.

## Attacks

Eriguel said the presence of soldiers, particularly in the towns of Agoo, Baniang, Caba and Tubao, would help boost confidence among voters, so they could "exercise their freedom of expression and right to suffrage without fear of threats and violence."

The former lawmaker was shot and killed on May 12, as he spoke at a caucus at Barangay Capas in Agoo, two days before Kabataan elections. Three others were killed during the attack.

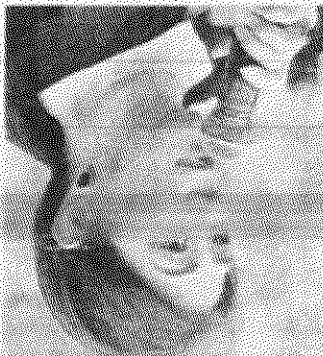
On Oct. 1, Mayor Alexander Buguing of Suidipen town, was killed in an ambush. Buguing's wife, Vice Mayor Wendy Joy Buguing, was wounded. Buguing's police security detail and his driver also died in that attack.

"Local leaders were also gunned down, particularly in the towns of Baniang and Tubao, but these were not reported in the national media," Eriguel said. She said political violence in La Union had not only caused fear among the people, but also among officials.

## Fear

On Nov. 14, Vice Mayor Alfredo Concepcion of Balaogan town was killed in another ambush. His daughter, Mayor Alleli Concepcion, was wounded during the attack that also killed one of the vice mayor's aides and wounded eight others.

"As a matter of fact, I received information that I would be gunned down once I filed my certificate of candidacy (COC). I did not take the information lightly, so I instructed my chief of staff to file my COC with the provincial election supervisor of La Union as a precaution," Eriguel said. "To this date, I continue to receive information about threats to me and my family, as well as my allies in politics," she said.—GABRIEL CARDINOSA, INQ



Sandra Eriguel

## TALAINGOD CASE

## MILITARY INSISTS OCAMPO, CASTRO 'ACTIVE REBELS'

"If one walks like a duck, acts like a duck, quacks like a duck and has the mindset and inclination of a duck, what else could it be but a duck?"

Brig. Gen. Edgard Arevalo, Armed Forces of the Philippines spokesperson, made this remark at a press conference on Wednesday as he backed the stand of AFP chief Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr. that former Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo and ACT Teachers Rep. France Castro were communist insurgents.

Galvez earlier said that Ocampo and Castro were "active members" of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and its military wing, the New People's Army (NPA).

### Charges vs. Galvez <sup>NY</sup>

The AFP chief also said he was not worried that party-list lawmakers had threatened to file charges against him for describing Ocampo and Castro as CPP-NPA members.

"If there is anything they (Ocampo and Castro) must be afraid of, it is not their so-called 'red-tagging' by the AFP. It is the cases legally and validly filed against them and the mounting evidence against their infamous version of 'rescue,'" Arevalo said.

He was referring to the transportation of 14 minors by Ocampo and Castro's group from Talaingod, Davao del Norte, without parental consent and in the dead of night, which Arevalo described as having "all the trappings of kidnapping."

—JEANNETTE I. ANDRADE INQ

DUTERTE'S PICK

# GALVEZ NEXT PEACE ADVISER

Retiring chief of staff Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr. will be the next peace adviser, presidential spokesperson Salvador Panelo announced on Wednesday.

"The President announced his intention to appoint Gen. Galvez to the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (Opapp)," Panelo said in a statement.

President Duterte, he said, informed the Cabinet about Galvez's new job during its meeting on Tuesday.

### Vacant position <sup>ky</sup>

The position of peace adviser is currently vacant after Jesus Dureza resigned last month to take responsibility for the controversy involving two of his top subordinates who are being investigated for alleged corruption.

Galvez, who will retire on Dec. 12 when he turns 56 years old, earlier offered his services to Dureza at Opapp. The general said he wanted to see the implementation of the peace process under Mr. Duterte.

—CHRISTINE D. AVENDAÑO INQ



## Duterte appoints Galvez as new OPAPP chief

President Duterte has named outgoing Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) chief Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr. as the next head of the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP), Malacañang announced on Wednesday.

Galvez, a member of the Philippine Military Academy class of 1985, is scheduled to retire from the military service on December 12, 2018.

He will take over the post vacated by erstwhile OPAPP chief Sec. Jesus Dureza.

"The President announced his intention to appoint General Carlito Galvez, Jr. to the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process," Presidential Spokesman Salvador Panelo said in a statement.

The imminent appointment of Galvez was announced during a Cabinet meeting convened by the President in Malacañang last Tuesday.

Even prior to the resignation of Dureza, Galvez has reportedly offered his services to work at the OPAPP after his

retirement.

He has expressed support for the government's peace initiatives, including the efforts to end the conflict with the communist rebel group.

Dureza, a former classmate of Duterte, quit his post last week as part of command responsibility after his two subordinates were implicated in alleged corruption.

President Duterte has lauded Dureza for showing delicadeza when he tendered his resignation. (Genelyn Kabiling)

## Duterte picks Galvez as top peace adviser

PRESIDENT Rodrigo Duterte has picked outgoing Armed Forces chief Carlito Galvez Jr. as his next top adviser on the peace process, Malacañang said on Wednesday.

In a statement, Palace spokesman Salvador Panelo said Duterte made the announcement

►Galvez A2

### ■ GALVEZ FROM A1

## Duterte

during the 32nd Cabinet meeting in Malacañang on Tuesday.

"The President announced his intention to appoint General Carlito Galvez Jr. to the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP)," Panelo told reporters.

Galvez will replace Jesus Dureza, who resigned from his post over Duterte's firing of his two undersecretaries for corruption.

Dureza's resignation came in the wake of Galvez's pronouncement that he wanted to become a peace consultant at the OPAPP when he retires on December 12.

Galvez was chairman of the government's Committee on the Cessation of Hostilities before taking over the military's helm.

He served for 12 years in Mindanao, during which he said he visited rebel lairs where soldiers were often killed, earning these areas the tag "point of no return."

Galvez has said he "saw the misery" in large parts of the South, which lacked access to education and basic services.

His possible appointment came less than two months before the January plebiscite for the Bangsamoro Organic Law, which grants wider self-rule to Muslim in Mindanao in southern Philippines.

Galvez said he would urge the terrorist Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters to join the crucial Bangsamoro plebiscite.

Galvez's appointment implies the "death of peace talks" between communist rebels and the government, the Makabayan bloc of lawmakers said on Wednesday.

"We are not surprised. The administration really shows that they do not value peace negotiations," ACT Teachers party-list Rep. Antonio Tinio and Rep. Francisca Castro said in a news briefing.

Anakpawis Rep. Ariel Casilao denounced the decision to appoint Galvez, describing him as "powder-brained and trigger-happy."

"*Hindi po nababagay sa posisyon ang isang heneral na utak pulbura at trigger-happy* (A powder-brained and trigger-happy general does not suit such position)," he said.

The Makabayan lawmakers previously said they would file a case before the Ombudsman against Galvez for "recklessly" accusing Castro and former Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo as top communist rebels.

Castro said Galvez's pronouncement put her life in danger.

She and Ocampo were both part of the "Talaingod 18" who were released after posting bail for charges of kidnapping and human trafficking.

CATHERINE S. VALENTE  
AND GLEE JALEA

## Retiring AFP chief to get job at OPAPP; successor named

**BY JOCELYN MONTEMAYOR and VICTOR REYES**

PRESIDENT Duterte will appoint outgoing Armed Forces chief Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr. to the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP), Chief Presidential Legal Counsel Salvador Panelo said yesterday.

Galvez' successor was formally announced last night by the Department of Defense. The new Armed Forces chief is Lt. Gen. Benjamin Madrigal, current head of the Eastern Mindanao Command.

Galvez and Madrigal are members of the Philippine Military Academy Class of 1985. Galvez

will reach the mandatory retirement age of 56 on December 12. Madrigal is due to retire in September next year.

Panelo, concurrent presidential spokesman, said Duterte announced his "intention" to appoint Galvez to the OPAPP on Tuesday

See RETIRING » Page B6

### RETIRING

night during the Cabinet meeting. However, it was not clear what Galvez' exact position at OPAPP will be.

There are three vacancies in the OPAPP. Its head, Jesus Dureza, resigned late last month for command responsibility, after Duterte dismissed two OPAPP officials for allegations of

corruption.

Prior to Dureza' resignation, Galvez said he has asked Dureza if he can work as a "consultant" at the OPAPP after his retirement on December 12.

Galvez had been involved in the peace talks with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front as co-chairman of the Coordinating Committee on the Cessation of Hostilities.

Madrigal was named to the Davao City-based Eastmincom in November last year. Before that, he served as commander of the Southern Luzon Command based in Lucena City, commander of the 4th Infantry Division in Cagayan de Oro City, Army chief of staff, and deputy commander of the Army's 10th Infantry Division in Compostela Valley.

## Rody names new AFP chief; Galvez moves to OPAPP

By Nat Mariano

PRESIDENT Rodrigo Duterte has chosen Eastern Mindanao Command head Lt. Gen. Benjamin Madrigal Jr. as the new chief of staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

Madrigal will assume the position on Dec. 12 when outgoing AFP chief Gen. Carlito Galvez retires.

Galvez, on the other hand, will head the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process, an official said Wednesday.

Presidential Spokesman Salvador Panelo said Duterte made the announcement during the Cabinet meeting on Tuesday night.

"The President announced his intention to appoint General Carlito Galvez Jr. to the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process," Panelo said in a statement.

Galvez will replace former Presidential Peace Adviser Jesus Dureza, who resigned two weeks ago over the alleged corruption of his senior officials at the OPAPP.

Communist Party of the Philippines founding chairman Jose Maria Sison had previously speculated that Dureza's resignation was aimed at covering up Duterte's intention to militarize the OPAPP.

But Panelo was quick to dismiss Sison's claim.

Last month, Galvez said he had personally told Dureza of his plan to become a peace consultant weeks before his retirement.

"I personally conveyed my request to OPAPP and I told Secretary Dureza, 'Can I be some sort of consultant?' He accepted my request," Galvez said.

## Galvez to OPAPP

PRESIDENT Rodrigo Duterte is set to appoint retiring Armed Forces chief General Carlito Galvez Jr. to the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP), Malacañang said yesterday.

Presidential spokesperson Salvador Panelo said Duterte "announced his intention" to name Galvez to the OPAPP during the 52nd Cabinet meeting held at the presidential palace on Tuesday.

But it was not immediately clear whether Galvez will be succeeding former presidential peace adviser Jesus Dureza who resigned last week in the wake of corruption issues bounding the OPAPP.

Dureza's resignation came as Duterte fired Ronald Flores, undersecretary for Support Services and national program manager of the Payapa at Masaganang Pamayanan (PAMANA), and Yeshter Donn Bacay, assistant secretary for Support Services and PAMANA Concerns for corruption

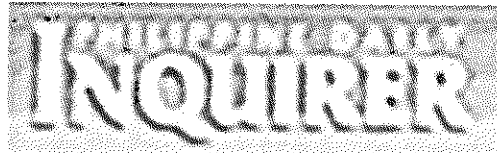
Before Dureza left the OPAPP, Galvez said he asked the former Cabinet official if he could serve as consultant in a bid to sustain the gains of the peace agreement inked between the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in 2014.

That accord led to the passage early this year of the Bangsamoro Organic Law which aims to end decades of conflict in Mindanao by creating a political entity that would enjoy greater autonomy than the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

Galvez reaches the mandatory retirement age of 56 on December 12.

Exiled communist leader Jose Maria Sison earlier said Duterte might militarize the OPAPP following Dureza's resignation and Galvez's pronouncement that he wanted to become a peace consultant.

**EMontano**



VICE GALVEZ, EFFECTIVE DEC. 12

# EASTMINCOM COMMANDER MADRIGAL IS NEXT AFP CHIEF

By Frances Mangosing  
@FMangosingINQ

Eastern Mindanao Command (Eastmincom) chief Lt. Gen. Benjamin Madrigal Jr. is the next chief of staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

Madrigal will replace Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr., who will reach the mandatory retirement age of 56 on Dec. 12.

The Inquirer obtained a

copy of Madrigal's appointment paper, signed by President Duterte, on Wednesday.

"I wish to inform you that, per your letter-endorsement and in accordance with the recommendation of the chief of staff, Armed Forces of the Philippines and chair, AFP board of generals, pursuant to Republic Act No. 9188, the designation of Lt. Gen. Benjamin Madrigal Jr., vice Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr., is

hereby approved effective Dec. 12, 2018," the letter read.

### Most senior

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana earlier said that Madrigal, a member of the Philippine Military Academy "Sandiwa" Class of 1985, was the most senior among the recommendees of the board of generals.

Madrigal's closest contender was Army chief Lt. Gen.

Macarog Alberto. Both had been assigned in Davao, the President's home region.

Madrigal took the helm of the Davao-based Eastmincom in November 2017, after Gen. Rey Leonardo Guerrero was appointed chief of staff.

He also previously served as commander of Southern Luzon Command, assistant chief of 10th Infantry Division and commander of 4th Infantry Division. INQ

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# Madrigal is next AFP chief; Galvez to OPAPP

By EDITH REGALADO

DAVAO CITY – President Duterte has named Army Lt. Gen. Benjamin Madrigal Jr. of the Eastern Mindanao Command (Eastmincom) as chief of staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), replacing Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr. who is retiring on Dec. 12.

Galvez will in turn assume leadership of the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP).

The President authorized Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzaria to announce Madrigal's promotion during the Cabinet meeting Tuesday night.

Madrigal served as commander of the 701st Infantry

Turn to Page 2

## Madrigal From Page 1

Brigade in Mati, Davao Oriental, then became assistant division

commander of the 10th Infantry Division (ID) in Mawab, Compostela Valley.

He was commander of the Philippine Army's 4th ID in Camp Evangelista in Patag, Cagayan de Oro City.

Described as a "mission-focused leader," Madrigal was credited for sustaining peace and preventing terrorism in Davao and Caraga regions as well as parts of Northern and Southern Mindanao.

Madrigal will reportedly assume as AFP chief during turnover ceremonies on Dec. 10 or two days before Galvez's birthday on Dec. 12.

A member of the Philippine Military Academy Sandiwa Class of 1985, Madrigal was former commander of the Southern Luzon Command in Camp General Nakar in Lucena City.

Madrigal was designated Eastmincom commander in November 2017.

In a chance interview in Malacañang, Interior and Local Government Secretary Eduardo Año hinted at Madrigal's appointment.

"Most likely it's Madrigal because he is the most senior, qualified in experience and the best. Madrigal worked with me when he was still a lieutenant, he's really good," said Año, also a former

AFP chief.

### Life after retirement

Galvez had previously told former OFAPP chief Jesus Dureza about his desire to be a consultant for OPAPP.

Galvez was chairman of the government's Committee on the Cessation of Hostilities before taking over as AFP chief of staff.

His service record showed 12 years in Mindanao, during which he visited rebel lairs where soldiers were often killed, earning these areas the tag "point of no return."

— With Christina Mendez

# Madrigal next AFP chief

BY DEMPSEY REYES

**L**T. Gen. Benjamin Madrigal Jr., commander of the military's Davao-based Eastern Mindanao Command, has been appointed chief of staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

He will replace Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr. who will retire on Dec. 12, 2018 at the age of 56. Madrigal and Galvez are members of the Philippine Military Academy Class of 1985.

The Department of Defense

said Madrigal's appointment papers had been signed by President Rodrigo Duterte.

Madrigal had served as head of the Southern Luzon Command and as commander of the Cagayan de Oro-based 4th Infantry Division



# Madrigal is next AFP CoS

By Kristina Micalft

President Rodrigo Duterte has appointed Lt. Gen. Benjamin Madrigal Jr. to replace outgoing Armed Forces chief of staff Gen. Carlo Galvez Jr. who is set to retire on 12 December 2018.

In a letter addressed to Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana Wednesday, Mr. Duterte said he had approved the designation of Lt. Gen. Madrigal as the 70th AFP chief of staff in accordance with the recommendation of Galvez, who is also the chairman of the AFP Board of Generals.

"Dear Secretary Lorenzana, I wish to inform you that per your letter endorsement and in accordance with the recommendation of the Chief of Staff, Armed Forces of the Philippines and Chairman, AFP Board of Generals, pursuant to Republic Act 6950, as amended by Republic Act 8985, the designation of Lieutenant General Benjamin R. Madrigal Junior (09265) Armed Forces of the Philippines as Chief of Staff, Armed Forces of the Philippines via Gen. Carlo C. Galvez Jr. (09265) AFP's family approved effective December 12, 2018," the letter read.

Madrigal is a graduate of Galvez in the Philippine Military Academy's Sandlot Class of 1987.

Galvez himself confirmed that Madrigal is among those being eyed as his successor.

Last 13 November, Galvez himself confirmed that Madrigal is among those being eyed as his successor.

He likewise lauded the EastMind.com's list of accomplishments, particularly the significant reduction of the strength of the communist insurgency within its area of jurisdiction under Madrigal's watch.

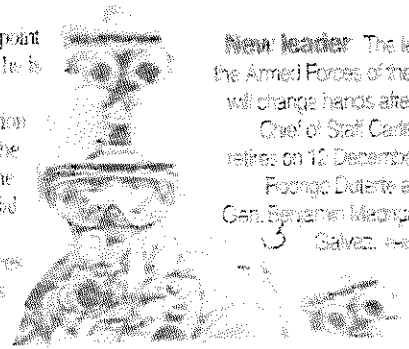
Subsequent however did not give any official comment about Madrigal's appointment to the military's highest position.

What presidential spokesperson Salvador Panelo hinted

is President Rodrigo Duterte's plan to appoint Galvez as a member of his Cabinet once he is done with his military duties.

"The President announced his intention to appoint General Carlo Galvez Jr. in the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP)," the Palace official told reporters in a text message.

To recall, Galvez has offered his services to then OPAPP chief Juan Durana.



**New leader** The leadership of the Armed Forces of the Philippines will change hands after incumbent Chief of Staff Carlo Galvez Jr. retires on 12 December. President Rodrigo Duterte appointed Lt. Gen. Benjamin Madrigal to replace Galvez. PHILIPPINE PHOTO

would like to continue being a part of the peace negotiations even after his retirement from the military.

Dutera tentatively accepted Galvez's resignation as OPAPP chief last week, after two of his undersecretaries were sacked by Mr. Duterte over allegations of corruption.

## Madrigal AFP chief

**PRESIDENT Rodrigo Duterte** has appointed Lt. Gen. Benjamin Madrigal as the new Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines effective December 12.

Madrigal, a member of Philippine Military Academy Sandiwa Class of 1985, will replace Gen. Carlito Galvez, Jr. who is stepping down from his post having reached the mandatory age of 56.

Madrigal's appointment paper is dated December 5. Prior to being named the Armed Forces Chief of Staff, Madrigal served as the commander of Eastern Mindanao Command based in Davao City, hometown of President Duterte.

**Efren Montano**

### ***Galvez, Pres' Peace adviser***

## **Madrigal next AFP chief**

Nakatakdang italaga ni Pangulong Duterte si Lieutenant General Benjamin Madrigal Jr. bilang susunod na chief of staff ng Armed Forces of the Philippines, ayon sa source sa Malacañang.

Papalitan ni Madrigal si Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr. na nakatakdang magretiro sa darating na Disyembre 12.

Miyembro ng PMA "Sandiwa" Class of 1985 si Gen. Madrigal at nagsilbing chief ng Eastern Mindanao Command (EastMinCom).

Bukod kay Madrigal ay kasama rin sa shortlist na pinagpilian ni Pangulong Duterte si Army chief Lt. Gen. Macario Alberto.

Samantala itatalaga ni Pangulong Duterte si Galvez bilang susunod na pinuno ng Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP).

Papalitan ni Galvez bilang OPAPP chief ang nagtiw na si Sec. Jesus Dureza Jr. matapos sibakin ng Pangulo ang isang undersecretary at assistant secretary ng OPAPP.

Samantala nagpasalamat naman si Pangulong Duterte kay Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) acting Secretary Eliseo Rio Jr. sa pagsisilbi nito sa kanyang administrasyon.

Ang papalit kay Sec. Rio ay si Gen. Gringo Honasan na ilinalaga ng Pangulo bilang DICT chief. *(Rudy Andal)*

06

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# GMA guarantees House approval of ML extension

By DELON PORCALLA

Speaker Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday guaranteed the approval by the House of Representatives of the recommendation by the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) to extend by another year martial law in Mindanao.

"If it comes to our chamber, I will recommend that we pass it," she told reporters in a chance interview, adding they are just awaiting the formal request from President Duterte on the matter.

For their part, Reps. Robert Ace Barbers of Surigao del Norte, Michael Romero of IPacman party-list and

LRay Villafuerte of Camarines Sur have also expressed their all-out support for another extension, insisting that peace and order is crucial in the conflict-ridden region.

"I will support the extension of martial law if only to maintain peace in the island," Barbers, chairman of the House committee on dangerous drugs, said. He clarified there is nothing wrong with it for as long as this can be justified under the circumstances.

Romero is concerned not just about the safety of Muslims and Christians alike but also about the local economy.

"Businesses should thrive. Peace of mind is priceless. If

there is peace, then there is stability. And with stability comes progress," he said.

Villafuerte, who sits as vice chairman of the House committee on national defense and security, underscored the need for the executive department to make a formal request to Congress - Senate and House of Representatives - for such an extension.

"We should give more weight to the inputs of the people living in Mindanao in considering a request for the extension of martial law. Mindanaoans are the ones experiencing what it's like to live under martial law for a year-and-a-half now," he said.

"So Mindanaoans would have a better grasp of what is an acceptable option for them for continued peace and security," the Bicolano congressman, who is also vice chairman of the House committee on local government, said.

## PNP, AFP sign recommendation

As this developed, the Philippine National Police (PNP) and the AFP have signed a document recommending the extension of martial law in Mindanao for one more year, PNP chief Director General Oscar Albayalde said yesterday.

Albayalde said he had already put his signature on the

document together with his counterpart in the military, AFP chief of staff Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr.

"We have just signed a document together with the outgoing AFP chief of staff recommending the extension of martial law in Mindanao for another year," Albayalde said in a television interview over *CNN Philippines*.

He did not say, however, if they have submitted the document to Duterte.

"The recommendation of the AFP and the PNP is for the extension of martial law maybe for another year for Mindanao, no expansion, but of course, it will be up to the

President," Interior Secretary Eduardo Año said in mixed Filipino and English in a chance interview at the awarding for child-friendly municipalities and cities yesterday.

"Once it is with the President, he may change it, add to (the provisions) or he may change them, or remove some," Año said.

Once Duterte has made a decision, the Office of the President will have at least one week to submit its recommendation to Congress, if needed, for the concurrence of both the Senate and the House of Representatives. - With Emmanuel Tupas, Christina Mendez, Ben Serrano

25

# House ready to extend martial law in Mindanao - Arroyo

By **CHARISSA L. ATIENZA**

Former President and now Speaker Gloria Macapagal Arroyo on Wednesday assured that the House of Representa-

tives will immediately act on the formal recommendation seeking to extend martial law in Mindanao for another year until December, 2019.  
"If it comes to our Chamber ▶4

## House ready to...

"I will recommend that we pass it," she told reporters in an interview after attending the House Committee on Disaster Management deliberation on a House resolution seeking to enjoin all government agencies to affirm their commitment and support to facilitate the rebuilding of the cities, municipalities, and barangays in Regions I and II, and the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR), severely affected by Typhoon "Omping" in September, 2018.

She made the assurance after the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) Chairman Chito Gascon rejected the proposal to extend martial law and suspend the writ of habeas corpus in Mindanao for the third time.

Gascon said the military should justify its proposal and prove that there is indeed "lurking" threat of terrorism in Mindanao.

President Duterte is currently studying the proposal to extend martial law and his decision is expected to be announced either today or tomorrow. Presidential spokesman

Salvador Panelo said.

"He will announce his decision today or tomorrow. He is still studying. Wait for the announcement," Panelo said.

The President recently said his decision on the martial law situation in Mindanao would depend on the recommendation of the military and the police.

"They are the guys on the ground. I'm here in Pasig River. I am not aware of the nitty-gritty happenings all over the country," Duterte said in an interview with reporters last Monday.

Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Chief of Staff Gen. Carlito Galvez had earlier said "there is really a clamor for extension considering that terrorism is still lurking in the area."

He the AFP and the Philippine National Police (PNP) will recommend extending martial law in Mindanao from December 31, 2018 to December 31, 2019.

House Majority Floor Leader and Camarines Sur Rep. Rolando "Nonoy" Andaya Jr. said the House

◀1

leadership will give in to the President's request to extend martial law in the South.

"If the President will ask for it, then chances are it shall be given," Andaya, chairman of the House Committee on Rules said.

He 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 said the "inputs and views of the congressmen from Mindanao, who represent the people directly affected," will certainly be factored in their deliberations.

On December 13, 2017 Congress, in a joint session, gave in to President Duterte's request to extend the martial law in Mindanao and suspend the writ of habeas corpus in Mindanao from January 1, 2018 to December 31, 2018.

A total of 240 Congress members voted in favor of the martial law extension, while 27 rejected it. The Senate's voting was 14-4, while House of Representatives voted 226-23. (With a report from Genalyn D. Kabiling)

## Arroyo: House to okay martial law extension

BY WENDELL VIGILIA

SPEAKER Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday assured Malacañang that the House will immediately act on a request to extend martial law in Mindanao.

"If it comes to our chamber, I will recommend that we pass it," Arroyo said, adding that House leadership is just waiting for President Duterte's the formal request.

Most senators want Malacañang to justify any request for extending martial for the third time, with Sen. Panfilo Lacson saying Malacañang should expect "harder questions than before."

Last Tuesday, Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said that like Armed Forces chief Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr., he is going to recommend to President Duterte a one-year extension of martial law in Mindanao. He also cited the continuing threat of terrorism as basis for the recommendation.

Lorenzana said another reason is that Mindanaoans wants an extension of martial law.

House majority leader Rolando Andaya Jr. on Monday said the House will readily extend martial law.

President Duterte declared martial law in Mindanao in May last year, after the Maute terror group occupied several barangays in Marawi City.

Martial law has been extended twice by Congress, on the request of Duterte who also cited as reason continuing threats from the terrorist groups.

The second extension ends on December 31.

The planned extension was supposed to have been discussed during the Cabinet meeting on Tuesday night. As of press time, there was no word from Palace officials if it was discussed and if there has been a decision. B1

# Martial law extension gains more traction

SPEAKER Gloria Macapagal Arroyo said Wednesday she will support a possible request of President Rodrigo Duterte to Congress to extend martial law in Mindanao.

"If it comes to our chamber, I will recommend to pass it," Arroyo told reporters.

She assured Duterte that the House would extend martial law and the suspension of the writ of habeas corpus in Mindanao for another year if the President wanted it.

She said the House was merely waiting for a formal request from Duterte on the matter.

House Majority Floor Leader Rolando Andaya Jr. reiterated his support for a martial law extension.

He repeated his support after Armed Forces Chief Carlito Galvez Jr. said Monday the military and the Philippine National Police would recommend extending martial law in Mindanao for one year, or from Dec. 31, 2018 to Dec. 31, 2019.

"If the President will ask for it, then chances are it shall be given," said Andaya who heads the House committee on rules.

He 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." A2

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

# WILL ML IN SOUTH BE LIFTED OR EXTENDED?

Duterte is set to announce his decision soon – Palace

By Efren Montano

**PRESIDENT** Duterte is expected to announce anytime if he would lift or seek the extension of martial law in Mindanao.

Presidential Spokesman Salvador Panelo said the President's decision would be made as soon as he completes his study of the recommendation to prolong martial law in the south.

"He will announce his decision today or tomorrow. He is still studying. Wait for the announcement," Panelo said, adding that the President is likely to declare an extension of martial law.

Martial law was declared in Mindanao in May 2017 to quell threats of rebellion and lawless violence following the terror siege in Marawi City. Congress had approved the President's previous request to extend martial

law until December 31, 2018.

The President recently said his decision on the martial law situation in Mindanao would depend on the recommendation of the military and the police.

"They are the guys on the ground. I'm here in Pasig River. I am not aware of the nitty-gritty happenings all over the country," Duterte told Palace reporters Monday.

Both the military and police have reportedly recommended to the President a yearlong extension of martial law to help address lingering terror threats in the region.

## House support

Speaker Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday said she will not oppose the extension of martial law if the President asks for it.

In an interview, Arroyo said they are waiting for the formal letter from

Malacanang about the extension of the martial law in Mindanao.

"If it comes to our Chamber, I will recommend that we pass it," Arroyo said.

Earlier, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Philippine National Police (PNP) said they will recommend to President Rodrigo Duterte the extension of martial rule for another one year.

To date however there is no formal request from the military and police. Malacanang said it will most likely be recommended to Congress.

House Majority Leader Rolando Andaya Jr. also said that there is a big chance for the martial law extension but it will first undergo debates in Congress.

Congress has only three session days left before the Christmas break. Session will resume on the third week of January 2019.

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

AFP Chief General Carlito Galvez said their recommendation of prescribing another year of martial law in Mindanao will be submitted as soon as possible to the Secretary of Department of National Defense.

Meanwhile Andaya asked the AFP and PNP to assure the public that they will continue to respect the Constitutional rights of the Filipinos amid martial rule.

"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," Andaya said.

Andaya also said, during the debates, the opinions of the Mindanaoan solons will be considered.

With Jester P. Manalastas



## PNP, AFP formally urge extension

By Alfred Dalizon

ITS official. The Philippine National Police and the Armed Forces of the Philippines leaderships have signed a joint document recommending the extension of martial law in Mindanao for another year as security officials say it would be crucial in keeping terrorism and criminality in check in the region.

PNP chief Director General Oscar D. Albayalde made the disclosure during a television interview where he said that he and outgoing AFP chief Gen. Carlito C. Galvez Jr. had signed the recommendation amid drastic improvements in the peace and order condition in the South since President Duterte imposed martial law in the region.

He said that since martial rule was imposed in Mindanao, crime volume dropped by 28.85% or 32.8 percent. The PNP chief they also recorded a 44.2 percent reduction in index crimes in the region as incidents of murder, homicide and physical injuries have dropped significantly.

Gen. Albayalde said that martial law in the region has also resulted in the seizure of around 10,000 loose firearms which could have been used to commit violence by lawless elements and other persons in the region including rogue politicians.

"These are all the good effects of martial law in Mindanao," the PNP chief declared. What's more important, he said is that they haven't recorded any human rights violation in the region since martial law was declared. The PNP chief said that although some quarters have claimed there were martial law abuses in the region, all the claims were unsubstantiated and no single case was filed.

Officials noted that since martial law was imposed in the region in June 2017, security forces and their checkpoints have effectively constricted the movement of the New People's Army, the Maute Group and the Abu Sayyaf Group in the region.

Police Regional Office 9 director Chief Superinten-

dent Emmanuel Luis D. Licup told the joint National Peace and Order Council and 4<sup>th</sup> RPOC Cluster Meeting in Davao City last Monday that the implementation of martial law in Mindanao and relentless government offensive against pro-ISIS groups including the Abu Sayyaf have weakened the terrorists' capability to retaliate against government forces.

Licup also said that the martial rule in the region has also greatly weakened the New People's Army movement in the region with the rebels now concentrating their effort on mass organization, black propaganda and recruitment programs after being upset by the series of surrenders of their mass supporters and members.

The Police Regional Office 11 in Southern Mindanao headed by Chief Supt. Marcelo C. Morales and the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao Police Regional Office headed by Chief Supt. Graciano J. Mijares and their respective RPOCs have also made similar recommendations.

The RPOC 13 Executive Committee in Caraga region also issued a resolution supporting the extension of martial law and suspension of the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus in Mindanao for 1-year in preservation of peace and public safety, said PRO13 director, Chief Supt. Gilbert DC Cruz.

The RPO13 said there is a need for martial law extension in the region to totally eradicate the local and foreign terrorist groups and armed lawless elements including the NPA and their coddlers, supporters and financiers.

It also said that as per testimonies by local officials, there is a great difference between the martial law declared by the late strongman Ferdinand Marcos and the present martial law declared by President Duterte.

"They feel much secure with the present martial law due to its safety nets wherein lots of stakeholders including the media are vigilant to the implementation of the law as well as the protection of human rights," the RPO13 added.

## Duterte to announce decision on ML extension

**PRESIDENT Rodrigo Duterte is expected to announce anytime on whether he would lift or seek the extension of martial law in Mindanao.** /Page 6

### DUTERTE...

*From Page 1*

Presidential Spokesman Salvador Panelo said the President's decision would be made as soon as he completes his study on the recommendation to prolong the martial law declaration in the south.

"He will announce his decision today or tomorrow. He is still studying. Wait for the announcement," Panelo said, adding that the President is likely to declare an extension of martial law.

Martial law was declared in Mindanao in May

2017 to quell threats of rebellion and lawless violence following the terror siege in Marawi City. Congress has approved the President's previous request to extend martial law until December 31, 2018.

The President recently said his decision on the martial law situation in Mindanao would depend on the recommendation of the military and the police.

"They are the guys on the ground. I'm here in Pasig River. I am not aware of the nitty-gritty happenings all over the country," Duterte told Palace reporters Monday.

Both the military and

police have reportedly recommended to the President a yearlong extension of martial law to help address lingering terror threats in the region.

Malacañang earlier said the President might be persuaded to seek a martial law extension in Mindanao given the support of the military, police and the residents of the region.

"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," Panelo said.

# PNP, AFP endorse Minda ML extension

## Rody assured of HoR backing

**By EFREN MONTANO & RYAN PONCE PACPACO**

**IT'S official.** The Philippine National Police and the Armed Forces of the Philippines have signed a joint document recommending the extension of martial law in Mindanao for another year as security officials say it would be crucial in keeping terrorism and criminality in check in the region.

PNP chief, Director General Oscar D. Albayalde made the disclosure during a television interview where he said he and outgoing AFP chief Gen. Carlito G. Galvez Jr. had signed the recommendation amid dras-

tic improvements in the peace and order condition in the South since President Duterte imposed martial law in the area.

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Mindanao," the PNP chief declared.

What's more important, he said is that they haven't recorded any human rights violation in the region since martial law was declared. The PNP chief said that although some quarters have claimed there were martial law abuses in the region, all of them were unsubstantiated, all mere allegations and no single case was filed.

Last week, citing a significant reduction in crime and ISIS-inspired terror activities in Mindanao since martial law was imposed in the region in May 2017, four Mindanao-based police regional offices and their respective Regional Peace and Order Councils (RPOCs) have recommended to the PNP leadership



Arroyo the extension of martial rule in the southern Philippines.

The recommendations forwarded to the National Peace and Order Council were made amid the positive impact on economy and peace and order condition in Mindanao from May 2017 to date, with no human rights violations.

Officials likewise noted that since martial law was imposed in the region in

June 2017, security forces and their checkpoints have effectively constricted the movement of the New People's Army, the Maute Group and the Abu Sayyaf Group in the region.

Meanwhile, Speaker Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday assured President Duterte that the House of Representatives would extend martial law and suspension of the writ of habeas corpus in Mindanao for another year.

Arroyo said her leadership is just awaiting the formal request from President Duterte on the matter.

"If it comes to our Chamber, I will recommend that

we pass it," Arroyo told reporters in an ambush interview.

House Majority Floor Leader and Camarines Sur Rep. Rolando "Nenoy" Andaya, Jr. reiterated his support on the matter after General Galvez and the PNP recommended extending martial law in Mindanao.

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

"The inputs and views of the congressmen from Mindanao, who represent the people directly affected, will carry much weight during the deliberations," said Andaya. 7

## ML extension isusumite na ng AFP, PNP kay Digong

Isusumite na ng Philippine National Police (PNP) at Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) ang kanilang rekomendasyon kay Pangulong Duterte para palawigin pa ng isang taon ang Martial Law sa Mindanao.

"We have just signed a document together with the outgoing military chief of staff (Gen. Carlito Galvez) recommending the extension of Martial Law in Mindanao for another one year," pahayag ni PNP Chief P/Director General Oscar Albayalde.

Sinabi ni Albayalde na ang malaking ibinaba ng crime rate sa Mindanao ang nagbunsod sa PNP para makiusap sa AFP na irekomenda ang isa pang taong ekstensyon ng martial law.

Ayon kay Albayalde, naging epektibo ang implementasyon ng martial law sa buong Mindanao simula Mayo 23, 2017 ng ideklara ito ni Pangulong Duterte para matugunan ang lahat ng uri ng krimen.

Ang crime volume sa Mindanao ay bumaba ng 32.8% simula Enero 2016.

Naging kapansin-pansin din ang pagbaba ng index crime kabilang ang murder, physical injuries at mga kaso ng pagpatay na nasa 44.2% na lamang.

Sa itaas rin ng martial law, nasa 10,000 loose firearms ang nakumpiska ng security forces. *(Joy Santos)*

# Widowed solon wants La Union under military protection

By ERWIN BELEO

**A**GOO, La Union – La Union 2nd District Rep. Sandra Eriguel asked the Commission on Elections (Comelec) to place the province under military protection to prevent the spread of violence following the deaths of several politicians this year.

In a letter dated November 20, 2018 to Comelec Chairman Sheriff M. Abbas, Eriguel asked for the intervention of the election body, particularly in the municipalities of Agoo, Bauang, Caba and Tubao in the 2nd district which she represents.

Eriguel made the plea after several politicians were gunned down, including her husband, former Rep. Eufanio Eriguel who was shot dead by still unidentified assailants on May 12, 2018 in Barangay Capas, Agoo, two days before the 2018 Barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan elections.

Prior to this, her husband survived a bombing attack on April 30, 2016 barely two weeks from the 2016 national and local elections.

The said bombing attack remains unresolved.

"The death of my husband was not the last of violent incidents that erupted in our province. The recent ambush on Sudipen Mayor Allan Buqing and Balaoan Vice Mayor Alfred Concepcion which resulted in their deaths as well as of their police security details, placed La Union again in the headline news," she pointed out.

"Apart from these, local leaders were also gunned down particularly in the towns of Bauang and Tubao but these were not reported in the national media," she said.

Eriguel said the prevalence of violence in La Union has not only caused fear among the people but also among politicians.

"I received information that I will be gunned down once I filed my certificate of candidacy. I did not take the information lightly thus I instructed my chief of staff to file my COC with the provincial election supervisor of La Union as a precaution. To this date, I continue to

receive information of ongoing threats to me and my family as well as my allies in politics," she claimed.

Eriguel also asked Comelec to allow the personnel from the Police Security and Protection Group and the Philippines Army to be detailed to her and her family during the election period amid the threats on their lives.

"I am willing to comply with any requirements which the Comelec will mandate," she said.

"I am hopeful that peace will again reign over La Union and with the intervention of Comelec, peace and violence-free elections are attainable." *J*

## Arroyo denies fast-tracking federal charter resolution

SPEAKER Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo denied claims that the lower chamber was fast-tracking the passage of the federal charter resolution, which was approved on second reading at the plenary on Tuesday.

"There was a debate, it was voted on, we sent it to them. It's part of the democratic process," Arroyo told reporters in a chance interview.

She said the House would "hopefully" take up Resolution of Both Houses (RBH) 15 on third and final reading on Monday. It only took three session days to deliberate on the resolution.

"We are able to pass it on second reading, so three days after the copy is circulated, we should be taking it up on third reading, hopefully that would be Monday," Arroyo said.

RBH 15 rejects the anti-political dynasty provision and provides no term limits for members of the Senate and the House of Representatives.

"There was a debate and you know that I did not participate in the debate because I have always said that my only contribution there is the mechanism for setting up the federal states. The others are all contributions of the other congressmen. They should answer for themselves," she said.

The amended measure also uses "lawless violence," which refers to terrorism and violent extremism, as grounds for martial law declaration. *A3*

Senators, however, said there was no time to tackle the Senate version of the proposed federal constitution.

"(The) chances of the federal draft charter making it in the Senate at this point is very doubtful," Senate President Vicente Sotto 3rd said in a text message.

**GLEE JALEA AND  
BERNADETTE E. TAMAYO**

# 'Place La Union under AFP care in 2019 polls'

BY WILLIAM GARCIA

**A**GOO, La Union: La Union Rep. Sandra Eriguel (Second District) has recommended to the Commission on Elections (Comelec) to place La Union under military protection during the 2019 elections to prevent the spread of violence resulting from the deaths this year of several politicians in the province.

In a Nov. 20, 2018 letter sent to Comelec Chairman Sheriff Abbas, Eriguel asked the poll body to intervene during the mid-term elections next year to ensure there is peace and order in La Union, particularly in the municipalities of Agoo, Bauang, Caba and Tubao in the Second District.

Eriguel made the plea after the murders of several politicians including her husband, former Rep. Eufanio Eriguel, who was gunned down by unidentified assailants on May

12 while he was speaking in a meeting in Barangay Capas, Agoo, La Union, two days before the 2018 *barangay* (village) and *Sangguniang Kabataan* (Youth Council) elections.

Her husband survived a bombing attack on April 30, 2016, or two weeks before the 2016 national and local elections.

The incident remains unsolved to this day.

"The death of my husband was not the last of the violent incidents that erupted in our

province. The recent ambush of Sudipen Mayor Allan Buquing and Balaoan Vice Mayor Alfred Concepcion, which resulted to their deaths, as well as that of their police security details, placed La Union again in the headline news," Eriguel said.

"Apart from these local leaders in Bauang and Tubao were also killed, but these were not reported in the national media," she added.

Eriguel said the prevalence of violence in La Union has not only caused fear among the people but also among politicians, themselves.

"I received information that I would be gunned down once I file my certificate of candidacy (CoC). I did not take the information lightly so I instructed my chief of staff to file my CoC with the provincial election supervisor of La Union as a precaution. To this date, I continue to receive information about threats to me

and my family as well as my political allies," she added.

To put the situation under control, Eriguel also asked Comelec to call on the Philippine Army through the Department of National Defense to place La Union province, particularly the towns hit by political violence, under military protection.

She said government troops must also provide close security for those running in the mid-term elections as soon as possible.

Eriguel further asked Comelec to allow personnel from the Police Security and Protection Group and the Philippine Army to be detailed to her and her family during the election period.

"I am willing to comply with any requirement which the Comelec would mandate. I am hopeful that peace would again reign over La Union and with the intervention of Comelec, peaceful and violence-free elections would still be attainable," she said. AX

# Kidnapping, child trafficking raps filed vs 2 more lawmakers

JUST a week after a Makabayan bloc lawmaker was released after posting bail for kidnapping and human trafficking charges, two more congressmen were charged with child abuse by the Davao City police.

In a news briefing on

Wednesday, ACT-Teachers Rep. Antonio Tinio and Anakpawis party-list Rep. Ariel Casilao said they received a subpoena and supporting affidavits from the Davao police accusing them of violating Republic

► RapsA8

### ■ RAPS FROM A1

## Kidnapping, child trafficking raps filed

Act (RA) 7610 on the "special Protection of Children Against Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act." On October 25, Casilao and Tinio took part in a protest activity in Davao City with Save Our Schools Network, a group of *Iumad* (indigenous people) students and teachers to condemn the increased militarization, killings and other human rights abuses under martial law in Mindanao.

The Save Our Schools Network broadened the protest after it noted that there were 735 reported cases of attacks on *Iumad* schools, with

577,161 affected individuals and more than 50 incidents of aerial bombardment in one year.

Davao City Women and Children's Protection Desk chief Lilibeth Liza Salvador Remolar said in her affidavit of complaint that alleged minors "were part of the rally, holding placards, banners and shouting words against the government."

"They were influencing the minors to be angry and to ruin the present government," she said.

Tinio denounced the "malicious" accusation and the use of "trumped-up charges to harass

members of the Makabayan bloc."

"We denounce the use of trumped-up charges to harass members of the Makabayan bloc. We will face this baseless complaint and shall remain steadfast in our advocacy for people's rights and welfare," he said.

In her Instagram post, Davao Mayor Sara Duterte-Carpio called out the two lawmakers in October for "putting children in the streets" while they were supposed to be in schools on a week-day.

"Casilao... just one question, what are the rights of the minors behind you? You take them out of schools and put them on the streets to conduct your rallies. Again, you do not deserve to be in Congress. When will the House of Representatives ever kick you out?" she asked in her post.

Casilao responded that the youth were rallying to assert their rights and that they were accompanied by their parents, advisers, teachers and community leaders.

Last week, ACT-Teachers Party-list Rep. Francisca Castro was arrested without warrant and charged for kidnapping and human trafficking while loaning a humanitarian mission to help *Iumad* students displaced by the forcible closure of their schools by military-backed paramilitary group Alamara under the 50th Infantry Battalion of the Philippine Army in the hinterlands of Talangod, Davao del Norte.

Castro at the time was with former Bayan Muna Rep. Sarur Cuzampin and six others.

The two were released on Saturday after posting P60,000 cash bond each.

GLEE JALEA



## Pampanga bags national Kalasag Award

SAN FERNANDO—Pampanga bested other provinces across the country in terms of disaster risk reduction and rescue during the 20th National Gawad Kalasag Awards on Tuesday at the AFP Amphitheater in Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City.

The prestigious award was received by Pampanga Vice Governor Dennis Pineda in behalf of his mother, Governor Lilia Pineda, during the rites at the AFP General Headquarters.

A national selection committee from member-agencies of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council chaired by the Office of Civil Defense conducted a series of stringent evaluation of the provincial disaster council's systems and programs, developed from one of the world's worst disasters, Mt. Pinatubo's 1991 eruptions and lahar flows.

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana handed the award to Vice Governor Pineda, co-chair of the PDRRMC, at the AFP Amphitheater.

"The PDRRMC stood out for its best

practices in empowering communities and the private sector to be alert, prepared and safe from disasters," the council's action officer Angelina Blanco explained.

The PDRRMC won the regional Gawad Kalasag Hall of Fame for five consecutive years. In 2016, the PDRRMC landed second in the 18th National Gawad Kalasag.

"The National Gawad Kalasag Award recognizes the leadership of the PDRRMC headed by the chairperson, Governor Lilia Pineda, and vice chairperson, Vice Governor Dennis Pineda, in the council's programs and projects that try to reduce the risks posed on people by natural hazards such as flooding, storm surges, landslides and earthquakes," Blanco said.

"Through the PDRRMC, we also see the cooperation of the provincial government, public agencies, private organizations, non-government organizations and civil society groups," she added.

**Jess Malabanan**



## ACROSS THE COUNTRY

### 3 soldiers hurt in Quezon clash with Reds

CAMP VICENTE LIM - Three soldiers were wounded in an encounter with New People's Army (NPA) rebels in Barangay San Bueno, Sampaloc, Quezon on Tuesday morning.

The military said 2nd Lt. Glent Paul Lim and Sgts. Mieri Jackly and Velmer Torente were taken to the Mauban District Hospital for treatment.

Brig. Gen. Arnulfo Marcelo Burgos Jr., 202nd Infantry Brigade commander, said government troopers overran an NPA camp, where an M16 rifle, various types of ammunition, personal belongings and war materiel were recovered, following the clash. K

- Ed Amoroso

8

December 2018

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## 3 soldiers wounded in Quezon encounter

By FRANCIS T. WAKEFIELD

Three soldiers were wounded after government troops overran a temporary encampment of the Communist New People's Army Terrorist Group (CNTG) following an operation in Quezon province on Tuesday, Dec. 4.

Lieutenant Colonel Jonathan S. Manio, the Commanding Officer of the Army's 1st Infantry Battalion, said troops were conducting Focus Military Operation (FMO) when they raided an enemy camp following an assault in the vicinity of Barangay San Bueno, Sampaloc, Quezon.

The operation, he said, was in response to intelligence report and tips from civilians about the NPA's presence and their ongoing extortion activities in the area.

When the troops were near the enemy camp, a gun battle ensued against some 20 NPA rebels that lasted for almost 30 minutes.

Three soldiers suffered minor wounds and are in stable condition.

A report said much blood stains in the area occupied by the NPAs indicated casualties on the NPA side.

The NPAs brought their wounded comrades when they escaped the gun fight, according to the troops.

The soldiers recovered one loaded M16 rifle and other war materials.

Manio said the rebels were believed to be members of the NPA Military Regional Guerrilla Unit (MRGU).

Brigadier General Arnulfo Marcelo B. Burgos Jr., commander of the 202nd Brigade which has operational jurisdiction over CALABARZON (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon), said the recent encounter in Quezon including last month's successive encounters in General Nakar came about following tips from concerned civilians. Bg

"It clearly shows that the NPAs are indeed losing mass base support due to their extortion and terror acts towards the people," he said.

## 3 sundalo sugatan sa encounter

Tatlong sundalo ang nasugatan makaraang makasagupa ng tropa ng pamahalaan ang nasa 20 na rebeldeng New People's Army (NPA) na nagresulta upang makubkob ang kampo ng komunistang grupo sa isang liblib na lugar sa Brgy. San Bueno, Sampaloc, Quezon kamakalawa.

Ayon kay Captain Patrick Jay Retumban, spokesperson ng 2nd Infantry Division (ID) ng Phil Army, dakong alas-11:30 ng tanghal nang makasagupa ng tropa ni 1st Infantry Battalion (IB)-PA Commanding Officer Lt. Col. Jonathan Manio ang mga rebeldeng NPA sa nasabing lugar.

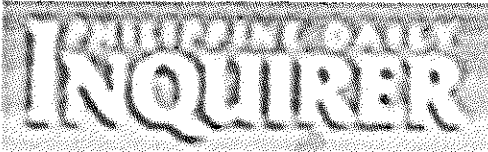
Nauna rito, nakatanggap ng report ang tropa ni Manio hinggil sa presensya ng mga armadong rebelde na nangongotong ng pera at pagkain sa mga residente sa lugar kaya agad si-

lang nagresponde. Pasok pa lamang ang mga sundalo sa lugar ay sinalubong na sila ng mga putok mula sa mga rebelde na nauwi sa 30 minutong bakbakan na ikinasugat ng tatlong sundalo na hindi pa pinangalanan. Mabilis na nagsitakas ang mga rebelde bilbit ang mga sugatang kasamahan.

Narekober sa lugar ang isang M16 rifle na kargado ng magazine at mga bala. Nakubkob din ng militar ang pinagkuku-taan ng mga rebelde matapos na tugisin ang mga tumatakas na kalaban.

Nakuha sa kampo ng mga rebelde ang mga personal na kagamitan, mga armas pandigma at mga pagkain. *(Joy Cantos)*

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# No holiday truce with NPA-Lorenzana

**By Jeannette I. Andrade and Delfin T. Mallari Jr.**  
@Team Inquirer

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana on Wednesday rejected any suspension of military operations (Somo) against the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and its military arm, the New People's Army (NPA), despite the insurgents' offer of a holiday ceasefire.

CPP founder Jose Maria Sison on Tuesday said the National Democratic Front of the

Philippines (NDFP) negotiating panel had received an "advance notice from the CPP" saying it would order the NPA to observe a unilateral ceasefire.

### Solidarity with Filipinos

The truce order is meant to manifest solidarity with the Filipino people's celebration of the Yuletide season and to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the CPP on Dec. 26, Sison said.

In a statement issued from his base in Utrecht, the Netherlands, Sison said the insur-

gents' temporary unilateral ceasefire "demonstrates the high morale and self-confidence of the revolutionary forces and people in their all-round strength."

But in a message to reporters, Lorenzana said the military "objected to a Somo" and "shall not allow the CPP to use a Somo to celebrate (its) 50th anniversary."

### First time for AFP

This is the first time that the Armed Forces of the Philippines

is not even contemplating a cessation of hostilities with the CPP and NPA for the holidays.

"We see that in the past, (the CPP-NPA) has not been sincere with any suspension of military operations. They continue with their terroristic and criminal activities, extortion, (and) harassment. We do not want to give them the opportunity to gather and mass up to joyfully celebrate their 50th anniversary," AFP spokesperson Brig. Gen. Edgard Arevalo said at a press conference.

"Experience told us, experience showed us that (a Somo) is not worth it," he added.

But even as he offered a holiday truce, Sison warned that NPA rebels were ready to thwart possible attacks from its enemies during the projected truce.

### NPA's surrender

Sison said President Duterte had made several unacceptable preconditions to continue peace negotiations, among them "the surrender of the NPA,

the laying aside of the people's demand for social, economic and political reforms, and the self-destruction of the revolutionary movement."

Mr. Duterte terminated peace talks with the NDFP in November last year and shortly after, declared the CPP and NPA as terrorist organizations.

The NDFP is the umbrella group of all communist-led underground organizations that has been conducting on-and-off peace talks with the government since 1986. INQ 14

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# Palace, AFP cool to Yule truce with NPA

By CHRISTINA MENDEZ

Presidential spokesman Salvador Panelo supported the stand of Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana not to declare a holiday truce between government troops and the communist New People's Army (NPA) this Christmas

season, which also coincides with the rebel group's 50th anniversary on Dec. 26.

Panelo, also chief presidential legal adviser, expressed belief that a truce with the NPA should be made permanent to ensure sincerity from the leftist groups.

"There should be a per-

manent truce. There should be no bloodshed as far as the government is concerned. It's about time we stopped all this bloodshed. It's been 50 years, my God! Let's end the internecine (fighting) among Filipinos," he said.

Panelo said the Palace has

Turn to Page 2

## Palace From Page 1

yet to issue a formal statement pending possible discussions of the matter during Tuesday night's Cabinet meeting presided over by the President.

Earlier in the day, Lorenzana said the rebels are already gearing up for the celebration of their 50th anniversary.

President Duterte, however, had also expressed anew serious concerns about the moves of the NPA as well as groups which they used as fronts for their anti-government demonstrations and other activities.

Lorenzana said the rebel communist group now being tagged by the government and the military as a terrorist organization can declare a ceasefire among their ranks if they want to.

"That's their call. We are not keen on a ceasefire," Lorenzana, a retired AFP official, said yesterday.

"No. I have objected to a SOMO (suspension of military operations). We shall not allow the CPP to use a SOMO to celebrate their 50th anniversary," he added.

The CPP-NPA, headed by its founding chairman Jose Maria Sison, will be celebrating its foundation day on Dec. 26.

Lorenzana also objected to a SOMO last year but Malacañang still declared a SOMO from Dec. 24, 2017 to Jan. 2, 2018.

President Duterte, however, noted then that the holiday truce was "not addressed to the NPAs. Rather, I would want to celebrate Christmas with the rest of

humankind or Filipinos, without stress."

AFP spokesman Brig. Gen. Edgard Arevalo said the year-end accomplishment report showed that over 1,000 NPA rebels and over 10,000 supporters have surrendered because of the Enhanced Comprehensive Local Integration Program (E-CLIP) that gave the insurgents a chance to return to their families and live peaceful lives.

He said some 116 rebels were killed in various military operations during the 11-month period, while 172 others were arrested.

Arevalo said a total of 1,709 firearms were also recovered by government troops.

He said that 284 members of the Abu Savyaf were neutralized by the military from January to November 2018.

The Army's 1st Infantry Battalion (1B) overran a camp of NPA rebels in Barangay San Bueno, Sampaloc, Quezon on Tuesday.

While the military believes that many rebel members were either killed or wounded, three soldiers were also hurt in a 30-minute firefight that ensued between government troops and the enemy.

Lt. Col. Jonathan Manio, Commanding Officer of the 1st IB, said soldiers conducted Focus Military Operation in the area after receiving an intelligence report and tips from civilians about NPA presence and their extortion activities.

- With Michael Punongbayan

# Defense chief nixes holiday truce with Reds

By FRANCIS T. WAKEFIELD

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana on Wednesday said that he is not in

favor of suspending military operations against the New People's Army (NPA) during the holiday season.

Lorenzana made the remark ▶4

## Defense chief nixes...



after he was asked whether or not the Department of National Defense (DND) and Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) are recommending a SOMO (suspension of military operations) with the CPP-NPA this Christmas season.

"No, I have objected to a SOMO. We shall not allow the CPP (Communist Party of the Philippines) to use a SOMO to celebrate their 50th anniversary," Lorenzana said.

At the same time, Lorenzana also rejected calls from the NPA for a unilateral ceasefire.

"That's their call. We are not keen on a ceasefire," he said.

In a text message, AFP Public Affairs chief Colonel Noel Detoyato, said they will support the decision of the defense secretary not to declare a SOMO.

"We support the stand of SND," he said.

Armed Forces Spokesperson Brig. Gen. Edgard Arevalo said if in the past they agreed to a truce with the Reds, it was only because of their desire to have lasting peace for the country.

"Hindi sa ngayon lang na-realize (It's not that we only realize it now) but the Armed Forces of the Philippines ever since we are hoping, ever since pinakikita natin yan (we are showing that) despite or notwithstanding the insincerities, notwithstanding their actions that are inimical to the interest of the state, we still give peace a chance especially during Christmas time," Arevalo said.

"But this time nakikita natin na (we already see) it is not working to the advantage and best interest of our people. So we are not inclined to go with

the declaration of traditional SOMO," he added.

### Heightened alert

And to ensure that communist rebels will be prevented from committing atrocities, Arevalo said all military units around the country will be on heightened alert.

The CPP-NPA is known for staging hostilities such as harassments, raids and ambushes against soft government posts and installations to highlight significant events in the terrorist movement.

The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) will celebrate its 50th founding anniversary on December 26, 2018.

President Rodrigo Duterte earlier signed Proclamations 360 and 274, which formally terminates the government's peace talks with CPP's political wing NDF and declares CPP-NPA as a terrorist organization, respectively.

Meanwhile, Army 2nd Infantry Division Chief Major General Rhoderick M. Parayno said they will be relentless with their combat operations especially with the upcoming December 26 anniversary preparations of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP).

"We will be relentless on our combat operations until the yearend and we will give the CPP/NPA no time to celebrate their futile cause," Parayno said.

"I would appeal to the NPAs, if they want to be with their families and live peaceful, normal and productive lives, to just return to the fold of the law. I guarantee their safety and I'll make sure that they receive all the benefits due them offered by the government," he said.

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## Defense chief nixes holiday truce with Reds

By FRANCIS T. WAKEFIELD

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana on Wednesday said that he is not in favor of suspending military operations against the New People's Army (NPA) during the holiday season.

Lorenzana made the remark after he was asked whether or not the Department of National Defense (DND) and Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) are recommending a SOMO (suspension of military operations) with the CPP-NPA this Christmas season.

"No I have objected to a SOMO. We shall not allow the CPP (Communist Party of the Philippines) to use a SOMO to celebrate their 50th anniversary," Lorenzana said.

At the same time, Lorenzana also rejected calls from the NPA for a unilateral ceasefire.

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## Defense, military don't want Xmas truce with Reds

BY VICTOR REYES

DEFENSE Secretary Delfin Lorenzana yesterday said the defense and military establishments are not going to recommend to President Duterte a ceasefire declaration with the communists for the Christmas season.

He said they do not want the communist movement to use government's suspension of offensive military operations (SOMO) to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) on December 26.

The CPP and its armed wing, the New People's Army, traditionally mark their anniversary with attacks on military and civilian targets.

Government traditionally declares a SOMO during the Yuletide season. The communists traditionally reciprocate. After the truce period, the two sides exchange accusations of ceasefire violations.

"I have objected to a SOMO. We shall not allow the CPP to use a SOMO to celebrate their 50th anniversary," Lorenzana said.

On reports that the communists intend to declare a truce, Lorenzana said, "That's their call. We (defense department and Armed Forces) are not keen on a ceasefire."

AFP spokesman Brig. Gen. Edgard Arevalo said the military is not inclined to recommend the SOMO because the communists, particularly the NPA, have taken advantage of past ceasefires.

He said the NPA, in past ceasefires, continued with their "terrorist and criminal activities -- extortion, harassments etc."

"We've seen their insincerity and their non-adherence (to ceasefire declarations). Experience told us, showed us, it's not worth it," he added.

Arevalo acknowledged that while the defense department and the military are not recommending a SOMO, President Duterte has the "last say" on the matter.

The President also consults other agencies, including the PNP and the interior department, before making a decision on a truce declaration.

Last year, the government and the communists declared a four-day truce for Christmas, from December 23 to 26, and another four days for New Year, from December 30 to Jan. 2.

The Duterte government also declared a SOMO in 2016. B1

## DND chief: No to Christmas truce with rebs

By **ZAIDA DELOS REYES**

**SAYING he will not allow the Communist Party of the Philippines-New Peoples Army (CPP-NPA) to celebrate their 50th anniversary, Department of National Defense (DND) Secretary Delfin Lorenzana yesterday said he will not recommend Christmas truce with the communist rebels this year.**

Lorenzana said he objected to the suspension of offensive military operations (SOMO) with the rebels.

"No. I have objected to a SOMO. We shall not allow the CPP to use a SOMO to celebrate their 50th anniversary," Lorenzana said.

Lorenzana said he will not recommend a declaration of SOMO this year with the

CPP-NPA because there was allegedly an order from their commanders to intensify operations against the military and therefore if they declare SOMO and will stand down the enemy will be given a chance to attack them.

The military traditionally declares a SOMO during the holidays, which is also reciprocated by the communist rebels.

It was learned that the CPP-NPA will celebrate their 50th founding anniversary on December 26, 2018.

Lorenzana, a retired military general, made a similar statement last year about possible Christmas truce with communist rebels.

However, President Rodrigo Duterte declared a suspension of military operations that lasted from December 24, 2017 to January 2, 2018.

## Defense chief says no to Xmas truce

By Zaida delos Reyes

SAYING he will not allow the Communist Party of the Philippines-New Peoples Army (CPP-NPA) to celebrate their 50th anniversary, Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana yesterday said he will not recommend a Christmas truce with the communist rebels this year.

Lorenzana said he objects to the suspension of offensive military operations (SOMO) with the

rebels.

"No. I have objected to a SOMO. We shall not allow the CPP to use a SOMO to celebrate their 50th Anniversary," Lorenzana said.

Lorenzana said he will not recommend a declaration of SOMO this year with the CPP-NPA because there was allegedly an order from the communist rebel commanders to intensify operations against the military and a SOMO would open them to attacks from the enemy.

The military tradition-

ally declares a SOMO during the holidays, which is also reciprocated by the communist rebels.

The CPP-NPA will celebrate their 50th founding anniversary on December 26, 2018.

Lorenzana, a retired military general, last year also rejected a Christmas truce with communist rebels.

However, President Rodrigo Duterte declared a suspension of military operations that lasted from December 24, 2017, to January 2, 2018.

# 'NO XMAS CEASEFIRE' VS NPA REBELS-AFP

Ni JOY CANTOS

**W**alang planong magrekomenda ng ceasefire ngayong Kapaskuhan ang Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) laban sa New People's Army (NPA) dahil sa ginagawang serye ng karahasan ng mga ito tulad ng ambushades,

extortion at iba pa. Ito ang binagyang diin kahapon ni AFP Spokesman Brig. Gen. Edgard Arevalo sa press briefing sa Defense Press Corps dahil sa mga nagdaang taon sa tuwing nalalapit ang Kapaskuhan ay nagdeklara ng unilateral ceasefire ang

gobyerno sa hanay ng CPP-NPA rebels pero sa taong ito ay hindi na nila ito gagawin.

Malinaw anya na sinasamantala lamang ng CPP-NPA ang tigil putukan na idinedeklara ng gobyerno tuwing Kapaskuhan sa pagpapalakas ng puwersa

at bukod dito'y patuloy pa rin ang paghahasik ng mga ito ng karahasan.

"They continue with their terrorist and criminal activists, extortion, harassments, etc and

we do not want to give them the opportunity to gather and mass up to joyfully celebrate their 50th anniversary" gitn ni Arevalo na ang unang ang ambersaryo ng NPA sa darating na Disyembre 26 ng taong ito.

Sinabi ni Arevalo na nakaalerto na ang tropa ng mga sundalo sa mga kanayunan upang supilin ang posibleng paghahasik ng terorismo ng komunistang grupo.

Sa loob ng mahabang panahon ito ang kaunau-

nahang pagkakataon na walang idedeklarang ceasefire ang gobyerno sa hanay ng CPP-NPA kapag kinatigan ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte ang rekomendasyon ng AFP at Defense department ng no ceasefire

# No more peace talks – Duterte

BY CATHERINE S. VALENTE

**P**RESIDENT Rodrigo Duterte on Wednesday said he was no longer inclined to pursue peace talks with communist rebels even if Jose Maria "Joma" Sison declared that the New People's Army (NPA) would observe a unilateral holiday ceasefire.

*"Ilong komunista (These communists), I'm no longer ready to talk to you. I've done it before. Magmukha lang tayong gago (We will only look stupid),"* Duterte said in his speech during the awarding ceremony for child-friendly municipalities and cities in Malacanang.

The President then siammed Sison, saying he would slap him if he returns to the country.

*"You insult me. I insult you. Huwag ka na lang umuwi dito (You should not come home), I promise you. I'll slap you. Kapag pinili mo sa airport bumalik. P\*\*\*\*-i\*\* mo, sampalin kita. Pakain ko sa yo — yung pustiso mo, leche ka (If you insist on returning, at the airport, you son of b\*\*\*\*, I'll slap you. I will let you eat your false teeth),"* Duterte said.

*"I\*\*\*\*-i\*\* nito, mayabang ka, akala mo kung sinong magsalita. Akala mo naman abugadong mas bright pa sa yo (You son of b\*\*\*\*, you're arrogant, you talk as if you know everything),"* he added.

On Sunday, Sison said the communists were set to observe a holiday truce to allow guerillas and their families to "freely enjoy" the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) on December 26.

It has become a tradition for the military and communist guerillas to observe a truce during the holidays through separate ceasefire declarations.

But the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) said it was not inclined to recommend a truce.

Brig. Gen. Edgard Arevalo, AFP spokesman said, the military did not

want the rebels to use the holiday truce as an opportunity to celebrate their 50th anniversary.

"We do not want to give them the opportunity to gather and mass up, to joyfully celebrate their 50th anniversary," Arevalo said.

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana also rejected the idea of the ceasefire, saying there was no need to declare a suspension of military operations (SOMO) in line with the CPP's 50th anniversary.

"I have objected to a SOMO. We shall not allow the CPP to use a SOMO to celebrate their 50th anniversary," Lorenzana told reporters.

Duterte terminated peace talks between the government and the communist group in November last year amid the NPA's continued attacks on state troops.

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WITH DEMPSEY REYES

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## Massacre survivor's charges unfounded — police chief

**BACOLOD CITY.** Charges filed against the father, the police chief and three members of the Sagay police are "unfounded and fabricated," a police official said.

Chief Insp. Robert Mansueto, Sagay police chief, described the criminal complaint filed by the mother of a 14-year-old boy who survived the Sagay massacre as "fabricated and designed to intimidate the police."

"There is no basis for it and the police has evidence to prove this," he said.

On Tuesday, the minor's mother filed criminal complaints with the Department of Justice (DoJ) against the boy's father, Mansueto and the three police officers.

Flor, the mother of "Lester," the

massacre survivor, alleged that the boy's father, identified only as "Vic," was inflicting psychological abuse on the child with his attempts to take custody of him and force him to testify in the investigation of the massacre, the mother's lawyer, Katherine Panguban, said.

Panguban added that Vic, who is not married to Flor, left Lester in his mother's custody 10 years ago but resurfaced after the Sagay massacre.

She said Vic is being used by the police and the military to force Lester to point to members of the communist New People's Army (NPA) as the culprits behind the massacre.

Aside from Vic, Flor also filed

a child abuse complaint under Republic Act 7610 or the Anti-Child Abuse Law, against Mansueto and Senior Police Officer 1 Julie Ann Diaz and PO Christine Magpusaw.

Panguban said the police officers threatened mother and son and took Lester's testimony without the presence of a support person, in violation of the Supreme Court's rules on examination of a child witness.

Flor, in her complaint, also slammed the boy's father and the Sagay police for charging Panguban with kidnapping and serious illegal detention for allegedly taking custody of Lester without consent.

Mansueto, however, said the

child was placed under the care of the city's Department of Social Service and Development, not with the police.

"When the child narrated, for an affidavit, before the prosecutor what he saw during the massacre, his father and a social worker were present and we have evidence to prove it," he added.

Mansueto said in Lester's affidavit, he did not specify the identities of the perpetrators. "Unless he sees them again."

Earlier, the Philippine National Police listed two recruiters of the National Federation of Sugar Workers as suspects and pinned the blame for the massacre on the NPA. *AF*

**EUGENE ADIONG**

## AFP chief not cowed by threats from Reds

BY VICTOR REYES

ARMED Forces chief Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr. is standing pat on his statement that former Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo and Rep. France Castro of the party-list group ACT Teachers are active members of the Communist Party of the Philippines and its armed wing, the New People's Army.

AFP spokesman Brig. Gen. Edgardo Arevalo said Galvez would not be cowed by threats from Ocampo's camp that they would charge the military chief before the Office of the Ombudsman for red-tagging.

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

The 18 were charged with child

abuse. They have posted bail and were released last Saturday.

Galvez told reporters on Monday that Ocampo and Castro are active members of the CPP and NPA which President Duterte wants classified as terrorist groups.

Castro, in reaction, said Galvez endangered her life and will hold Galvez accountable if something happens to her, noting the ongoing military operations against communist rebels.

Arevalo said Galvez is questioning the motive of Ocampo and Castro for spurring out the children and bringing them to an unknown destination in the dead of the night, without permission from the children's parents or authorities.

Ocampo and his companions were arrested on Wednesday night last week.

"If there is anything that they should be afraid of, it is not their

so-called red-tagging by the Armed Forces of the Philippines, but rather it is the cases legally and validly filed against them and the mounting evidence against their infamous version of rescue," he said.

Arevalo said the AFP chief is not threatened by threats that he will be charged in court for his statement against Ocampo and Castro, because "he says he has been incarcerated for years fighting for what he believes in." **B2**

Galvez was detained in the late 1980s for involvement in the failed coup in 1989. He and other military officers involved were detained and later granted amnesty.

"What do you call those who support, adhere to, and protect the operation of schools like Salogpungan and Alcaides (another leftist school)?" asked Arevalo. The schools have reportedly been teaching communist ideals.

## Reds spoof national anthem

EDU. News. Duterte's attempt to teach an alternative version of the Philippine National Anthem "Lupang Hinirang" is part of local communist efforts to fight the government and demonstrate its intent to protect the country from such threats.

This was disclosed by Armed Forces of the Philippines public affairs office chief Col. Noel Detoyato, when asked if the military was aware of such efforts by the rebels, especially those operating in the

## Reds...

From A1

"That has been confirmed years ago by a minor who was once in a Salugpungan school. It ("Lupang Sinira," the rebel version of "Lupang Hinirang") teaches the children to fight the government and it demonizes the soldiers," Detoyato said in a message to the Philippine News Agency Wednesday.

He added: "Schools are supposed to teach children love of country and be responsible Filipino citizens and contribute to nation-building.

"The national anthem they are teaching in Salugpungan is not an alternative version.

"It is a bastardized version and is an insult to the Filipinos and to our national heroes who fought and died just for the national anthem to be sung freely by the Filipinos of today and Filipinos of tomorrow." **PNA**



## Reds spoof national anthem

THE New Peoples Army's attempt to teach minors an alternative version of the Philippine National Anthem "Lupang Hinirang" is part of local communists' efforts to fight the government and demonize troops tasked to protect the country from such threats.

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# Military forms strike force to stop NPA attacks

By Nat Mariano and Francisco Tuyay

THE military will form a unit to counter New People's Army hit squads this month, made up mostly of intelligence officers from the Armed Forces of the Philippines and its different branches, Defense Secretary Deifin Lorenzana said Tuesday.

"The core of this unit will be from the Intelligence Service of the AFP. The Army, Air Force, Navy and Marines have

their own intel unit, so they could form the core of this anti-SPARU unit," Lorenzana said, referring to the NPA Special Partisan Unit.

He said he supports the formation of the special unit to protect military personnel from attack by NPA hit squads.

"I support the anti-SPARU unit that will protect our soldiers but I said let us be very careful in organizing these people. Some quarters are saying we'll get civilians to do it. I think no, this will be

very difficult for civilians to do this [as] they might think they have blanket authority to just kill anybody they suspect of being NPA. I want soldiers to be our anti-SPARU unit members and this should be supervised by officers," he added.

President Rodrigo Duterte proposed the creation of a "Duterte Death Squad" after reports said 136 people, most of them military, police and rebel returnees, were assassinated by the communist rebels in the last three years. *Next page*

## Military...

From A1

The Communist Party of the Philippines blamed the President for the repeated termination of peace talks.

CCP founding chairman Jose Ma. Sison said communist rebels have wanted to peacefully end the five-decade-old armed conflict with the government, but the Duterte administration has failed by setting up conditions and terminating the peace talks.

"Duterte and his armed minions have only themselves to blame for the repeated terminations of peace negotiations that Duterte declared and for making preconditions," said Sison from his base in Utrecht, The Netherlands on Wednesday.

The top communist official said the government's conditions such as the surrender of the New People's Army, the laying aside of the people's demand for social, economic and political reforms, and the self-destruction of the revolutionary movement have blocked the path to peace and hindered the establishment of a just and lasting ceasefire between the government and communist rebels.

Sison said the National Democratic Front of the Philippines was expecting that the comprehensive agreements would have been made before the end of the year.

He said Duterte should have fulfilled his promise to [grant] amnesty and release all political prisoners.

"He would have gotten a ceasefire longer than the nearly six months from August 2016 to January 2017. And the peace negotiations would have advanced fast and smoothly," Sison said.

"But whenever the comprehensive agreement on social and economic reforms moved forward, Duterte always came up with a surprise declaration of termination."

Meanwhile, the AFP has formed a division-size group of infantry men to be deployed in the volatile province of Sulu to defeat the lingering security threat posed by various terrorist groups, particularly the Abu Sayyaf Group.

AFP spokesman Brig Gen Edgard Arevalo said the division-sized unit will be permanently stationed in Sulu Archipelago to contain and decimate terrorists elements that continue to sow havoc.

"The Armed Forces of the Philippines, in support to national leadership, is determined to engage squarely and defeat decisively all threat to national security that are harboring in Sulu," Arevalo said.

The insertion of the 11th Infantry Division with a complement of about a thousand troops in Sulu came after President Duterte expressed concern that, despite the AFP garnering major victories in Sulu, security forces continue to incur casualties.

"The 11th ID is envisioned to effectively and efficiently engage and decisively defeat the lingering threat in Sulu in the soonest time possible," Arevalo said.

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# Elite unit vs hit men

By Mario J. Mallari

The "best and the brightest" in the military will compose the anti-terror squad conceptualized by President Rodrigo Duterte against communist assassins, Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said.

Lorenzana said the Armed Forces of the

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# Elite unit vs hit men

From page 1

Philippines (AFP) is targeting forming the crack military team within the month and the composition of the unit is now being finalized.

The composite troop will primarily target members of the Special Partisan Unit (Sparta) who are communist assassins who target members of security forces.

The anti-terror squad will be made up mainly of operatives of the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (ISAFP) which will be augmented by intelligence units from the Army, Navy, Air Force and the Marines, the Defense chief said.

The anti-Sparta squad will then get its own people and train them, he added.

The activation of the unit was in compliance with Mr. Duterte's wish for a body to counter the NPA's (New People's Army) liquidation unit that gained notoriety in the 1980s and 1990s for targeting law enforcers.

The Defense secretary said the anti-terror squad will be activated "as soon as possible, before the year ends."

He stressed the unit will not have the license to kill but its primary task is to protect soldiers and policemen from NPA assassins.

"We are not an assassination squad. We are going to neutralize any NPA force or individual who is going to hurt our soldiers," he added.

Latest available data showed at least 130 soldiers and policemen had been killed by NPA hit squads in recent years.

### No SOMO

Relatedly, Lorenzana said he will not recommend the declaration of suspension of offensive military operations (SOMO) with the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) NPA.

He said the CPP-NPA would only use the SOMO in celebrating its

50th anniversary on 26 December which is traditionally marked by atrocities.

"I have objected to a SOMO. We shall not allow the CPP to use a SOMO to celebrate its 50th anniversary," he explained.

CPP founding chairman Jose Maria Sison expressed intention for the CPP-NPA to observe a unilateral truce during the holiday season.

"That's their call. We are not keen on a ceasefire," he added.

### NPA's Lupang Sinira

The military, meanwhile, released documents to prove its earlier allegations of indoctrination in schools where minority Lumad children are being brought and taught with odd subjects not found in other schools.

The anti-terror squad will be activated "as soon as possible, before the year ends."

Documents seized by government troops from the Salugpuungan Ta'Taru Igarogon Community Learning Center Inc in Barangay Mangayon, Compostela Valley on 28 January 2014 showed a different version of the National Anthem allegedly being taught to Lumad children.

The NPA supposedly teach minors an alternative version of the Philippine National Anthem, "Lupang Hinirang," as part of its efforts to fight the government and demoralize troops, AFP Public Affairs Office chief Col. Noel Detoyato said.

"That has been confirmed years ago by a mayor who was once in a Salugpuungan school.

It ("Lupang Sinira"

(Destroyed Land) is the rebel version of "Lupang Hinirang" (Beloved land) and teaches children to fight the government," Detoyato said.

"Schools are supposed to teach children love of country and be responsible Filipino citizens and contribute to nation-building," he added. "The National Anthem they are teaching in Salugpuungan is not an alternative version. It is a bastardized version and is an insult to the Filipinos and to our national heroes who fought and died just for the National Anthem to be sung freely by the Filipinos of today and Filipinos of tomorrow."

Earlier, former Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo had denied claimed minors in the Davao region are being taught the "Lupang Sinira" as stated by Philippine National Police Director General Oscar Albayalde.

His claim, however, was junked after documents recovered by military units in Compostela Valley in January 2014 showed a copy of the "Lupang Sinira" which is sung to the tune of "Lupang Hinirang."

### Ocampo condemned

The National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) condemned Bayan Muna president and former solon Satur Ocampo and his companions' activities which included the alleged trafficking of 14 Lumad minors.

In a statement released on Monday, NCIP also condemned Ocampo's group for what it calls disregard of the right of Ate-Manobo Indigenous Cultural Communities or Indigenous Peoples (IP) of Talaingod, Davao del Norte to "free and prior informed consent, manipulations and misinterpretations as to the true intent of the schools and lack of recognition of community authority and customary laws."



***Pondo sa mahihirap  
ibinigay sa NPA - Duterte***

Inakusahan ni Pangulong Duterte ang dating kalihim ng Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) na ibinigay ang pondo ng gobyerno para suportahan ang New People's Army (NPA).

Sinabi ito ng Pangulo sa kanyang mensahe sa Presidential award for child-friendly Municipalities and Cities sa Malacanang kahapon.

Ayon kay Pangulong Duterte, ang dating DSWD Sec. na si Judy Taguiwalo na kaalyado rin ng kaliwa ay pinalitan niya matapos hindi makapasa sa confirmation nito sa Commission on Appointments (CA).

Wika pa ni Duterte, ibinigay niya bilang suporta sa NPA fighters ang conditional cash transfer funds ng DSWD.

"Taguiwalo is good, might be brilliant might have the highest IQ but do not bring with it an ideology that carries with it an armed struggle to seize power," dagdag ng Pangulo.

Samantala, nagbabala naman si Pangulong Duterte kay CPP founding chairman Jose Maria Sison na sasampalin niya ito sa sandaling umuwi sa bansa.

"Wag ka na lang umuwi dito. I promise you. I'll slap you," wika ni Duterte kay Joma. (Rudy Andai)

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## 4 BIFF men killed in Maguindanao

MAGUINDANAO – Four members of the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters were killed in a gunfight with soldiers who foiled an attempt by the militants to hoist a flag of the Islamic State in Sitio Narra, Barangay Masalay, Ampatuan town on Tuesday.

Sources from local communities identified the fatalities as Samir Guinta, Undak Kamarudin, Sangkay Guibar and Mohammad Bantuas, who were led by Abu Ruzdak and a certain Diok.

Soldiers recovered improvised explosive devices along

the bandits' escape route.

Maj. Gen. Cirilito Sobejana, 6th Infantry Division commander, said farmers in Barangay Masalay and Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) members reported the convergence of the BIFF gunmen in the area.

The government and the MILF are bound by a cease-fire agreement, the 2012 Framework Agreement on Bangsamoro and 2014 Comprehensive Agreement on Bangsamoro to cooperate in addressing security concerns in flashpoint areas in Mindanao.

15 - John Unson

## Zambo City LGU opposes petitions for BARMM inclusion

**ZAMBOANGA CITY** – The city government here will oppose petitions filed by residents of at least five barangays to be included in the proposed Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM).

Mayor Maria Isabelle Climaco-Salazar said she would present the position of the city government to the city council for approval before filing it with the Commission on Elections (Comelec).

Some residents of Barangays Busay Landang Gua, Tumulutab, Arena Blanco and Cawit filed petitions to allow them to participate in the plebiscite to ratify the Bangsamoro Organic Law.

The local Comelec office

said only one percent of the residents of Barangays Arena Blanco and Cawit signed the petitions.

The plebiscite will be held on Jan. 21 next year in the ARMM as well as in Balo-i, Munai, Nunungan, Pantar, Tagoloan and Tangkal towns in Lanao del Norte and 39 barangays in Aleosan, Carmen, Kabacan, Midsayap, Pigawayan and Pikit in North Cotabato, which will comprise the proposed BARMM.

Subject to the approval of the poll body, the plebiscite may also be held in contiguous local government units.

City legal officer Jesus Carbon also noted that Zamboanga City is not contiguous with the BARMM.

– Roel Pareño

dy

## Muslim villages oppose Bangsamoro inclusion

**ZAMBOANGA CITY:** Almost all the predominantly Muslim *barangay* (villages) here have expressed opposition to their inclusion in the proposed Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), which replaces the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARRM) when the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL) is approved in a plebiscite, according to a lawmaker.

The two Houses of Congress passed the BOL, which was later signed by President Rodrigo Duterte.

Rep. Celso Lobregat made the disclosure after he visited the villages of Landang Gua, Busay, Tictapul and Tumulutab for a dialogue with their leaders and inhabitants to find out their sentiments about their possible incorporation into the BARMM.

Present during the dialogue were former lawmaker Lilia Nuno, Councilor Melchor Sadain and village chiefs Abdurahman Nuno and Benjamin

Adjulla together with their *barangay* councilmen.

Lobregat later told media men in a news conference that all the leaders of the villages concerned unanimously passed resolutions, addressed to the City Commission on Elections, vehemently rejecting the incorporation of their villages into the proposed BARMM.

"We will openly disclose our negative reactions during the scheduled plebiscite," a Landang Gua councilor said.

Lobregat advised the leaders from the four island villages "to explain their side" to local Commission on Election (Comelec) officials during the verification of the petition they submitted objecting to their inclusion in the BARMM.

Earlier, the officers of Barangay Cawit submitted to the Comelec their acceptance of their inclusion in the Bangsamoro region.

ANTONIO RIMANDO

## IS supporters shoot down 2 military drones

**ZAMBOANGA CITY:** Pro-Islamic State (IS) forces reportedly shot down a pair of military drones hovering near their encampment in Maguindanao where security forces were battling a huge group of the terrorist Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) early on Tuesday evening.

The military confirmed the report but did not elaborate on the extent of damage to the drones.

This happened close to the start of the campaign period, on Friday for the Bangsamoro plebiscite.

The report from Shariff Aguak, Maguindanao, said Maj. Gen. Cirilito Sohejana, commander of the 6th Infantry Division (6th ID) declared on Wednesday that the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) is on top of the situation after the Tuesday night clashes between the BIFF and the Philippine Army in Sitio Narra, Barangay Salman, Ampatuan, Maguindanao.

Troops of 2nd Mechanized Battalion led by Lt. Col. Alvin Iyog were conducting the offensives when the drones were hit.

Iyog admitted that the BIFF, which has snipers, had slowed down Army offensives.

"Our two bird's eye drones were even hit," he said of the flying military equipment that managed to hover over enemy positions.

Soldiers fired 105 howitzers toward enemy positions even at night toward a suspected BIFF

encampment in Ampatuan town as troops advanced to capture the remote area in Salman village from the bandit group.

The group is blamed by authorities for terrorism and a spate of attacks on civilians and the military in Maguindanao and nearby provinces.

The scene of the firefight is around 600 meters uphill from the infamous massacre site in Ampatuan where the group of Abu Rusda and Diok, both sub-commanders of Commander Kariajan's BIFF faction, have been sighted.

Philippine Army intelligence information showed the rebel group had converged in the area and planned to launch attacks on military and police detachments in the municipalities of Shariff Aguak, Datu Hoffer and Ampatuan, so they can cross the national highway and proceed to the Liguasan marshland.

Senior Supt. Madzgan Mukaram, Maguindanao police director, said, "We have no report on the ground if there are casualties now, what we learned so far is that the enemies were already cornered that is why we secured the town centers and highways."

The sporadic fighting on Tuesday night continued on to the next day after troops were dispatched to the town where BIFF gunmen had converged.

A possible exit that government authorities are closely watching is the nearby town of Datu Abdullah Sangki, Maguindanao.

There were no immediate reports of casualties from both sides, but raw military intelligence reports suggest that there had been a sizeable number of militants either killed or wounded in the battle.

Meanwhile, Commission on Elections officials and members of the Bangsamoro Transition Commission and Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process are set to arrive in Cotabato City to brief journalists on the plebiscite on Friday.

Cotabato City is more than an hour away from the site of the clash in Maguindanao.

The BIFF is a breakaway rebel group of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) that forged an interim peace pact with the government in Manila in 2014.

It remains outlawed.

The Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, which will be created once the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL) is ratified in the plebiscite early next year, is set to replace the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

The new political entity is a product of the peace process between the government and the MILF.

Campaign period for the plebiscite on the ratification of the BOL will start on Friday, December 7, and end on Feb. 5, 2019.

The MILF has not yet issued a statement on the clashes.

**JULMINIR JANNARAL AND AL JACINTO**



# Free of HR stain

Safety and security of the people in Mindanao will be the President's main concern

By Mario J. Maliani and Kristina Maralit

No single case of human rights (HR) violation was filed against government security

forces during the 18-month implementation of martial law in Mindanao.

Instead, Philippine National Police (PNP) chief Director General Oscar Albayalde said

the effectivity of military rule in the region was marked by a significant drop in the crime volume in southern Philippines during the past year.

Albayalde's pronouncement

came as the PNP and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) indicated they were ready to recommend to President Duterte the extension of martial law in Mindanao for another year.

Except for unfounded allegations by critics of the Duterte administration, the PNP chief said not a single case has been filed against lawmen in connection

Turn to page 2

We haven't heard any or a single case of human rights violation in Mindanao since the implementation of martial law

From page 1

with the implementation of martial law.

"We haven't heard any or a single case of human rights violation in Mindanao since the implementation of martial law," he said.

"There were allegations by the same sectors of society (critical of President Rodrigo Duterte) but no case was ever filed. These are all allegations and not even substantiated," he added.

On the contrary, the PNP noted a significant drop in the crime volume in Mindanao during the past year.

"Because of martial law, we have a drastic improvement on the peace and order situation in Mindanao where the crime volume dropped by 28,853 incidents or 32.8 percent," he said.

## Index crime down

"We have recorded a drop of 44.2 percent on index crimes that include murder, physical injuries and homicide cases. So, these are all the good effects of martial law and also the recovery of almost 10,000 loose firearms in Mindanao," he added.

With the implementation of military rule, Albayalde said the PNP managed to deploy two battalions of its elite Special Action Force in areas in Mindanao, thus increasing police visibility.

He said even tourists have not stopped coming to Mindanao.

Another positive effect of martial law in Mindanao, he added, was the removal of the "control and supervision of local chief executives to the local police."

Mr. Duterte declared martial law on 23 May 2017 after elements of the Islamic State (IS)-inspired Maute-Abu Sayyaf Group laid siege on Marawi City which ended on 23 October 2017 with the killing of more than 1,000 terrorists, government troops and civilians.

Most of Marawi City was left in ruins in its aftermath.

The initial six-month military rule was extended to one year by Congress that will expire on 31 December.

Albayalde said the PNP and AFP leaderships have already signed their recommendation to extend martial law in Mindanao for another year. They are expected to conduct next security briefings with lawmakers for their concurrence.

Not on agenda  
 Presidential spokesman

Salvador Panelo, meanwhile, said the extension of military rule in Mindanao was "not on the agenda" when President Rodrigo Duterte convened his Cabinet on Tuesday night.

Mr. Duterte is still carefully reviewing the recommendations made by the AFP and PNP of prolonging martial law down South but may announce his decision "today or tomorrow."

"He is still studying it. Wait for the announcement," Panelo replied via text message to Palace reporters when asked about the Chief Executive's take on the peace and order situation in Mindanao.

The Palace official previously said the "safety and security of the people in Mindanao" will be the President's main concern in deciding whether to ask Congress for another martial law extension.

#### Going for 3

Both chambers of Congress have twice extended military rule in Mindanao as a result of the siege of Marawi City by IS-inspired terror groups last year.

**On the contrary, the PNP noted a significant drop in the crime volume in Mindanao during the past year.**

#### Viva voce

On Tuesday, the House approved Resolution 15 of both Houses which proposes the revision of the 1987 Constitution through voice voting a day after the period of debates was closed.

This came after Arroyo announced they will focus on the charter change this week with only three session days left before the Christmas break.

The President first declared martial rule on 23 May 2017 effective for 60 days after IS-inspired terrorists placed Marawi City under siege that resulted in a bloody battle with government forces that lasted for five months. It was extended by Congress on 23 July to 31 December 2017. A second extension, this time for a full year, was granted by both chambers on 13 December 2017. The declaration is set to expire on 31 December.

Earlier this week, Mr. Duterte had said the AFP's and PNP's recommendation "has not yet been submitted" to his office, but Justice Secretary Menardo Guevarra bared the issue has been "taken up privately elsewhere."

#### House to heed call

Speaker Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo said the House of Representatives is bound to heed a call from Mr. Duterte for an extension.

"If it comes to our chamber, I will recommend to pass it," Arroyo said in an interview, referring to the possible extension of martial rule.

Despite only three session days before the proposed Federal charter has passed on second reading last Tuesday, the Speaker denied the House

**Because of martial law, we have a drastic improvement on the peace and order situation in Mindanao.**

During the period of amendments, the line of succession after the President during the transitory period was changed from Senate President to Vice President.

ACT Teachers Partylist Rep. Antonio Tinio also moved to insert the anti-dynasty provision in the House version. However, it was rejected through voice voting.

With Nananeel Bordey,  
Elmer N. Manuel

of Representatives "railroad" its passage.

"Well, it's part of the democratic process. There was a debate, it was voted on, we sent it to them," Arroyo, who also pushed for charter change during her administration, said.

The former President said they should take it up on third reading possibly on Monday.

#### Own interest

Minority Leader Quezon Rep. Danilo Suarez said the Senate is "not in the mood" for the proposed amendments to the 1987 Constitution as there were issues in the House version that might "threaten" the existence of the chamber.

He said it is "high time" to revisit the Constitution as the current charter was made out of "vengeance" and it instill that "anything that is Marcos is bad."

"The conditions 30 years ago no longer exist. It is time to revisit the Constitution. We must determine whether its provisions are sustainable and can stand firm, as our nation is continuously adapting to an evolving, connected world," Suarez said.

Moreover, BUHAY partylist Rep. Lito Atienza added it should be revised, but the House leadership should be "more democratic" and "lenient" to encourage more intelligent discussion and to prevent being a "stamp pad" Congress.

## Military: No over-reaction to Abu Sayyaf threat

BY VICTOR REYES

THE Armed Forces yesterday justified the creation of the 11th Infantry Division of the Army to hasten the defeat of the Abu Sayyaf terror group.

The 11th ID, which will be composed of around 4,500 soldiers, will be tasked to hunt down some 300 Abu Sayyaf members operating in Sulu.

"It's not overreaction," said AFP spokesman Brig. Gen. Edgard Arevalo in a press briefing in Camp Aguinaldo.

Arevalo said what will be created is merely the headquarters of the 11th ID, to be based in Sulu, and the personnel that will be under it are the same forces that are already conducting operations in the area.

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said the division is due to be activated by President Duterte during a visit to Sulu on December 17. He said the division will have operational control over three brigades composed of around 4,500 men.

"What we're creating actually is just the headquarters. The composition of that 11th Infantry Division remains to be the units, the personnel, and the equipment already in Sulu," said Arevalo.

Army spokesman Col. Louie Villanueva earlier said the Joint Task Force Sulu, which controls the three brigades in Sulu, will be dissolved to give way to the division. The task force is under Brig. Gen. Divino Rey Pabayo.

"We would like to have a unit that has a particular command and control of the units and personnel already there. We need it so we can enhance, be more effective and make the operations more efficiently," said Arevalo.

"For now, the focus will only be the province of Sulu," he added.

He could not immediately say who is going to be in command of the division but said the selection process is ongoing.

Arevalo said the military has no specific timetable as to when to defeat the Abu Sayyaf, which is blamed for numerous atrocities, including bombings, kidnappings, and beheadings. The group is holding 10 foreign and Filipino kidnap victims in Sulu.

## PHILIPPINE-CHINA RELATIONS: THAT WAS THEN, THIS IS NOW

LETTER writer Austin Ong ("Lack of understanding of long-standing PH-china relations," 11/29/18) clearly displayed an impressive knowledge of history as he narrated the friendly relationship between China and the Philippines that existed way back before our time. As he wrote in part "... China, [in] centuries of relations, only traded with and extended friendship to us."

Fine and dandy! But that was then and this is now. Besides, in most business dealings, dealers will always show outright friendliness to whom they deal with. It's good for the business since it helps keep their customers loyal.

Ong also questioned the Filipinos' distrust of China but went on to say "Of course, we must remain vigilant and be responsible

for our own decisions, as no country would do that for us—and that can only start with having the right facts."

What exactly are the right facts?

To brief the historically minded Ong on current affairs, how about China's aggressive acts of seizing and militarizing islands in the West Philippine Sea that the Permanent Court of Arbitration at The Hague ruled were under the Philippines' jurisdiction? What about China's continuous harassment of our fishermen in that part of the sea?

Aren't these facts enough? If those are not enough factual reasons to distrust China, then somebody please tell me what is

  
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# A POINT OF AWARENESS

PRECIOSA S. SOLIVEN

## Claiming our sovereign rights in WPS - a guide for present and future generations (Part I)

During the launching of his eBook "The South China Sea Dispute: Philippine Sovereign Rights and Jurisdiction in the West Philippine Sea" last May 4, 2017, Justice Antonio Carpio hailed DFA Sec. Albert del Rosario as a true Filipino patriot, who filed the landmark arbitration case against China together with our foreign service officials who never fail to advance, promote and protect our national interest. He also thanked the Supreme Court for allowing him to take leave, en banc to travel to Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia and Brunei, the neighboring countries affected by the disputes the South China Sea.

Last Nov. 24, as keynote speaker of the first general assembly of Akademiyang Filipino, an organization whose members include National Artists, National Scientists and the country's Ramon Magsaysay awardees Law of the Sea advocates stressed, "We all have one common purpose - to DEFEND, PROTECT and PRESERVE Philippine maritime entitlement in the West Philippine Sea."

### Three-fold purpose of the e-book

First, the eBook is intended to inform the Filipino people about the vast maritime areas and rich natural resources that they own in the West Philippine Sea under international law. Once the Filipino people realize that these maritime areas and resources belong to them and to future generations of Filipinos, as affirmed with finality

by a United Nations Convention on the Laws of the Sea (UNCLOS) arbitral tribunal, then the Filipino people will never allow any government administration, any government agency or any government official to give away or compromise these maritime areas or resources in favor of a foreign state in violation of the Constitution.

Second, this eBook is intended to inform other coastal states of the world that it is in their national interest to help the Philippines protect Philippine maritime entitlements. That is why Vietnamese, Indonesian, Japanese and Spanish versions of this eBook has been released. For if China can grab for itself the maritime entitlements of the Philippines in violation of international law, then other coastal states may also lose their maritime entitlements to their more powerful neighboring states. This would end the rule of law in the oceans and seas of our planet.

Third, this eBook is intended to convince the Chinese people that the nine-dash line has no legal or historical basis. That is why a Mandarin version of this eBook has been released.

### China's grand design

China's grand design is to control the South China Sea for economic and military purposes. China wants all the fishery, oil, gas and mineral resources within the nine-dash line. In the 1990s, China was taking only 20 percent of the annual fish catch in the South China Sea. Today, China is taking 50 percent of the annual fish

catch in the South China Sea as more than 80 percent of its coastal waters are already polluted. China has the largest fishing fleet in the world, with some 220,000 sea-going vessels, about 2,600 of which go all the way to East Africa. China's fish consumption is the highest in the world considering its 1.4 billion population.

China is the largest net importer of petroleum in the world. China wants the lion's share of the oil and gas in the South China Sea. The Chinese estimates that the South China Sea holds 130



billion barrels of oil, and if this is correct, the South China Sea has more oil than either Kuwait or the United Arab Emirates. A reserve of 130 billion barrels of oil can supply China's

oil needs for 22 years. The South China Sea is also rich in methane hydrates - said to be one of the fuels of the future. China wants to secure all these methane hydrates, which can fuel China's economy for 130 years.

China also wants the South China Sea as a sanctuary for its nuclear-armed submarines - free from surveillance by US submarine-hunting Poseidon aircraft or US nuclear powered attack submarines. China wants a second-strike nuclear capability, joining the ranks of the US and Russia. A second-strike capability means a nuclear power, after its land-based nuclear weapons are obliterated in a pre-emptive first-strike by nuclear-armed enemy, it can still retaliate with its nuclear-armed ballistic missile submarines. This second-strike capability deters an enemy from making a pre-emptive first strike.

### Illegal reclamations and harvesting of endangered species

The coral reefs in the Spratlys serve as the breeding ground of fish in the South China Sea. It comprise 34 percent of the world's total coral reefs, despite the South China Sea occupying only 2.5 percent of world's total ocean and sea surface. Coral reefs are the single most valuable ecosystem – a hectare of reef can produce a potential value of approximately \$350,000 a year.

From 2014 to 2016, China deployed dozens of dredgers in the Spratlys. The rotating cutters of these dredgers pulverized the coral reef and the hard sediment on the seabed. The pulverized materials are pushed by pressure through a floating pipe and deposited on the rim of the reef. This kills all the coral reefs in the atoll. Dr. McManus, a marine biologist who has studied the marine life in the Spratlys, made a survey in February 2016 said "China's reclamations are the most rapid permanent loss of coral reef in human history. It's a terrible, terrible thing to do this. It was really a massive destruction."

### The nine-dash line claim of China drilled into the Chinese

In December 1947, the Kuomintang Government of China adopted the nine-dash line claim, embodied in the *Location Map of the South Sea Islands*, released in China, February 1948, with 11 dashes forming a broken U-shaped line covering almost the entire South China Sea. The title of the map indicates China's claim of the islands enclosed by the eleven dashes, namely Pratas, Paracels, Macclesfield Bank, and Spratlys. China was silent on any claim to the surrounding waters. Scarborough Shoal is not mentioned in the map. Macclesfield Bank is not an island because it is fully submerged. In 1950, China under communist rule, announced the removal of two dashes in the Gulf of Tonkin. The line became known as the nine-dash line.

Once the Chinese people realize the falsity of the nine-dash line, they themselves will be too ashamed to press the nine-dash line claim before the world. That will be the time when the Chinese government can comply with the ruling of the arbitral tribunal.

(Part II – "China's Militarization of the South China Sea")

(Ref: "The South China Sea Dispute..." eBook by Antonio T. Carpio)

## Squeezed and caught in the crossfire: The story of the Lumad

A FERTILE land promising a bounty of natural resources, from forests to minerals, that happens to be the home of indigenous peoples is certain to become a political flashpoint. We saw this in the hills, plains and valleys of both Americas, in Asia and Africa. Everywhere there are native peoples living in pristine environments blessed with natural wealth, we see outsiders coming in, laying claim to the land. Armed with superior force, these outsiders intrude into the natural and cultural habitats, effectively destroying the cultural ecologies that sustain the logic of the native peoples.

Externally, the colonization of native peoples became an



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imperative for the expansion of empires seeking new territories. These territories are primarily seen for their natural resources and their strategic advantages, even as their inhabitants are always seen as either problems to be annihilated or human resources to be assimilated. Indigenous economic and political systems are displaced in favor of extractive and exploitative modes of production and governance. And we saw a

tragic procession of monarchs and native chiefs dethroned, local resistance subjugated and killed, and native consciousness colonized and corrupted.

This is the story of the formation of the Philippines as an outcome of a painful process of colonization. And yet, and as if we did not experience the tragedy attending colonization and failed to learn lessons from it, we are also doing it to our native populations.

The Lumad of Mindanao, which is the collective name given to non-Muslim indigenous peoples living there, have suffered the curse of being the first inhabitants of lands that

offered outsiders the promise of unbridled wealth-making. Their forests became beacons for logging companies to cut, and when these were gone, to convert to industrial forest plantations. Buried deep in their mountain ranges are mineral ores and gold which became irresistible magnets that attracted mining companies. The tragedy of the Lumad is that the logging and mining interests coincided with, and on many occasions, even carried the interests of the political and economic elites who were in control of the seats of power and influence in government. These interests are amply represented

by Contreras A5

in the Cabinet, in Congress and in various local executive and legislative positions. To these, the Lumad were no match.

The only option left available for the Lumad, as an alternative to capitulation whose consequence is loss of their land and their very being, was to fight. Faced with a government that could not represent their interests, the Lumad tribes fighting for their land rights were left with no choice but to join the only available option, which is that offered by the communist rebels.

It would have been easy for every Filipino who knows his or her history to understand the predicament of the Lumad. After all, our nation was born through the blood of our martyrs and heroes who fought the Spaniards and the Americans. It would not have taken a lot of ef-

fort to express empathy towards the plight of a people who are just fighting for their land. It would not have been much of an exercise of solidarity with them for us to understand why the Lumad would join the rebel forces, and would find hope in the ideology that the CPP-NPA-NDF offered to them, simply because the government appeared to have abandoned them when it took the side of the capitalist landgrabbers.

Indeed, one could argue that the state attempted to take the developmentalist route to address the land rights issue of the Lumad. The Indigenous People's Rights Act (IPRA) was enacted through RA 8371 in 1997, and the National Commission for Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) was established as an outcome of the law. In theory, the Lumad would have been entitled to be awarded their Certificate of Ancestral Domain Titles (CADT).

But the influential elites, with knowledge of the legal

loopholes, and with influence to peddle, took advantage of the paternalistic and hierarchical cultures of the Lumad tribes, and were able to effectively coopt many *datus* to grant them free and prior informed consents (FPIC) for their continued exploitation of the Lumad lands despite these now being covered by CADTs. In fact, some powerful personalities were even able to exercise their influence and were able to install their own *datus*, thereby displacing the indigenous power structures in the tribal communities.

This further fueled Lumad resistance against these external forces, and indirectly, against the state and the government.

Unfortunately, instead of understanding what the state gave in return to the Lumad is the iron fist, lumping them with the communist rebels and declaring them

to be enemies of the state. Instead of a compassionate approach, what the state unleashed was further militarization. What is even more tragic is that the military appeared to have adopted a divide and conquer approach when it formed Lumad paramilitary militias to wage its low-intensity ground war against the CPP-NPA-NDF, thereby effectively pitting Lumad against Lumad.

In the end, the Lumad is squeezed and caught in the cross-fire between the military and its Lumad paramilitary militias on one hand, and the CPP-NPA-NDF and its Lumad cadres on the other.

There are allegations that the CPP-NPA-NDF is using the Lumad schools to indoctrinate the Lumad youth in the communist ideology. The existence of these schools is in fact a structural reaction to the relative neglect of the state of the educational needs of the Lumad, by failing to establish government schools in their areas. This led to Church-based organizations and progressive and leftist NGOs filling up the void by establishing alternative Lumad schools. Indeed, it is plausible that these schools can provide an avenue for breeding rebellious minds. As to whether they actually do so remains to be established by an objective fact-finding process, and not conducted by the military or by

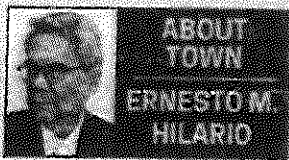
progressive forces allied with the Left. And the long-lasting solution is for the Department of Education to make its presence felt and supervise closely these Lumad schools, and provide them technical and financial support.

It is most unfortunate that the anti-insurgency campaign of the government remains fixated on a militaristic approach. In response to ambushes, assassinations and attacks by the rebels, the military and paramilitary militias respond with equal force by harassing the Lumad who are suspected of being members of the NPAs. Here the Lumad schools which are suspected of teaching Lumad children the communist ideology are the ones that suffer as collaterals, with their students and teachers being caught in the middle of and held hostage by a tug-of-war between government and rebel forces.

It's about time the government re-examine its approach towards the Lumad. The root of their discontent is their loss of security to their ancestral lands. The state has only to secure these, and endeavor to convert their areas into peace zones. This can be achieved by engaging the Lumad combatants from both sides in localized peace talks, with the military and the CPP-NPA-NDF being prohibited from entering the picture. Only then can a long-lasting peace be possibly attained.



# Mutual benefit should guide PH-China ties



WE HAVE been fortunate to take a close look at China in two separate visits—in April 2017 and in June this year. In these two media visits—the first took us from Guangzhou to various cities in the southwest and ended up in Shanghai, the second from Beijing and on to Harbin city near the border with Russia—we marveled both at the scale and pace of economic progress the country has been making since the People's Republic of China was founded in 1949. To think that from the '50s to the '60s

and mid-'70s, China had witnessed both political upheavals and economic setbacks. It managed to surmount all this to emerge as the second-biggest economy in the world today after the United States.

*“Bilateral ties have markedly improved in the past two years.”*

That China is now an economic giant and at the same time a military power is a reality that we must learn to live with. That much is how longtime China

resident Jaime FlorCruz, a former CNN Beijing Bureau chief and now Peking University professor, views our current ties with our neighbor to the west.

Take the controversy over the issue of joint exploration and development of oil and gas resources in the West Philippine Sea. While there are those who say that we should not enter into such an arrangement as this would negate our legal victory in the Permanent Court of Arbitration in 2016, there's also the view, as articulated by FlorCruz, that the idea of joint exploration is “very complicated” as it involves legal, territorial and sovereignty issues.

“We really need the oil and gas. Our oil and gas supply is fast depleted and

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Turn to A5

## Mutual...

From A4

we need more. So for pragmatic reasons, we should be open to exploring the possibilities of doing it," he pointed out in a recent TV interview.

FlorCruz believes that while the Hague ruling represents a "good legal and moral victory" for the Philippines, we should "take that out of the front and center of our relationship with China. We do not concede that it's China's, we still insist on the territory that it's ours. Meanwhile, let's explore the possibilities."

The pragmatic approach appears to be working, from all indications.

In his remarks at the reception to mark the 69th Founding Anniversary of the People's Republic of China, Chinese Ambassador Zhao Jianhua observed that 2018 witnessed the sustained growth in Philippines-China relations, with the leaders of the two countries already having met at least five times on bilateral and multilateral occasions. The state visit of Chinese President Xi Jinping in late November further strengthened bilateral ties, with no less than 29 agreements signed during the occasion.

Since the second half of 2016, the two countries have revived a series of dialogue and consultation mechanisms in such areas as foreign affairs, defense, energy, economy and trade, agriculture, fisheries, science and technology. There have been also increasing interactions and exchanges between local governments, media agencies, universities, think tanks and cultural institutions.

The Philippines and China have also maintained good economic ties. Last year, trade volume reached \$50 billion, which made China the Philippines' No. 1 trading partner and import origin, and the fourth largest export market. Also in 2017, additional investments from China reached \$53.84 million, representing a year-on-year increase of 67 percent. In the first five months of this year, China poured another investment of \$165

million into the country.

China is also assisting the administration's Build, Build, Build infrastructure program through outright grants, commercial loans and loans under official development assistance. So far, two bridges over Pasig River and the Chico River Pump Irrigation Project have already started. The two sides are pushing forward more big infrastructure projects, such as New Centennial Water Source-Kaliwa Dam, Subic-Clark Railway, Philippine National Railways South Long Haul and the Safe Philippines, with total volume surpassing US\$ 7 billion.

The Philippines is also benefiting from increased tourist arrivals from China. In the first seven months in 2018, more than 760,000 Chinese tourists visited the country, representing a 40-percent year-on-year increase. More than 1.5-million Chinese tourists are expected to visit the Philippines this year, with the tourist influx expected to generate revenues of more than P32 billion.

Relations between the Philippines and China have deteriorated in recent years because of conflicting territorial claims in the South China Sea/West Philippine Sea. But the two countries agreed to initiate dialogue through the Bilateral Consultation Mechanism and Joint Coast Guard Committee, and explored practical cooperation in various areas, such as fisheries, maritime affairs, joint search and rescue, marine scientific research and environmental protection.

What the two sides are doing at this point is to properly manage differences in views through diplomacy and dialogue and to focus on cooperation in various fields of endeavor.

With the Duterte administration choosing to emphasize common interests rather than differences, bilateral ties have markedly improved in the past two years. For as long as we deal with the Chinese government on the basis of mutual benefit and mutual advantage, we can expect better prospects for trade and investments and development cooperation in the years ahead.

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# DepEd's doppelganger

The controversial Lumad school Salugpungan Ta'tanu Igkanugon Community Learning Center Inc. (STTICLC) in Talaingod, Davao del Norte was established in 2007 by religious groups with the apparent blessing of the Department of Education (DepEd) at the time to help educate Manobo children living in remote highlands. From one campus, the school spawned branches in the province, Compostela Valley and Davao Oriental.

**“ Lumad men who have been recruited to join the ranks of the communist rebels claimed that the Salugpungan teaches basic education in the morning and rifle orientation at night.**

With the recent discovery by authorities that the STTICLC is being used by the communist movement to indoctrinate Lumad children according to their ideology and potentially turn them into members of the New People's Army (NPA), past officials of the DepEd have a lot of explaining to do for failing to notice that such schools were merely pretending to educate indigenous people and were actually serving the interest of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and the NPA. All along since 2007, CPP had its DepEd counterpart establishing a network of schools that brainwash tribal students into thinking that the government is an enemy that has to be destroyed and replaced in accordance with the ultimate objective

of the CPP

The parents of the 14 Lumad students who were allegedly kidnapped by former Bayan Muna

Partylist Rep. Satur Ocampo and incumbent ACT-Teachers Partylist Rep. France Castro from the Talaingod STTICLC on the night of 29 November complained that the ex-legislator had no permission to take their children with them. That reinforced the Talaingod police's action to detain Ocampo, Castro and 16 STTICLC members after officers manning a checkpoint found the students inside their vans.

Ocampo and Castro denied the charges and argued they were rescuing the children after the military allegedly padlocked the school. Leftist congressmen soon defended the two and accused the military of harassment.

It is the military's position that the so-called Salugpungan schools are creations of the communists to convert civilians into rebels and replenish the dwindling ranks of the NPA. Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) Secretary Eduardo Año believes Ocampo is recruiting minors for the communist movement. President Rodrigo Duterte, the commander-in-chief, concurred when he said Bayan Muna is a communist front.

Ocampo denied recruiting Lumad students for the NPA even citing a rule of the communist against such practice. But at least 26 child warriors of the NPA in Eastern Samar surrendered over the weekend while two juveniles were rescued following an encounter with soldiers in Barangay Namal, Asipulo, Ifugao on Friday belying his claim.

Lumad men who have been recruited to join the ranks of the communist rebels claimed the Salugpungan teaches basic education in the morning and rifle orientation at night. Other proofs of the Salugpungan's sinister activities are the alternative version of the Philippine National Anthem being taught at the said schools. A copy of the rebel version of the anthem titled "Lupang Sinira" was seized by troops at the STTICLC in Barangay Mangayon, Compostela Valley in 2014.

It is appalling the CPP is not only maintaining an armed force, but also has been operating a network of school-by-day, hoot-camp-by-night sites *a la* DepEd. Local DepEd officials' negligence, if not treachery has allowed many tribal children to adopt and perpetuate a violent ideology whose ultimate goal is the downfall of the democratic government. They allowed the proliferation of communist campuses that supplied the NPA with fresh recruits.

It will take the dismantling of communist schools in Lumad territories to stop the DepEd doppelganger from victimizing more indigenous communities. The people behind the creation of these Salugpungan facilities must also be made to account for their negligence if not treasonous actions. A

**“ Past officials of the DepEd have a lot of explaining to do for failing to notice that such schools... were actually serving the interest of the CPP and the NPA.**

# Cashing in on China

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*There is a phenomenal increase in Chinese capital flowing into the Philippine economy... overtaking the US in terms of foreign direct investment inflows and trade.*

Let's face it. The government should be balancing its relations with all countries, especially the US and China. And since the government has special relations with the US that extends to economic, political, cultural and military control, the balancing between global superpowers means developing better closer ties with China.

Indeed, President Duterte has surpassed all previous Presidents in terms of his closeness to Beijing and has a better record compared to others, including Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo in terms of creating goodwill and attracting Chinese capital. He has already made three official visits to China, bringing with him a large entourage of businessmen and government officials, making him the most frequent traveler to China among all Philippine Presidents.

Expectedly, our traditional politicians are true-blue and die-hard supporters of the US. Thus, they criticize Duterte for his overtures to China. But Duterte loves Trump and the US, too. He may deny it, but he would also qualify as a staunch supporter. But at least he is balancing the relations between two powers. And there is a lot of ground to cover.

Duterte's interest is not simply balancing



**CROSSCURRENTS**  
Antonio Tujan

relations. The Philippine government seeks China's support for at least P738 billion worth of infrastructure projects accounting for almost half of the P1.5 trillion flagship projects under the Duterte administration's "Build, Build, Build" program. To date, it has already identified P392 billion worth of projects for China's consideration.

China's portfolio in the Philippines includes: the PNR South Long Haul, Mindanao

Railway, Subic-Clark Railway, Chico River Pump Irrigation Project, New Centennial Water Source-Kaliwa Dam, Ilocos Norte Irrigation, Pasig-Marikina River bridges, Davao-Samal bridge, Davao River bridges, Davao City Expressway, Panay-Guimaras-Negros bridge, Camarines Sur Expressway, Agut-Pulangui Hydroelectric Power and the Ambay-Simual Rio Grande de Mindanao flood control project. It is also building the Philippine National Police, Bureau of Jail Management and Penology and Bureau of Fire Protection command centers in Metro Manila and Davao.

But there are many controversial issues that the government has to deal with properly. First of all, do these projects truly fulfill the needs of the

masses or are they made to sacrifice their lands to give right of way only to favor big business, Chinese and Filipino alike?

**“ Duterte loves Trump and the US, too. He may deny it, but he would also qualify as a staunch supporter.**

China official development assistance has become controversial with its high-profile cases that stipulate the collateralization of resources and state assets should a country default on its loan payments and actually enforces its claim. The Sri Lankan government, for instance, was forced to lease its strategic Hambantota Port for 99 years to a Chinese company when it was unable to pay back its debt.

Such conditions are standard in the terms of reference in China loans and are included in the Chico River Pump Irrigation loan agreement. Additionally, these loans require that disputes in the agreement, as well as the rights and obligations of both parties, be put beyond the scope of Philippine laws and transparency in the public domain. Such disputes are to be settled at the China International Economic and Trade Arbitration Commission (CIETAC) and the agreement “shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of China.”

There is a phenomenal increase in Chinese capital flowing into the Philippine economy.

China has recently overtaken the US in terms of foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows and trade.

In the first semester of 2018, FDI from China amounted to \$175 million as compared with Japan's \$154 million and US's \$84 million. From January to September, Philippine exports to China (including Hong Kong) amounted to \$19.9 billion compared to exports to the US worth \$7.8 billion. This is just another aspect of rebalancing economic relations between the two powers.

Behind the reciprocal visits of heads of state and officials to cement diplomatic and political-economic cooperation is the target to become part of China's Belt and Road Initiative which could otherwise bypass the Philippines. China already controls the disputed South China Sea/West Philippine Sea through the series of garrisons built on the islets and atolls to the actual loss of our claims.

In the end, it is important to remember that the US and Japan remain dominant in the Philippine economy. They hold the largest FDI stock in the country which is an important indicator of the extent to which foreign capital exploits Filipino labor, natural resources and markets and also points to how much of the country's economic surplus is repatriated abroad. ✓

# Bad habits die hard

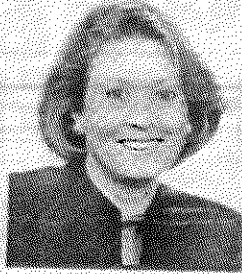
**“It should be asked of both Drilon and Pangilinan if they can honestly state... whether the yellow regime tried solving the people’s woes.**

Opposition lawmakers have acquired this habit of opposing almost anything and everything for the sake of opposing, and in the recent instance, they have come up to oppose the planned extension of the implementation of martial law (ML), claiming it is unconstitutional because there are no grounds for extending it.

These lawmakers certainly know that the unconstitutionality of any act, including some of their bills that have been enacted into law and that have remained unquestioned before the High Court, has to be challenged before the Supreme Court.

There is, however, nothing in the Constitution that says extending ML, even after a one-year extension, is illegal as long as Congress approves it. The Charter says the President can declare ML for 60 days and, if extended, must ask Congress’ approval for the extension, which both the House and the Senate gave in December last year, giving President Duterte a year’s extension.

Liberal Party Sen. Franklin Drilon insisted the Constitution is clear. “Martial Law may be declared only in cases of



**FRONTLINE**  
Ninez Cacho-Olivares

actual rebellion when public safety requires it. I may sound like a broken record, but for the nth time, I would repeat, there is no actual rebellion. Rebellion no longer persists in Mindanao,” he said.

Really? How does he know, by way of intelligence that the President and his top armed forces intelligence network know?

The political opposition creates the fear factor in an extension of ML which is clearly a political move.

Drilon said the extension of military rule in the southern Philippines continues to be in violation of the 1987 Constitution.

The military’s statement that continuing threat is “lurking” in Mindanao shows that there is no actual rebellion happening, he stated.

“There may be threats of rebellion, but what the Constitution clearly requires as a ground for declaring and extending martial law is the presence of actual rebellion,” the lawmaker said.

But rebellion in this day and age of radical Islamic terrorism, no longer can be regarded as the days of “actual rebellion,” especially since the terrorists are foreign fighters and foreign recruiters and the time element to stop the terrorism cannot also be measured by a 12-month period.

But what makes Drilon believe that rebellion by terrorists is over and done with,

as there has to be actual rebellion? Does he then believe that the administration can only act against the terrorists when actual rebellion is ongoing?

What then do he and the usual yellows and allies expect this regime and any other regime to do: let the terrorists continue recruiting to take over Mindanao while the government does nothing to nip this in the bud?

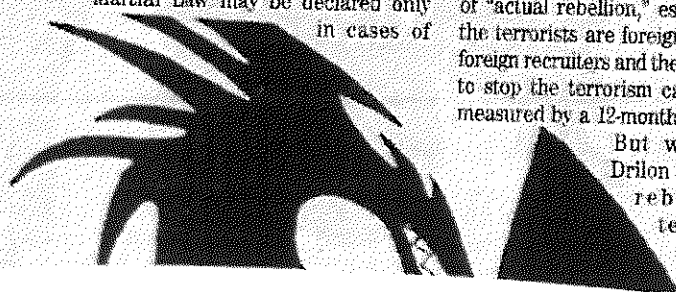
Sen. Francis Pangilinan, also an oppositionist, wants the military and police forces to match their request for ML extension “with hard and justifiable facts.”

Said he: “For instance, they should answer the question, how big and wide is the threat in the region that necessitates it to be placed under such declaration?”

He added the extension of military rule in the entire island shows the failure of the declaration in Mindanao since he stressed the military might never solve the people’s woes that are deeply rooted in poverty, lack of jobs and absence of basic services.

Pangilinan and Drilon should be reminded of the fact that terrorism in this country, especially in Mindanao, became a much bigger and already was a real threat during the yellow regime under then President Noynoy Aquino. Despite his awareness of the foreign terrorists in the country, who were into recruiting and training local Muslim terrorists, he did nothing but nothing in clipping the rebellion.

Pangilinan seems to believe that imposing ML does not solve the problems of Mindanao.



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# A dare

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**Rody's political foes should be challenged to live for a while in suspected Islamic State lairs in Mindanao to know the real situation close up.**

President Rody Duterte provided resolute action in imposing martial law in Mindanao to smother the Islamic State (IS) incursion in May last year, a move that surprised even his yellow foes who accused him of setting the stage for a nationwide imposition.

The opposition's line remains the same after two extensions granted by Congress and a possible third until the end of next year which security officials have recommended.

Rody's proposal to Congress for a one-year extension of martial rule is a certainty after Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana, the recommending authority, said he would follow the views of the police and the military to extend martial law for another year.

The usual critics immediately recycled criticisms already discredited by recent assessments of a benign military rule that contributed to the economic transformation of most parts of Mindanao.

A left-wing partyist House member said extending martial law in Mindanao for the third time may embolden the AFP to expand its coverage to the whole country.

Lorenzana, however, said terrorist activity is again strong as terrorists from Malaysia, Indonesia and the Middle East who are experts in bomb-making have entered Mindanao.

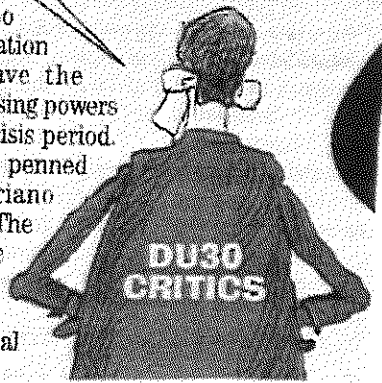
The protests, however, are pointless and can be consigned to the political noises now in vogue as national elections are set next year, particularly since

NO NEED FOR MARTIAL LAW. THERE IS NO ACTUAL REBELLION AND TERROR THREAT

the Supreme Court (SC) already ruled that martial law and the terms for its implementation are within Rody's powers.

Regarding petitions to invalidate Rody's Proclamation 216, the SC decision gave the President preeminence in using powers available to him during a crisis period.

In the majority decision penned by Associate Justice Mariano del Castillo, the SC said, "The Constitution grants him the prerogative whether to put the entire Philippines or any part thereof under martial law."



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"There is no constitutional edict that martial law should be confined only in the particular place where the armed public uprising actually transpired," the SC ruling stated.

It likewise affirmed the role of the House in the discussions related to the basis for the martial law edict which invalidated the chamber's minority views.

By issuing a resolution supporting it, the House of Representatives is declaring that it finds no reason to review the sufficiency of the factual basis of the martial law declaration which is in direct contrast to the petition of Albay Rep. Edcel Lagman, the SC said.

The tribunal even said it merely took a liberal approach through "judicial self-restraint" to accept the petition for review.

The ruling stated the judicial power to review the sufficiency of factual basis of the declaration of martial law or to suspend the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus does not extend to the calibration of the President's decision on what powers he will avail of in a given situation.

The President as Commander-in-Chief wields the extraordinary powers of calling out the armed forces, suspending the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus and declaring martial law, according to the SC ruling.

**"The Supreme Court already ruled that martial law and the terms for its implementation are within Rody's powers.**

It was also the SC which debunked the allegations of dictatorial tendencies on Rody. It said he exhausted all options available to him before declaring martial law.

The President decided to use his power to call out first. Unfortunately, the situation did not improve; on the contrary, it only worsened, according to the SC.

Rody issued Proclamation 55 on 4 September 2016, declaring a state of national emergency on account of lawless violence in Mindanao after members of the Maute group exploded a bomb in the Davao City market that killed 15 individuals.

Discordant yellow voices in the Senate said there is no actual rebellion and that the extension would pave the way for a national military rule. Their sentiments merely validated suggestions that the yellows and the Reds are in cahoots against Rody.

Since they strongly feel about their arguments, Rody's political foes should be challenged to live for a while in suspected IS lairs in Mindanao to know the real situation close up.

Their fact-finding mission should not have any military or police escort since they are certain about "no rebellion" transpiring in the region.



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### PNP, AFP recommend 1-year ML extension in Mindanao: Albayalde

By Christopher Lloyd Caliwán

**MANILA** -- Police and military officials have signed a document recommending to President Rodrigo Duterte a year-long extension of martial law in Mindanao, Philippine National Police (PNP) Chief, Director General Oscar Albayalde, confirmed.

"We have just signed a document together with the outgoing military chief of staff (Gen. Carlito Galvez) recommending the extension of martial law in Mindanao for another one year," Albayalde said in a TV interview on Wednesday.

Citing PNP data, he said crime volume in Mindanao dropped by 32.8 percent since January this year.

"Because of the martial law, we have a drastic improvement on the peace and order situation in Mindanao where the crime volume dropped by 28,853 or 32.8 percent -- because of the implementation of martial law and because of the forces present there now conducting target hardening measures, military operations, police operations, checkpoint operations," he said.

Albayalde said most notable is the 44.2-percent decrease on index crimes, which include murder, physical injuries, and homicide cases.

The freedom to conduct operations and implementation of security measures under martial law has also resulted in the confiscation of some 10,000 loose guns in Mindanao, he added.

"So, these are all the good effects of martial law in Mindanao," Albayalde said, adding that it resulted in the people of Mindanao feeling safer now.

He said there has been no reported incident of human rights violation since the declaration of martial law in the island.

"That's one thing good. We haven't heard of any or a single case of human rights violation in Mindanao since the implementation of martial law. These are all allegations by the same sectors of society, but no case was ever filed. These are all allegations and not even substantiated," he noted.

Martial law in Mindanao was declared on May 23, 2017 following attacks launched by the Maute Group in Marawi City.

The House of Representatives, in a special joint session in July last year, granted the extension of martial law until Dec. 31, 2017 at the President's request.

The Senate and House of Representatives, convening in a joint session early December, granted the Chief Executive's request for the extension of martial law and the suspension of the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus for a period of one year from Jan. 1 to Dec. 31, 2018. (PNA)

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# New Sulu-bound infantry division activated this month

By Priam Nepomuceno

**MANILA** -- To fully neutralize Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) terrorists in Sulu, the military will formally activate a new infantry division sometime this month.

"The unit shall be oriented, armed, and equipped to address the peculiarity of the enemy, weather, and terrain; as well as enemy techniques, tactics and procedure; and other variables that are unique to the island province of Sulu," Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) spokesperson, Brig. Gen. Edgard Arevalo said in a press briefing Wednesday.

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said the new unit will be activated on December 17.

With the activation of this unit, the AFP will now have 11 infantry divisions, one mechanized infantry division, one Army artillery regiment and various support and logistics units.

"The President expressed concern that, despite the AFP garnering major victories in Sulu, government security forces continue to incur casualties. The AFP leadership, and in response to the clamor from the local government executives, has recommended the activation of a division-sized unit that shall be permanently stationed in Sulu Archipelago," Arevalo added.

The AFP spokesperson said creating a new infantry division is a much better option than moving an existing unit from elsewhere in the country.

"Hence, the (proposed) activation of the 11th Infantry Division is envisioned to effectively and efficiently engage and decisively defeat the lingering security threat in Sulu in the soonest time possible. For the time being, the units already in the area: Two Infantry Brigades, Two Infantry Battalions, Two Special Forces Battalions, among other Navy-Marines units will initially man the Division," he added.

Other component units and capabilities to find, fix, shoot, move, and communicate to fully compliment the Division will be gradually filled up until 2022, Arevalo added. **(PNA)**

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# AFP chief stands pat on rebel tag on Ocampo, Castro

By Priam Nepomuceno

**MANILA** -- Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) chief-of-staff, Gen. Carlito Galvez, Jr. stands firm on his statements that former Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo and ACT-Partylist Rep. France Castro are active members of the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army (CPP-NPA).

"The AFP chief-of-staff stands pat by the statement he made the other day (Monday). He questions the motive of Mr. Satur Ocampo and ACT Partylist Rep. (France) Castro in going to Talaingod, Davao Del Norte at the dead of the night, in spirited away 14 minors from Salugpungan Learning Center to unknown destination without appropriate courtesies to local government executives, devoid of any parental authority or permission," military spokesperson Brig. Gen. Edgard Arevalo said in press briefing Wednesday.

He added the incident has all the indications of kidnapping.

"If there is anything, they must be afraid of, it is not their so-called 'red tagging' by the AFP. It is the cases legally and validly filed against them and the mounting evidence against their infamous version of 'rescue'," the AFP spokesperson said.

Arevalo added that the AFP chief cannot be cowed by reports that the party-list representatives are filing a case against him.

"He has been incarcerated in the past for fighting for what he believes in. All his prime spanning nearly four decades, he has been putting his life and limb and that of his men on the line in the name of protecting the people and securing the state. What else can be more patriotic than that as against enemies of peace and development?" the AFP spokesperson added.

Arevalo also said the AFP chief will not succumb to propaganda and lies of the enemies of the state who belong to front organizations of the CPP.

"He will not cower in fear for this terrorist organization that has exploited and killed Lumad tribesmen and their leaders and even fellow NPAs on mere suspicion of being government assets; NPA that murders their own people who plans to leave their inutile struggle and return to the folds of the law and their families," he said. (PNA)

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# Duterte eyes Galvez as next OPAPP head

By Jelly Musico

Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Chief of Staff Carlito Galvez Jr. as the next head of the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP), Malacañang announced on Wednesday.

"The President announced his intention to appoint Carlito Galvez Jr. to the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process" during Tuesday night's Cabinet meeting, Presidential Spokesperson Salvador Panelo said in a statement.

Galvez, a member of the Philippine Military Academy Class of 1985, will step down on Dec. 12 upon reaching the mandatory retirement age of 56.

He had served the military for 30 years, including eight months as top official of the AFP.

Last week, Jesus Dureza resigned as Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process, taking full responsibility for the corruption allegations against two OPAPP officials – Undersecretary Ronald Flores and Assistant Secretary Yeshter Donn Baccay.

During the inauguration of the Bohol-Panglao International Airport, Duterte announced he regrets accepting the resignation of Dureza, a high school classmate at the Cor Jesu College in Digos City, Davao del Sur.

Duterte fired Flores and Baccay over allegations of corruption. Both were involved in the OPAPP support services and implementation of the PAMANA (Payapa at Masaganang Pamayanan) projects. (PNA)