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## **NEWS CLIPPINGS**

**26 December 2018**

**Wednesday**



*Honor. Patriotism. Duty*

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# Pope urges faithful: Forgo insatiable greed

VATICAN CITY – Pope Francis is urging Christians to forgo the greed, hoarding and materialism of Christmas and to focus instead on its message of simplicity, charity and love.

Francis celebrated a Christmas Eve mass on Monday night in St. Peter's Basilica, opening a busy week for the 82-year-old pope that includes a Christmas Day message and blessing, a Dec. 26 prayer, New Year's Eve vespers and a Jan. 1 mass.

During his homily, Francis lamented that many people find meaning in possessions. He said: "An insatiable greed marks all human history, even today, when paradoxically a few dine luxuriantly while all too many go without the daily bread needed to survive."

Francis has focused on the world's poor and downtrodden during his five-year papacy. The Catholic Church's first Latin American pope has denounced the global financial system that he says makes the rich richer at the expense of the poor. Pope Francis ushered in Christmas with a late-night mass in St. Peter's Basilica.

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## Pope From Page 1

while his deputy is traveling to Iraq to celebrate with the country's long-suffering Christians.

The mass on Christmas Eve is one of the highlights of the Vatican's liturgical year.

As Francis presided over festivities at home, Secretary of State Cardinal Pietro Parolin was heading to Iraq to celebrate Christmas with the Chaldean Catholic community. Catholics are among the religious minorities devastated by Islamic State-inspired violence that has driven tens of thousands from their home.

Parolin's visit was a clear sign of Francis' personal solidarity.

### See differences as asset, not danger

Francis, in his Christmas message to the world, urged people on Tuesday to see dif-

ferences as a source of richness instead of danger and called for reconciliation in places torn apart by conflict.

Francis delivered the traditional papal "Urbi et Orbi" (to the city and the world) message to tens of thousands of people in a sunny St. Peter's Square from the same basilica balcony where he first appeared as pontiff shortly after his election on March 13, 2013.

Security has been tight around the Vatican for the Christmas season, with military jeeps stationed at key access routes and tourists undergoing metal detector and bag searches.

Last week police in southern Italy arrested a Somali man suspected of having been a member of Islamic State and who had threatened to bomb churches in Italy, including St. Peter's.

In his address, in what appeared to be a reference to the shrill political climate in a number of countries, Francis called for "fraternity among people with different ideas, yet capable of respecting and listening to one another."

Francis alluded to polarization over migration, saying God wanted "love, acceptance, respect for this poor humanity of ours, which we all share in a great variety of races, languages and cultures."

"Our differences, then, are not a detriment or a danger; they are a source of richness," he said.

Francis called for the resumption of dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians to "undertake a journey of peace that can put an end to a conflict that for over 70 years has lacerated the land chosen by the Lord to show his face of love."

He urged the international community to work for a political solution in Syria and said he hoped a truce brokered in Yemen's civil war could bring relief to a population exhausted by violence and famine.

The Argentinian-born pope also called for social harmony in Nicaragua and Venezuela, both racked by internal political conflicts.

The millions of refugees or displaced people in Africa who are in need of humanitarian assistance and food security should not be forgotten, he said.

In Ukraine, he called for "a peace respectful of the rights of every nation." Ukraine's relations with Russia have been locked in a downwards spiral since Moscow annexed Crimea 2014 and backed pro-Russian separatists in eastern Ukraine. —AP, Reuters

# WIDOW RULES OUT NPA ROLE IN SOLOMON'S SLAY

Gertie Duran-Batocabe says communist rebels have nothing to gain in killing her husband. Allies of the lawmaker, who planned to run for mayor of Daraga, point to political rivalry as the most plausible motive for the assassination.

By Rey Anthony Ostria and Mar S. Arguelles @InquirerSLB

DARAGA, ALBAY—The widow of slain Ako Bicol Rep. Rodel Batocabe on Tuesday dismissed

speculation that the communist New People's Army (NPA) carried out the attack on her husband.

The National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP), the umbrella organization of

the local communist movement, in an e-mail to reporters on Tuesday also denied the NPA had a hand in the killing of Batocabe.

Gertie Duran-Batocabe, the congressman's widow, said she

did not believe the NPA had anything to do with the slaying of her husband.

"They just did it in a village in the mountains to make it look like, you know," she said, referring to the NPA angle that police

investigators were pursuing.

"What will they (the NPA) get if they kill my husband? We have not opposed their principles. So the question is, Who will gain from his death? Simple," the widow said.

Batocabe's relatives and local officials earlier pointed to political rivalry as the most plausible motive for the killing.

They said Batocabe began receiving death threats after a survey showed he



was the leading contender in the Daraga mayoral race.

Batocabe and his police aide, SPO1 Orlando Diaz, were gunned down by as many as six men as the congressman emerged from a Christmas event for senior citizens at Barangay Burgos in Daraga on Saturday afternoon.

Batocabe was shot four times in the back, with all the bullets exiting in front, indicating use of high-powered firearms.

**Witnesses, video images**

Testimony from witnesses and video images taken by security cameras are helping to move the investigation of last week's killing of Batocabe, police said on Tuesday.

**What will they (NPA rebels) get if they kill my husband? We have not opposed their principles. So the question is, Who will gain from his death? Simple**

**Gertie Duran-Batocabe**  
Widow of Rep. Rodel Batocabe

Supt. Dennis Balla, the new police chief of Daraga, said six people who were wounded in the attack had given statements to investigators that could help the authorities identify the killers.

"Investigators started with a

blank wall, but based on the statements of witnesses and the CCTV footage, we are slowly getting a clearer picture of the case," Balla said.

He did not provide details to avoid jeopardizing the investigation.



GEORGE GIO BRONDIAL

formation that may lead to the identification and arrest of the perpetrators.

Members of the House of Representatives are giving P50,000 each to boost the bounty to as much as P50 million to entice witnesses to come forward.

Ako Bicol has called on politicians to disarm their bodyguards, a step toward ending political violence during election season.

The Philippine National Police on Tuesday clarified that police presence at campaign rallies were not for the protection of politicians but of the public.

**People's protection**

PNP Director General Oscar Albayalde said local police chiefs should deploy officers to secure rally sites.

"Not the [politician] but all the people there," Albayalde said.

The PNP chief said such a de-

ployment was not electioneering. He called on politicians not to treat policemen deployed to rally sites as their personal security.

Albayalde said the PNP was studying Sen. Panfilo Lacson's advice that the police and the military limit the carrying of firearms to uniformed officers and soldiers to reduce violence during election season.

The Supreme Court, acting on a petition from the Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP), on Monday agreed to sit down with the police, the military and civil society groups to explore measures to protect lawyers and judges.

Batocabe was a lawyer and he was the latest member of the bar to be killed under the Duterte administration.

The IBP has also asked the Supreme Court to investigate those killings.

—WITH A REPORT FROM JEANNETTE LANDRADE INQ

Ako Bicol said on Monday that it would not allow the death of Batocabe go unresolved.

**Reward money**

The party list group is offering a P30-million reward for in-

# Military advises public to stay vigilant as Reds mark 50th year

By Jeannette L. Andrade  
@jiandradeINQ

The Armed Forces of the Philippines has advised the public to be vigilant against possible attacks by communist rebels as the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) celebrates its 50th founding anniversary on Wednesday.

Col. Noel Detoyato, chief of the AFP public affairs office, on Monday said the military was prepared for any eventuality but urged Filipinos to take "extra caution and remain vigilant" against attacks by "terrorist groups."

Detoyato noted that CPP founding chair Jose Maria Sison

had ordered the New People's Army (NPA) to escalate attacks during the Christmas season.

### Secure the communities

"Our soldiers on the ground and at all levels of command will continue to monitor and conduct security operations against the CPP-NPA [National Democratic Front of the Philippines]. We are ready to secure any community threatened by them," he said.

But Detoyato said the military was ready to welcome rebels who would "abandon the armed struggle and violence perpetrated by the [communist movement] and embrace a life

of peace and prosperity with their family."

The CPP, he said, has had no achievement to celebrate since Dec. 26, 1968, when Sison founded the CPP.

Lt. Gen. Danilo Pamonag, commander of the Southern Luzon Command, also said the CPP-NPA had "no achievement to be proud of" in half a century of fighting the government.

President Duterte stood pat on his decision not to declare a holiday truce with the insurgents—the first in 30 years.

State security officials earlier argued that a ceasefire with the insurgents would be futile because the rebels continued to

attack government forces.

The CPP ordered the NPA to observe a holiday truce that took effect at midnight of Dec. 24 to end midnight of Dec. 26.

Another truce would take effect at midnight of Dec. 31 and end at midnight of Jan. 1.

### Abandon struggle

Pamonag reiterated his call to the insurgents to abandon the armed struggle.

"Our offer for peace is open to all who wish to take this opportunity to abandon the violence perpetrated by the CPP-NPA and embrace a life of peace and prosperity," he said.

Sison on Tuesday claimed

that the people could invoke its right to oust President Duterte whom he described as a tyrant and instigator of mass murder.

In a statement posted on his Facebook account, Sison said the people should make Mr. Duterte their "precise target" in the exercise of their "sovereign right to free themselves from tyranny."

The people, he said, should undertake all necessary actions to oust the President.

Only 39 percent of Filipinos voted Mr. Duterte into office, which leaves him with a precarious hold on the presidency, Sison claimed. —WITH A REPORT FROM DELFIN T. MALLARI INQ

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## AFP: Communists have nothing to celebrate

By FRANCIS T. WINEFIELD

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) on Tuesday advised peace-loving Filipinos to take extra caution and remain vigilant against attacks from the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army-National Democratic Front (CPP-NPA-NDF) which marks its 50th founding anniversary

today, stressing that they have nothing to celebrate and no achievement to be proud of.

The military said that that CPP founding chairman Jose Maria Sison has ordered communist rebels then to escalate attacks and violence during the Christmas season.

In a statement, AFP spokesman Colonel Noel Detoyato ▶9

## AFP: Communists have... ◀1

said the threat of heightened atrocities marks another year of violence and manifests their nature as a terror group that works to undermine the government, disrupt national development, and damage public and private properties – all to the inconvenience of the Filipino people.

"As far as we, peace-loving Filipinos, are concerned, the CPP-NPA-NDF has nothing to celebrate and no achievement to be proud of," Detoyato said.

"Our soldiers on the ground and at all levels of command will continue to monitor and conduct security operations against the CPP-NPA-NDF. We are ready to secure any community threatened by them especially during this season of Christmas celebration," he added.

Detoyato said the AFP's lines of communication are also open to those who wish to take this opportunity to abandon

the armed struggle and violence perpetrated by the CPP-NPA-NDF and embrace a life of peace and prosperity with their family.

The alert level, he said, will be determined by field commanders on the ground.

The government had earlier rejected proposal to reciprocate the annual declaration of truce by the NPA.

More rights violations feared

Meanwhile, the Philippine Ecumenical Peace Platform (PEPP), a peace advocate group, said President Duterte's order to the military to "destroy" the NPA is worrisome.

The PEPP, which is composed of five church institutions or groups, said they are particularly worried about the escalation of violence and human rights violations that will surely ensue because of such statement.

"As leaders of churches in the country, we are troubled by this announcement and the escalation of violence and violation of human rights that will surely ensue," read their statement, titled "Our Enduring Call this Christmas: Resume GRP-NDFP Peace Talks!"

"As we celebrate the day of birth of Jesus Christ, the bearer of hope, we affirm our belief that peace is possible through principled dialogue and that the peace talks are still the most viable option to attain a just and enduring peace in the country," it further read.

The group said House Resolution 2339, which the House of Representatives adopted to urge President Duterte to resume peace talks with the NDFP was a piece of good news for peace advocates like them.

PEPP called on President Duterte to heed the House resolution and continue the peace negotiations with the NDFP and resume the formal peace talks. (With a report from Leslie Ann G. Aquino)

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TODAY

## Solons pushes for separate funding program for soldiers

By Maricel V. Cruz

A LEGISLATOR on Tuesday expressed support for the establishment of a separate pension fund for soldiers to ease the burden of paying the pensions of retired military personnel from the Government Service Insurance System.

Senior Citizen Party-list Rep. Francisco Datol, Jr. vice chairman of the House Special Committee on Senior Citizen, broached the idea as President Duterte's ordered the Departments of Finance, and Budget Management to draft a plan to establish a soldier's fund to be administered by the GSIS.

The soldier's pension fund will be separate from the pension fund of other government personnel now being administered by the GSIS.

"I agree with the broad strokes of the solution Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez and Budget Secretary Benjamin Diokno have disclosed so far and I am hereby committing to file and push for the draft bill as soon as the DOF and DBM have finalized it," Datol, also member of the House Committee on Veterans Affairs and Welfare, said.

Aside from the contribution from soldiers and the counterpart to be provided by the government through budgetary allocations, Datol proposed the augmentation of the fund through taxes imposed on firearms, bullets, explosives imported by private sector.

"To lessen the premiums burden on retired soldiers who are now senior citizens and on the retiring military servicemen, I suggest that there be a particular tax on firearms, ammunition, and explosives imported by the businesses and private individuals and that proceeds of this tax go to the soldiers' pension fund," Datol said.

In the middle of 1970s, then President Ferdinand E Marcos established the Armed Forces of the Philippines Retirement and Separation Benefit System to equalize the pensions of all military retirees.

Aging military retirees have been complaining that their pensions are considerably lower than the pensions of recent and younger retirees, Datol said.

The situation came about because of the drastic increases in the salaries of uniformed personnel during the imposition of Martial Law.

However, military observers said the RSBS was "ill-fated" from the very start because the administration gave only P2 million as a start-up fund while actuarial studies conducted indicated that a P2-billion fund was needed to make the fund viable.

# 2018 a banner year for PN, as it enters 'missile age'

**Y**EAR 2018, which will end in a few days' time, can be considered as a banner year for the Armed Forces of the Philippines, especially the Philippine Navy, as it formally entered the missile age and demonstrated its capability to sail beyond its territorial waters during deployments to the US, South Korea and Russia.

This is aside from projected deliveries of new assets for 2019, such as the AgustaWestland AW-159 "Wildcat" helicopters and the "Pohang"-class frigate donated by South Korea to the Philippines.

The PN's formal entry to the missile age took place off Lamao Point, Limay, Batuan last Nov. 21, when three of its multi-purpose assault craft fired the newly-acquired and installed Rafael Advanced Defense Ltd. Spike-ER (extended range) surface-to-surface missile during a capability demonstration witnessed by Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana and Navy flag-officer-in-command Vice Adm Robert Empedrad.

During the exercise, the MPACs fired two Spike-ER missile rounds, which hit two surface targets. The said craft also utilized remote-controlled .50 caliber machine guns to neutralize another

target.

An AgustaWestland AW-109 attack helicopter armed with 2.75-inch high-explosive rockets also provided air support to the MPACs by firing its weapons. "Impressive. Not one (missile) round was wasted," Lorenzana said in describing the Spike-ER capability demonstration, which he witnessed aboard the BRP Davao Del Sur (LD-602).

He said this is no mean feat considering that the seas were quite rough at the time. "(Modern) technology has come to the Navy and we will use this technology to protect our seas," the DND chief emphasized.

A single Spike-ER missile round costs an estimated PHP10 million, which makes accuracy for the PN a virtue.

The first test-firing of the Spike-ER missile took place last Aug. 9 in the

same location.

The weapon was fired from one of the PN's three Spike-ER armed MPACs.

The MPACs were constructed by the Subic-based Propenech Corporation and activated on May 22, 2017.

The PN MPAC Acquisition Project entered into a contract with Rafael, through SIBAT of Israel Ministry of Defense, for the supply and integration of the weapons systems to three Mark III MPACs.

On April 15, 2017, Lorenzana approved the Notice to Proceed.

The Spike-ER system, which arrived in the country last April, is the PN's first missile weapon capable of penetrating 1,000-mm (39 inches) of rolled homogeneous armor and has a range of eight kilometers.

More missile-armed MPACs needed to defend PH waters

Empedrad, meanwhile, said missile-armed MPACs can be utilized to defend Philippine waters through the so-called "swarming tactic", where these craft will be committed to engage larger and more capable ships posing a threat to the country's waters.

The PN chief added that the Navy needs an additional 42 MPACs to further enhance its capabilities to defend the country's waters.

## Military all geared up vs NPA attacks

By Francisco Tuyay

GOVERNMENT forces have fortified their positions to repulse any attacks by the communist New People's Army, which celebrates its 50th founding anniversary today, an official said Tuesday.

Armed Forces of the Philippines spokesman Col. Noel Detoyato said government troops were ready to secure any community against any attacks by the New People's Army, the CPP's military arm.

He made the statement even as Police

Chief Oscar Albayalde said the CPP had so far made no threats on the eve of its 50th founding anniversary.

But he said government troops remained on alert and ready to repulse any attacks.

The CPP announced a unilateral ceasefire in time for the holidays and for the celebration of its anniversary on Dec. 26. And following the communists' raid in Tubigan, Agusan del Sur, last week that resulted in the kidnapping of 12 soldiers,

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CPP chairman Jose Maria Sison ordered the NPA to escalate its attacks during the Christmas season.

As a result, Detoyato advised Filipinos to remain vigilant.

"As far as we peace-loving Filipinos are concerned, the CPP-NPA has nothing to celebrate and no achievement to be proud of," Detoyato said.

Three days before the CCP's anniversary, party-list Rep. Rodel Batocabe was shot dead by still unidentified men in Daraga, Albay, an incident that the government blamed on the communists.

The authorities have also blamed the NPA for the killing of dozens of policemen, soldiers and even village officials in attacks in the aftermath of President Rodrigo Duterte's abrogation of the peace talks.

Philippine Army spokesman Louie Villanueva said all field units were enforcing stricter security measures to thwart any attacks by the communists.

"The Philippine Army along with its entire operational and tactical units have already stepped up its security measures," Villanueva said.

## Military Santa Claus updates live despite US government shutdown

WASHINGTON—The US government shutdown may have temporarily dimmed Washington's National Christmas Tree but never fear, Santa Claus still came to town—with the military tracking his path across the globe.

Just as it has since the 1950s the Canadian and American defense agency NORAD delivered live updates on the man in the red suit's international gift delivery route.

NORAD eased the fears of good little boys and girls concerned the tracker might be down, after US lawmakers failed to agree on a budget, triggering a partial shutdown of federal services, including the maintenance of the Christmas tree outside the White House.

"In the event of a government shutdown, NORAD will continue with its 63-year tradition of NORAD Tracks Santa on Dec. 24," the agency tweeted of the tracker, the Pentagon's largest public outreach program.

"Military personnel who conduct NORAD Tracks Santa are supported by approximately 1,500 volunteers who make the program possible each and every year."

The 3-D, interactive website at [www.noradsanta.org](http://www.noradsanta.org) showed Santa on his delivery route, allowing users to click and learn more about the various cities along the way.

Just after 0645 GMT, Father Christmas's reindeer-powered sleigh was headed for Monterrey, Mexico, having already delivered more than six billion gifts.

In addition to tracking St Nick, volunteers donning military garb and Santa hats also respond to tens of thousands of calls and emails from eager children hoping to probe for details including their Christmas wish lists.

The Troops, who canceled their holiday trip to Mar a Lago, their residence and club in Florida, in light of the shutdown, took a turn fielding calls from the White House on Monday evening. **AFP**

What it will pre-

offensives

### 43 killed in Kabul govt compound attack

KABUL—An hours-long gun and suicide attack on a Kabul government compound killed at least 43 people, the health ministry said Tuesday, making it one of the deadliest assaults on the Afghan capital this year.

No militant group has claimed responsibility for the raid, which caps a bloody year for Afghanistan as long-suffering civilians and security forces are slaughtered in record numbers.

Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mijangid told AFP the attack had "nothing to do with the militants."

Another 25 people were wounded in Monday's massacre on a site where the Ministry of Public Works and an office that handles pensions and benefits for war veterans are located, spokesman Walid Mujahid said.

Gunmen stormed the compound mid-afternoon after detonating a car bomb at the main entrance—opposite residential apartment buildings—sending terrified people running for their lives. Some jumped from windows several floors high to escape the militants.

The suicide blast appears to have been a decoy, according to witnesses who told AFP they saw several militants enter the compound through a back gate. AFP

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# Military braces for communist attacks

THE military doubled its vigilance for possible communist attacks after detecting movements by the New People's Army (NPA) in various provinces in line with the

Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) commemoration of its 50th founding anniversary. Maj. Gen. Noel Clement, commander of the military's Cebu-based Central Command (Cent-

Com) in Samar and the Negros Islands, are being monitored because of movements by the communist rebels. GenCom is a unified command of the military  
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that covers the whole Visayas region.

"There are movements, but we are doing preemptive measures to prevent them from conducting atrocities," Clement told *The Manila Times* in a text message.

In eastern Mindanao, Maj. Gen. Ronald Villanueva, commander of the Cagayan de Oro-based 4th Infantry Division (ID), said NPA "movements" were also monitored in the North Central and North Eastern parts of Mindanao.

Villanueva said the commencement of the CPP anniversary celebration that culminates on December 26 was a "signal" for communist rebels to conduct tactical offensives.

Three weeks ago, government

troops and NPA rebels clashed in the boundary of Bukidnon and Esperanza towns in Agusan del Sur and in Andap at Surigao del Sur.

"In Andap town, I had four wounded soldiers," he added.

"They have been preparing for this [anniversary] for a long time now, with the past incidents that transpired," he said.

But Villanueva said the military disrupted the communists' plan to escalate attacks.

Still, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) continues to monitor the southern part of Luzon, including the provinces of Rizal, Laguna, Quezon and Mindoro.

Maj. Gen. Rhoderick Parayno, commander of the Philippine Army's 2nd ID based in Rizal, said military operations are being

conducted to prevent attacks from the NPA.

The military also detected NPA movements in two provinces in Northern Luzon — Abra and Nueva Ecija.

Lt. Col. Eugenio Ocas, 7th ID spokesman, said these movements include transporting food for the CPP anniversary celebration and the consolidation of forces.

"These are confirmed movements already of the NPA. We won't let our guard down even with the declaration of their ceasefire for the holiday season," Ocas said.

He added that two battalions had been deployed each in the provinces of Abra and Nueva Ecija to counter possible attacks by the NPA.

The AFP also reminded the public to be vigilant especially with the alleged order of CPP founder Jose Maria Sison to intensify attacks during the holiday season.

"The threat of heightened atrocities marks another year of violence and manifests their nature as a terror group that works to undermine the government, disrupt national development and damage public and private properties — all to the convenience of the Filipino people," Detoyato said in a statement.

"As far as we peace-loving Filipinos are concerned, the CPP-NPA-NDF (National Democratic Front) has nothing to celebrate and no achievement to be proud of," he added.

**DEMPSEY REYES**

## Witnesses in Batocabe slay come forward

By CET DEMATERA

LEGAZPI CITY - At least six witnesses have come forward and issued statements on the killing of Ako Bicol party-list Rep. Rodel Batocabe and his bodyguard Senior Police Officer 1 Orlando Diaz.

Newly installed Daraga police chief Supt Dennis Balla said it is a positive development in their efforts to solve the double murder case.

The Daraga police chief added that they have identified "persons of interest" and others for questioning and background checking. But Balla did not provide names.

"We in the Philippine National Police are glad to tell you that witnesses to the Batocabe and Diaz killings are cooperating with us in our serious efforts to bring the perpetrators to the folds of the law," Balla told a press conference on Monday afternoon at the office of Daraga Mayor Carlwyn Baldo.

Baldo lamented speculations that he was behind Batocabe's killing.

"These reports are dragging my name down. I accept (the blame), being the mayor of Daraga where this sad incident happened. What I cannot take are insinuations that I am be-

hind this crime. People who know the background of our family (are aware) that we do not resort to violence to resolve issues," Baldo said.

The mayor dared his accusers to file charges against him if they have proof of his complicity in the crime.

As this developed, Ako Bicol party-list Rep. Alfredo Garbin Jr. said their group would decide after the burial of Batocabe who would replace the slain lawmaker as mayorality candidate for Daraga.

"We do not want to discuss this matter at this time (when) everybody is still mourning. But, yes, we will put a replacement to his candidacy," Garbin told The STAR.

### Reds deny role

Meanwhile, the communists in Bicol yesterday denied any role in the killings.

In a statement posted on its website, the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), its armed wing New People's Army (NPA) and umbrella organization National Democratic Front (NDF), through its Bicol spokesperson Maria Roja Banua condemned the murders.

"The CPP-NPA-NDF Bicol expressed its condolences to the (families of Batocabe,

Diaz) and the seven civilians wounded during the attack," Banua said in Tagalog.

"There is no truth to the statement of the (Philippine National Police) linking the revolutionary movement to the incident. Army NPA unit in Bicol has no involvement in the killing. It has become automatic to the (military and PNP) to blame the NPA in these kind of cases of killings and other crimes to cover up the investigation and hold responsible the perpetrators who belong to their ranks," Banua said.

Banua noted that the PNP suddenly linked the CPP-NPA-NDF Bicol and took advantage of spreading fake news during the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the CPP to destroy the people's recognition of the leadership of the party.

"(Batocabe) is not considered as persona non grata of the revolutionary movement in Bicol. The coordination of the revolutionary movement with him is the same with other political leaders who expressed their intention to deliver basic services to the people," Banua maintained.

Banua added that Ako Bicol has not been charged with "access fee" and "permit to campaign" by the CPP-NPA-NDF.

Banua also noted that Bato-

cabe has a history of standing for the people such as against the extension of martial law in Mindanao.

"The killing of (Batocabe) is part of a series of planned high-profile killings of the US-Duterte regime to intensify the war against the revolutionary movement and the people especially in the Bicol region," Banua said.

### **Military training**

Members of a gun-for-hire group, whom police are eyeing as possible suspects in the killing, have trained in the military, a security official said.

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said these persons underwent training in the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP).

"They trained at the Army Scout Rangers, including their leader," the source said. But the official did not say if the personalities completed training and became soldiers.

The source added some of the suspects' parents were once affiliated with the communist NPA.

Based on their investigation, the group is allegedly responsible for the murder of police officers and journalists in Bicol.

"They are also involved in

extortion," the source said.

Probers are looking into the possible involvement of the gun-for-hire syndicate in Batocabe's death because of the similarities in the manner the murder was carried out compared to other killings in the region.

Among the clients of this group, according to police, are unscrupulous politicians.

At least six suspects are believed to have carried out Batocabe's murder, according to witnesses. They allegedly blended with the crowd to avoid detection.

The PNP will consider the proposal of Sen. Panfilo Lacson for stricter gun control measures following Batocabe's murder.

"That's a very good suggestion. We will consider that," PNP chief Director General Oscar Albayalde told reporters.

Lacson, a former PNP chief, is pushing for stricter gun control, including the suspension of permit to carry firearms outside of residence (PTCFOR) of licensed gun owners.

In response, Albayalde said they will suspend the PTCFOR next month as part of their security preparations for the midterm elections.

"This will be coupled by our intensified police operations,"

he said.

### **SC vows action**

The Supreme Court (SC) is set to act on the spate of attacks on lawyers in the country, its spokesman said yesterday.

Court Administrator Midas Marquez said Chief Justice Lucas Bersamin has received the online petition of officials and members of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP) urging the SC to take measures to protect lawyers after some of its members continued to fall prey to heinous criminals, with Batocabe as the latest victim.

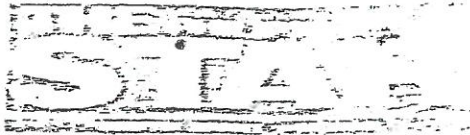
"The (CJ) will seek the concurrence of the court in conducting an independent investigation and convening a dialogue between members of the Bar and law enforcers," Marquez said in a statement.

The IBP petition, signed initially by 78 lawyers, called on the SC to "take immediate action to protect lawyers in the Philippines as they perform their function to protect their clients' rights and uphold the rule of law."

The IBP made the appeal as it condemned the killing of Batocabe. — With Jose Rodel Clapano, Emmanuel Tupas, Edu Pusay



Up



# Be vigilant against NPA, military urges public

By JAIME LAUDE

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) is calling for public vigilance against New People's Army (NPA) rebels while military units conduct offensive operations against the insurgents on the 50th founding anniversary of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) today.

Col. Noel Detoyato, AFP Public Affairs Office chief, issued the call yesterday as the insurgents were seen as more likely to harass local communities to evade ongoing military operations in the moun-

tain strongholds of the rebels in various regions.

"The AFP advises the Filipino people to take extra caution and remain vigilant against attacks from the terrorist group, the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army-National Democratic Front as part of their founding anniversary," Detoyato said.

CPP founding chair Jose Ma. Sison has issued a directive to the NPA guerrillas to escalate attacks to protest the extension of martial law in Mindanao for another year.

In Northern Luzon, 7th Infantry Division commander Maj. Gen.

Felimon Santos ordered all military units in Bulacan, Pampanga, Zambales, Bataan, Nueva Ecija, Aurora, Pangasinan, La Union, Ilocos Sur and Ilocos Norte to carry out operations against the NPA.

"We are actively conducting combat operations to deny the communist terrorists to conduct terrorist acts. We know that the communist terrorists' highlight during their anniversary celebration is the number of harassments, murders, extortion and other criminal activities they have done against the Filipino people and our government," Lt. Col. Edgenio

Julio Osias, 7th Infantry Division chief of civil-military operations, said.

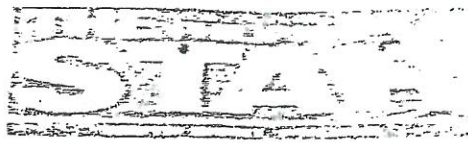
He said two days ago, soldiers were able to derail an NPA plan to celebrate the CPP's founding anniversary in Pantabangan, Nueva Ecija, with the capture of the insurgents' newly established camp and seizure of high-powered firearms

and food stuff stored in the area.

The NPA leadership has been trying to reestablish their foothold in former strongholds in Northern Luzon, specifically the provinces of the Cordillera Administrative Region, Cagayan Valley, Ilocos and Central Luzon.

- With Delon Porcalla

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# Duterte's order to destroy Reds opposed

By EVELYN MACAIRAN

The Philippine Ecumenical Peace Platform (PEPP) yesterday expressed concern over President Duterte's order to the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) to destroy the communist rebels.

"As leaders of churches in the country, we are troubled by this announcement and the escalation of violence and violation of human rights that will surely ensue," the PEPP said in a statement.

The PEPP said the President should reciprocate the unilat-

eral truce of the New People's Army (NPA).

"We also appeal to the NPA for the peaceful turnover of the Citizen Armed Force Geographical Unit (CAFGU) personnel and enlisted soldiers detained recently in Sibagat and other parts of Caraga region in order for them to be with their families this holiday season," the PEPP said.

The religious leaders expressed their support for House Resolution 2339 principally authored by Tawi-Tawi Rep. Ruby Sahah urging the President to return to the ne-

gotiating table with the communist National Democratic Front.

"As we celebrate the day of birth of Jesus Christ, the bearer of hope, we affirm our belief that peace is possible through principled dialogue and that the peace talks are still the most viable option to attain a just and enduring peace in the country," they said.

"We thus call on President Duterte to heed House Resolution 2339 and continue the peace negotiations... and resume the formal peace talks."

The religious leaders also

appealed for the release of Rey Casambre, executive director of the Philippine Peace Center, and his wife along with other NDF peace consultants.

Another troubling development was the resignation of Secretary Jesus Dureza of the Office of the Presidential Adviser for the Peace Process (OPAPP) and the appointment of former AFP chief Carlito Galvez as his replacement, they said.

The Commission on Human Rights (CHR), on the other hand, cautioned the government over Duterte's plan to

hamlet or isolate indigenous peoples to prevent them from being influenced by communist rebels.

CHR spokesperson Jacqueline de Guia said the government should critically study this move and establish a strong need to hamlet indigenous peoples before it is implemented.

"The government is well within its obligation to protect the welfare of its people. However, hamletting as an approach to public safety may result in a number of human rights violations due to the

enforced displacement of communities and individuals," De Guia said.

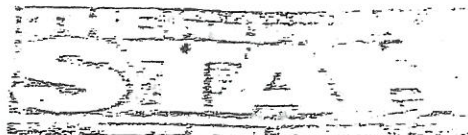
"Such proposal challenges the people's constitutional right to liberty and property, among others, and will inevitably disrupt a community's cultural life," she added.

De Guia said the international humanitarian law, as well as its implementing law in the country (Republic Act 9851), prohibits arbitrary deportation or forcible transfer of population or unlawful confinement.

- With Janvic Mateo

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## Makabayan lawmakers deny communist tag

By DELON PORCALLA

On the eve of the 50th anniversary of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), the seven-member Makabayan bloc in the House of Representatives yesterday denied being communist "legal fronts."

The 104 million Filipinos know that the seven-member bloc is not a legal front of the CPP or any of its affiliates, the left-wing lawmakers declared.

"The public knows that we are legal and legitimate party-list groups and we are not fronts of the CPP. Our track record speaks for itself and we have always stood for the interest of the majority of our people," they said in a joint statement.

The militant lawmakers issued the statement following pronouncements from Secretary Martin Andanar of the Presidential Communications Operations Office urging Filipinos not to vote for communist-linked party-list groups and non-government organizations.

When asked what would be done to the alleged communist "legal fronts," Andanar replied in Filipino: "When our enemies campaign in 2019, they have party-list groups, right? That means we should not vote for them."

"All fronts - be it the armed front, the military front of the New People's Army, even their party-list legal front, those that come to our workplaces to recruit members - all of them are included (in the anti-insurgency drive). There are no excuses," Andanar told reporters.

President Duterte has rejected the ceasefire offered by the CPP-New People's Army in time for the holidays, and has even ordered the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) to "destroy" the decades-old insurgency, noting the communists' "insincerity" in forging peace.

The militant congressmen nonetheless reminded the Duterte administration that "genuine services were delivered to the people" when "members of Makabayan were still part of the Cabinet."

Judy Taguiwalo used to head the Department of Social Welfare and Development, Rafael Mariano was secretary for the Department of Agrarian Reform while Liza Maza once took over the helm of the National Anti-Poverty Commission.

"We are warning the AFP, the Philippine National Police and other state agents that we will not take their attacks sitting down," Reps. Antonio Tinio, France Castro, Carlos Isagani Zarate, Emmi de Jesus, Arlene Brosas, Ariel Casilao and Sarah Elago warned.

"Let the conviction and imprisonment of 'the Butcher' Gen. Jovito Falparan and other state forces who attacked the people stand as a lesson to all soldiers, police, paramilitary groups and hired goons who plan to carry out Duterte's murderous overtures," they declared. "We are calling on all freedom loving people in the Philippines and abroad to be more vigilant in opposing the rising tyranny of this regime and to further raise our voices so that we will not be silenced," they added.

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THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONTIER

# AFP troops seize 2 NPA hideouts in Agusan del Sur

By **MIKE IL COMENANDO**

**CAMP BANCASI, Butuan City** - Two days before the 50th anniversary of the New People's Army (NPA), the military seized two rebel hideouts deep in the mountains of Agusan del Sur last Monday.

This was disclosed by Lt. Col. Francisco Molina Jr., commanding officer of the Army's 23rd Infantry Battalion (23rd IB), on Tuesday as he also reported that his units seized in the abandoned hideouts several war materials, including radio communication facilities, rifle grenades and assorted live ammunitions.

"Our operating troops also seized foodstuffs including sacks of rice inside the two makeshift hideouts of the CPP-NPA terrorists in far-flung forested mountains in Esperanza town, Agusan del Sur province," he said.

"An undetermined number of Communist insurgents immediately abandoned the two

CPP-NPA hideouts after sensing that our patrolling troops were closing in on their position," Molina bared.

He said his troops were still scouring the seized camps for other war materials left by the terrorists.

He said the enemy (CPP-NPA) hideouts were located after concerned villagers reported their location to the patrolling troops of the 23rd IB.

The fall of the two rebel camps came as a huge blow for the NPA, which is celebrating its 50th anniversary December 25.

"We are still tracking down the enemy route as of this time (Dec. 25) and we will not stop our operation even during the Christmas Day and New Year's Day, per directive of our 4th Division commander Maj. Gen. Ronald C. Villanueva," the 23rd IB commander added.

Chief Supt. Gilberto DC Cruz, regional director of the Northeastern Mindanao Police Regional Office 13 (PBO 13)

late Monday afternoon ordered regional and provincial mobile force commanders to assist the pursuing troops of the 23rd IB by way of extending blocking positions along the possible escape route of the fleeing CPP-NPAs.

Meanwhile, combat maneuvering battalions of the 401st Infantry (Unity) Brigade are still pursuing "without let up" the hostage-takers of the two Army soldiers and 14 militiamen somewhere in the Diwata ranges in Agusan del Sur and Surigao del Sur.

However, the command group of the 401st Brigade based in Camp Dana Lipus Makapandog in Agusan del Sur province could not disclose the exact location of the troops as tactical movement was still going on.

Air and ground assets of the AFP are already "on standby position" here for possible air cover and ground support to the pursuing combat maneuvering troops of the 401st Brigade in Agusan del Sur and Surigao del Sur.

# CPP-NPA 'deceit, lies' hit

**O**N THE 50th anniversary of the Communist Party of the Philippines on Tuesday, a ranking member of the organization called out its "deceit and lies" and said its armed wing, the New People's Army, had "no chance of winning" its armed struggle against the government.

This developed as the Police Regional Office Cordillera condemned the NPA for attacking the CAFGU (Citizen Armed Force Geographical Unit) Active Auxiliary Patrol Base in Uma, Lubuagan, Kalinga at dawn on Sunday, Dec. 23, killing the base commander and hurting three other personnel.

The CPP officer, who signed a statement sent to several media outlets in the Cordillera as "Ka Danny," said he was "a witness that the CPP, NPA and NDF [National Democratic Front] are just using the party-list groups like Bayan Muna, ACT [Alliance of Concerned Teachers] and Anakpawis as fronts."

"No chance of winning! We are the living witnesses, the former cadres and members of the crusade, of the wrongdoings of the NPA against the masses," claimed Ka Danny, who said he was an 18-year member of the CPP and "official of the higher organ of the Legal and Unification Committee."

"Because if they are really sincere in what they are fighting for, there will come a time that they will succeed. But in reality, they are just using the implementation of peace talks to deceive the youth and try to teach them that the country is experiencing a wrong system!" added Ka Danny, who said he was

the "political officer" of three party-list congressmen from Bayan Muna, Anakpawis and ACT.

Officials of the party-list groups could not confirm Ka Danny's identity at press time.

The statement was co-signed by Mario Ludades, one of the original 18 founders of the CPP and currently the spokesperson of the No to Communist Terrorist Group Coalition.

An indigenous peoples' leader in the Cordillera Administrative Region, Ludades said only CPP founder Jose Maria Sison remains in the party from the original 18, "and he is continuously living the grand life in the Netherlands."

"It can be recalled that one by one, a lot of founders detached themselves from the group because of Joana's dictatorial rule and being a self-centered style of leadership," he said.

For the last 50 years, Ludades said the communist groups failed in delivering their promises to their members, and instead of traversing the way to democracy

and success, thousands of lives have been lost "for the sake of their own war."

"Those intellectual youth and individuals, those who were victims of purging in the organization come from the peasant group, workers, laborers, students, indigenous people. They are the ones who lost their lives for the sake of the so-called 'peoples' war.' But what really hurting is the fact that innocent civilians are the real victims of their war," said Ludades.

He said "great young people" like Edgar Jopson and Lean Alejandro became victims of the wrong ideology of the CPP-NPA-NDF.

"While currently, young children are being lured to fight as NPAs," he added, noting that the leftists were using "legal fronts" like several youth groups "to deceive and brainwash the youth to join the 'kilusan' or movement."

Ludades and "Ka Danny" called on the youth "not to be deceived anymore and never patronize the fight being waged" by the communists. **With PNA**

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A1

## Palace: Sison 'abominable violator of human rights'

MALACANANG has said it was exiled communist leader Jose Maria "Joma" Sison who should be called an "abominable violator of human rights," not President Rodrigo Duterte.

Palace spokesman Salvador Panelo made the statement after Sison alleged that Duterte was the "number one perpetrator of state-sponsored terrorism" after the President issued an order

"destroy" the communist rebels and all their sympathizers.

"It is Jose Maria Sison, as founder of the (P)CC (Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army), that has to destroy the government that should be able to get the job done. It is Sison who is the abominable violator of human rights," he said.

Violator A2

### VIOLATOR FROM A1

## Palace:

On Saturday, Duterte ordered the military to destroy communist rebels, saying he will "assume full responsibility" should cases of human rights violations be filed against him.

Panelo said the President's order against communist rebels was "pursuant to his constitutional duty to protect the people."

He noted that the CCP-NPA "was established for the purpose of seizing political power from the constituted government."

"In a span of 50 years, the CPP-NPA has waged a continuing rebellion and engaged in the killing of soldiers, policemen and civilians; destroying properties; extorting money from businessmen and landlords; kidnapping civilians and men in uniform; committing acts of terrorism; and even exterminating its own comrades without compunction in a cleansing purge of suspected traitors to their cause," Panelo said.

"In doing these atrocities, the CPP-NPA aided by, and in conspiracy with its legal fronts, violated the human rights of their victims, disobeyed the laws of the land, and infringed the Constitution with such impunity in order to destroy the democratic way of life enshrined in the Constitution as crafted by its framers and ratified by the sovereign people," he added.

The Palace official asserted that the state "has the inherent right to defend itself and the President is mandated to protect the government and the governed."

"Jose Maria Sison, as an ideologue, should be the first one to know that the government that he wants to destroy will unleash its might and send its forces to annihilate those who seek to dismantle the democratic society in order to protect its people, maintain peace and order as well as assert its constitutional authority," he said.

Panelo warned the rebels "will reap violence" from the government "for sowing violence against the people."

"That is the irreversible law of *karuna* or the law of cause and effect," the Palace official said.

Meanwhile, Panelo urged "our brother rebels that have chosen to tread the path of destruction and bloodshed" to just surrender, saying "it is not too late to return to the fold of the law."

"Your families await the warmth and the joy of your return. Let us end the internecine [fighting] among Filipinos. Let the spirit of Christmas enlighten all of us that change that we seek in our society

can only be realized if we begin to change ourselves," he said.

"The road to peace and reconciliation is more desirable than the road to bloodshed and destruction. There is honor in returning to the rule of law," Panelo added.

Duterte, in a speech before troops in Camp General Miguel Yari Sr. in Compostela Valley, said destroying all members of the NPA was the only way to achieve law and order in the country.

"Law and order means you have to destroy, not really fight, but destroy the Communist Party of the Philippines, including its legal fronts and infrastructure," he added.

"Unless we are able to destroy every one of them, *ang ating mga anak o apo ninyo ganun pa rin ang habarapin* [our children and grandchildren will face the same problems]," the President said.

Earlier, Duterte described the NPA as "cruel and brutal people" and would rather have the military finish them off than call for a holiday truce.

Sison, however, maintained that communist rebels have been following and enforcing the International Humanitarian Law.

He lashed out at Malacanang saying it is Duterte who had become "a tyrant and a shameless instigator of mass murder and other grave human rights violations."

"Duterte is the abominable No. 1 violator of human rights and is the precise target of the Filipino people's exercise of their sovereign right to free themselves from tyranny and to undertake all necessary actions to oust him from his position," Sison said in a statement.

The Makabayan bloc at the House of Representatives also on Tuesday condemned the "blatant red-tagging and bullying" of Duterte and Communications Secretary Martin Andanar.

This came after Andanar said all groups and personalities linked with the communists would be covered by Duterte's order to "destroy" insurgents.

"President Duterte and Sec. Andanar are again setting up our bloc and progressive people's organizations for attacks by state agents through trumped up charges, harassment, enforced disappearances, and even extra-judicial killings with their continued vitriolic verbal attacks and black propaganda against us," Makabayan bloc countered.

"The public knows that we are legal and legitimate party-list groups and we are not fronts of the Communist Party of the Philippines," the Makabayan bloc added.

On December 7, Duterte accused Bayan Muna party-list, Gabriela, labor group Kilusang Mayo Uno, and transport group Piston of being "legal fronts" for the communist movement.

CATHERINE S. VALENTE  
DEMPSEY REYES GLEE JALEA

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# 4 NPA rebels surrender to spend Christmas with family

**SMARDFACIMK, Bagumbayan:** It was a happy Christmas for the families of the four New People's Army (NPA) rebels who surrendered to the Army's 33rd Infantry Battalion (33IB) in Masig, Bagumbayan Municipality in Sultan Kudarat on the eve of Christmas.

"Ka Carding," an NPA commander of the Manobo-Dniangan tribe living in Daguma mountain ranges of Sultan Kudarat, was thus home to share *noche buena* with his family.

Ka Carding, who was also the communist group's political instructor and platoon medic serving the defunct Platoon Turo-turo, handed over his M1 Garand rifle.

He and his four followers yielded to the 33rd IB because

they preferred to spend Christmas with their families and feared of getting hit by the military's mortars and howitzers.

Lt. Colonel Harold Cabunoc, 33IB commander said the Army is anticipating harassment and offensives from the NPA since the rebel movement celebrates its 50th founding anniversary on December 26.

Cabunoc said they have launched sporadic mortar and artillery fire on the identified location of the communists in the mountains of Sultan Kudarat since Friday.

"Hearing the loud explosions from mortar fire and anti-tank weapons, they surfaced to lay down their firearms and officially

surrendered," the 33IB commander said.

Ka Carding, was accompanied by three of his men who brought with them a KC9 sub-machine gun, two revolvers, a 9mm pistol, and three MK2 fragmentation grenades.

"We were afraid to die in battles that we could not win. We also wanted to spend Christmas with our families," said Ka Carding.

Cabunoc said "Ka Carding" and his men were among the remnants of the communist rebels that established the Daguma Sub-Region Party Committee about two years ago.

The series of rebel surrenders led to the gradual collapse of the communist movement in

Bagumbayan and in the town of Senator Ninoy Aquino, in Sultan Kudarat province.

"We have lost the support of the people when the 33rd Infantry Battalion took over to assist the local government here. Our cadres retreated to adjacent towns, leaving us in hiding in the forest," Ka Carding said.

A two year veteran of the communist 'protracted war' in the countryside, Ka Carding said they were abandoned by their comrades when the Army started coming to their communities.

"They moved to the Palimbang areas," he said, referring to an adjacent town in Sarangani province.

Cabunoc received the former rebels at his camp in President

Quirino, Sultan Kudarat accompanied by Capt. Winston Cacatian, 33IB Charlie company commander.

Col. Robert Dauz, the commander of the 1st Mechanized Infantry Brigade, pe received the former communist rebels at the brigade's headquarters in Tacurong City.

To date, 203 NPA rebels have surrendered to the 33rd IB since the unit took over responsibility over the communist insurgency in Sultan Kudarat in March 2017.

A total of 65 of the former rebels have been granted social benefits through the Enhanced Comprehensive Local Integration Program or E-CLIP, Cabunoc said.

**JULIANNE JANNARAL**

## Lider ng NPA, 3 tauhan sumuko

Dahil sa hangaring magbagong buhay sa pagpasok ng Bagong Taon (2019), sumuko sa tropa ng militar ang isang lider ng mga rebeldeng New People's Army (NPA) at tatlo pa nitong tauhan sa Brgy. Masiag, Bagumbayan, Sultan Kudarat kamakalawa.

Sa report ni Phi Army 6th Infantry Division (ID) Commander Major Gen. Cirilito Sobejana, dakong alas-7:30 ng umaga nang sumuko sina Ka Carding at mga tauhan nito sa tropa ng 33rd Infantry Battalion (IB).

Ayon kay Sobejana, si Ka Carding ay nagsisilbing politi-

cal instructor at platoon medic ng Platoon Turo-Turo ng NPA movement. Inimander ni Ka Carding ang kanyang 1M1 garend nile habang ang tatlong tauhan ay isinuko ang KG submachine gun, dalawang revolvers, isang 9mm pistol at tatlong M2 fragmentation grenades. Nabulid na si Ka Carding at mga kasamahan nito ay sumapi sa Dagupan Sub Region Party. (Joy Carding)



## 3 partylist 'front' ng CPP-NPA

Sa paggamit ng ika-49 taong anibersaryo ng CPP-NPA-NDF ngayong araw, ibinunyag ng isang dating kadre ng grupo na ginagawang "front" lamang ng komunistang grupo ang ilang partylist sa Kamara.

Ito ang ibinunyag ni "Ka Danny", 18 taong miyembro ng Communist Party of the Philippines at opisyal ng higher organ ng Legal at Unification Committee at political officer ng tatlong partylist congressman ng Bayan Muna, Anakpawis at ACT.

Giit niya na siya mismo ang makakaipagpatunay na ginagawang front ng CPP-NPA-NDF ang nasa-bing mga partylists-group at iniluklok lamang sila sa puwesto para gawing front

dahil ang nasusunod pa rin ay ang lider ng partido.

Ito umano ang isa sa dahilan kanya tumiwalag siya sa partido dahil habang tinataya nila ang kanilang buhay sa digmaan, manungya na mang na mamuhay si Jose Maria Sison at ilang miyembro ng higher organ sa ibang bansa at sila ang nagpapasasa sa pondo ng partido.

Manawagan din si Ka Danny na huwag paasahin pa ang masa at mga kabataan at mas pang-nahing bigyang pagpapahalaga ang muling pagpapamumbalik sa kanyuan at kapayapaan sa bansa.

Kasabay nito manawagan naman ang No to Communist Terrorist

### NI GEMMA GARCIA

Group Coalition (NTCC) na tuktukan na ang 50-taong panilintang ng partido.

Sinabi ni Maria Ludades, spokesperson ng NTCC, IP leader sa Cordillera Administrative Region, sa orihinal na 18 founders ng CPP, tungg si Journal mang ang nana-titi sa partido at patuloy na nanumuhay ng manungya sa Netherlands.

Giit pa ni Ludades na, sa loob ng 50 taon, nasa-titing-bigo ang pangkat ng CPP-NPA-NDF imbes na landas ng pambansang demokrasyang tagumpay, libu-libong Pilipino ang nagbuwis ng buhay sa ngalan ng Digmaang bayan.

Habang patuloy ang paggamit umano sa "legal fronts" tulad ng Anakbayan, IFS, MRJP, CEEGP, CGM at iba pa upang linlangin, gailin at brain wash ang mga kabataan na may mataatlas ang pagsusuri para sumapi sa Kamara.

Samanantal, it nanggi ng Makabayan bloc sa Kamara na front sila ng CPP-NPA-NDF.

Sa palayag ng grupo na, alam ng may 104 milyong Filipino na ang pitong miyembro ng Makabayan bloc sa House ay hindi "legal fronts" ng anumang teroristang grupo.

Ang katatag track record umano ang mag-sasabi na ang interest ng mayorya ng Pilipino ang kanilang ginagawa.



### PANLILINLANG NG CPP-NPA-NDF IBINUNYAG

Isang dating kadre na 18 taon na naging miyembro ng Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army-National Democratic Front (CPP-NPA-NDF) na nagbunyag na legal front ng mga ito ang tatlóng partylist na Bayan Muna, Anakpawis at ACT.

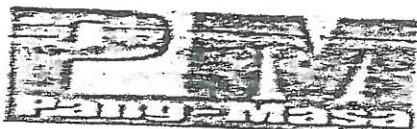
Ayon kay Ka Daway, na dating opisyal ng higher organ legal at unification committee at political officers ng nasabing tatlóng partylist na kanyang napapatunayan na gangawang front ng CPP-NPA-NDF ang maraming mga partylists group at mabuklod lamang sila sa pwesto para gawing front dahil ang nasusunod pa rin ay ang lider ng partido.

Ito umano ang isa sa dahilan kaya tumiwalag siya sa partido dahil hindi ang tatalnang kanyang buhay sa di-gamangay marangya na ang mga maraming si Jose Martin Sison at ilang miyembro ng higher organ sa ibang bansa at sila ang nagpapasa sa partido ng partido.

Bukod dito ay nagawagan namat ang No to Communist Terrorist Group Conditions (NTCC) at talibhan na ang 50 taong panlilinlang ng CPP-NPA-NDF.

Ayon kay Mario Ludales, spokesperson ng NTCC, IP leader sa Cordillera Administrative Region na orihinal na 18 founders ng CPP, tangang si Jose Lina ang ang amali sa partido at patuloy na namumuhay ng marangya sa Netherlands. ~~Conrado Garcia~~

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### NPALIDER, 3 TAUHAN SUMUKO

Sumuko sa tropang militar ang isang lider ng mga rebelde ng New People's Army (NPA) at tatlo mabaitang tauhan sa bayan ng Hingy Masiasag, Bagumbayan, Sultan Kudarat na hangaring maghagunabulay sa pagpatak ng Bagong Taon.

Sa ulat ni Army's 6th Infantry Division (ID) Commander Major Gen. Cirilo Sobespasa, dalang alas-7:30 ng umaga nang sumuko sina Ka Carding at mga tauhan nitong tropang Army's 33rd Infantry Battalion (IB).

Sa pagpatak ni Ka Carding na nagpapalibing political instructor at platoon medic ng Platoon Turo-Turo ng NPA movement ay sumuko rin rin ang kanyang M1 garand rifle habang sumunod din sumuko ang tatlong tauhan bitbitang kanilang mga armas na kinabibilangan ng KG star chine gun, dalawang new avens, isang 92mm pistol at tatlong MK 2 fragmentation grenades.

"Ehok kaming mamatay sa digmaan na napagtao nang hindi namin mapag-iwasan, guton at hangap ang aming mga kasamahan. Nais din nating makapiling ang aming mga pamilya ngayong kapokulahan maghagunabulay na kami", pahayag ni Ka Carding.

Nabatid na si Ka Carding at mga kasamahan nito ay sumuko sa Dagupan Sub Region Party.

Sa tala ng Army's 6th Infantry Division (ID), unang batay sa 205 ang mga nagsisulong rebelde sa Army's 33rd Infantry Battalion (IB) sumunod sa Maseo 2017. -Joy Santos-

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**UNA MANG UNABERTO ANG AFP AT PNP KAUGMAY NG PAGDINIWAS NG CPP NG IKA-50 NITONG KARAWAN NGAYONG ARAW (DISYEMBRE 26) KUNG SAAN AY PINATALAKAS NG NPA REBELS ANG PAGHABIK NG TERRORISMO**

Pinatunayan ng Communist Party of the Philippines - New People's Army - National Democratic Front (CPP-NPA-NDF) na sila ay isang teroristang organisasyon sa gitnang nitong paglulunsad ng serye ng paghahasik ng terorismo sa panahon ng Kapaskahan.

Sinabi ni AFP Public Affairs Office Chief Col. Noel Detoyato, ang pinangiting na pag-atake ng NPA rebels, ang armadong CPP ay sumibol ang kasalukutan sa pagdanas ng ika-50 taong anibersaryo ng kasamintang grupo ngayong araw ( Disyembre 26 )

Una nang unaberto ang AFP at PNP kaugmay ng pagdinwas ng CPP ng ika-50 nitong karawan ngayong araw ( Disyembre 26 ) kung saan ay pinatalakas ng NPA rebels ang paghahabik ng terorismo.

Kabilang dito ay ang pagbibag ng dalawang sundalo at 12 CAFGU sa Silangal, Agusan del Sur noong Disyembre 19 ng taong ito. ang includes at iba pa - Jay Car...

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# Defeating Abus remains a challenge – AFP

By ROEL PAREÑO

**ZAMBOANGA CITY** – Even with the deployment of more soldiers, the military has admitted that neutralizing the Abu Sayyaf remains a tall order.

“It is still a tall challenge... to finish our fight against the Abu Sayyaf... The key... as we always said are the stakeholders in Sulu and Basilan,” Col. Gerry Besana, Western Mindanao Command spokesman, said.

“The Philippine National Police cannot do it alone. Community policing cannot be undertaken by the PNP alone... All the challenges... needs the concerted effort of all stakeholders,” Besana added.

With marching orders to wipe out the Abu Sayyaf before the end of this year, 10 Army battalions and several military units were placed under the control of the Joint Task Force Sulu this year.

Besana said around 300 bandits led by Radullan Sahiron and Hasib Hajar Sawadjaan are still holed out in Sulu. Another 200 led by Furuji Indama are in Basilan.

At least 57 bandits were killed, 202 surrendered and 39 others were arrested in military operations this year. A total of 231 firearms were recovered.

More soldiers will be involved in the campaign against the Abu Sayyaf next

year, with the activation of a new Army unit, the 11th Infantry Division (ID), which President Duterte led during his visit to Jolo last week.

The 11th ID has three brigades and support units from the Navy and Air Force.

Besana said there is an ongoing enhancement of the organizational setup of the new Army division in Sulu.

“The setup will be much better to address the problem about the scourge of the Abu Sayyaf,” Besana said.

A Dutch man, a Vietnamese, an Indonesian and three Filipinos remain in the hands of the bandits.

Authorities are validating reports that a crewmember of an Indonesian fishing vessel snatched off Sabah earlier this month is also being held in Sulu.

## Economic reasons

Besana said the Abu Sayyaf continues to exist for economic reasons rather than ideological belief.

He said a number of surrenderees admitted that they were forced to join the group because they have no other means of livelihood.

“One of those we talked to was a drug addict and said he joined the group thinking that it was a religious organization. He said he was surprised to learn that what the group is doing is against Islam,” Besana said.



# MILF chair calls for BOL support in Christmas message

By **ALFRED BERNALDEZ**

**COTABATO CITY** - Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) Chair Murad Ebrahim issued an unprecedented Christmas message to call on the Bangsamoro tri-people to reconcile, bond together and ratify R.A. 11054 as a springboard for the dawning of inclusive progress and lasting peace in the region.

On the eve of Christmas, Ebrahim

particularly greeted the Christians, who are described in Islam as the "People of the Book," wishing them a joyful and enlightened holiday and to ponder on what is best for mankind.

"Sa mga kapatid naming Kristiyano, hayaan ninyong ipaabot sa inyo ang tawag na mensahe at pagtataguyod ng pagdiriwang ng pasaha at nag-uamang ng masaganang bagong taon," he said in a video footage posted on his Facebook page.

"Sa nakalipas na mahigit apat na dekada, ang mga Muslim, Kristiyano at lumad sa Bangsamoro ay hindi nakaranas ng pangmatagalan at tunay na kapayapaan. Labat tayo at nagkaroon ng maipait at masakit na karanasan," he said.

"Ngayong naisa-batas na ang Bangsamoro Organic Law at sa darating na Enero 21 at Pebrero 6 ay magtakaroon ng plebisito. Ako ay umaapela sa inyo na sumali sa natin ang rekonstruksyon

at gamutin ang masasakit na sugat ng nakaraan. Nasa atina ang oportunidad upang masolusyunan ang mga political, sosyal at ekonomikal na problema na bawat isa sa atin ay nararamasan," he added.

"Bigyan natin ang pagkakataon na maisaayos ang ating pamumuhay upang sa gayun ay makasit nating labat ang kapayapaan na ating hinahangad. "Yes tayo sa BOL," Ebrahim concluded.

Ebrahim's message, his first so far in MILF history, came on the heels of unverified claims being made in social media that Christians and lumad people will be persecuted in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), which is being proposed

under the BOL, known as R.A. 11054.

If the BOL is ratified in the upcoming plebiscites, BARMM will be created to replace the existing Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). The new geopolitical entity will be initially administered by officials to be appointed by the President from among MILF nominees.

BOL prescribes for BARMM to absorb all component areas of ARMM, namely Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur, Sulu, Basilan and Tawi Tawi provinces and the cities of Marawi and Lantawan, as well as the neighboring six towns in Lanao del Norte, 39 barangays in six North Cotabato towns and the cities of Cotabato and Isabela in Basilan.