

Army Vision: By 2028, a world-class Army that is a source of national pride



TEAM ARMY
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OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

NEWS CLIPPINGS

19 February 2018

Monday

Army Core Purpose: Serving the people. Securing the land.

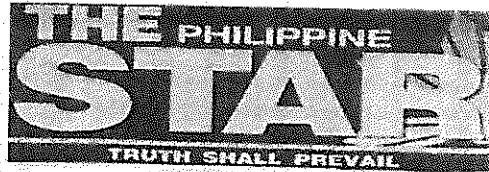
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THE PHILIPPINE STAR
 NEWS TELEVISION
 MONDAY - FRIDAY 11AM & 3PM
 FILIPINAS! WEEKDAYS 4AM & 30 PM & 9PM WEEKENDS 6AM

WEEKLY WEATHER FORECAST FEBRUARY 18, 2018 MONDAY

NORTHEAST MONSOON AFFECTING EXTREME NORTHERN LUZON at 01:50 am - February 18, 2018

MANILA	23-32 °C	TAGAYTAY	24-32 °C
BAKING	25-25 °C	LAGUNA	24-33 °C
SEMARANG	24-33 °C	QUEZON	24-32 °C
ALABANG	22-31 °C	BARANGAY	25-30 °C
MAKATI	25-32 °C	GENERAL	25-31 °C
SMITH	25-31 °C	GENERAL	24-32 °C
GENERAL	24-33 °C	GENERAL	24-31 °C

REGION	FEB 18 TUE	FEB 19 WED	FEB 20 THU	REGION	FEB 18 TUE	FEB 19 WED	FEB 20 THU
METRO MANILA	24 °C 33 °C	24 °C 33 °C	24 °C 33 °C	PUERTO PRINCESS	25 °C 31 °C	25 °C 31 °C	25 °C 31 °C
TUGUEGARA	25 °C 32 °C	24 °C 32 °C	23 °C 30 °C	ILORON/ BACOLOD	25 °C 32 °C	24 °C 31 °C	24 °C 31 °C
LAGUNA	23 °C 31 °C	23 °C 31 °C	22 °C 30 °C	METRO CEBU	23 °C 32 °C	24 °C 32 °C	24 °C 32 °C
BAKING	15 °C 25 °C	15 °C 25 °C	14 °C 23 °C	TACLOBAN	24 °C 31 °C	24 °C 31 °C	23 °C 30 °C
SEMARANG	24 °C 32 °C	24 °C 32 °C	25 °C 32 °C	CAGAYAN DE ORO	24 °C 33 °C	23 °C 33 °C	23 °C 32 °C
TAGAYTAY	22 °C 32 °C	22 °C 31 °C	22 °C 31 °C	METRO DAVAO	25 °C 32 °C	25 °C 33 °C	25 °C 33 °C
LAGAZIPI	25 °C 31 °C	25 °C 32 °C	25 °C 31 °C	ZAMBANGA	24 °C 33 °C	24 °C 33 °C	24 °C 33 °C

Partly cloudy to at times cloudy with rainshowers

Partly cloudy to at times cloudy with rainshowers and/or thunderstorms

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Malaya
The National Newspaper

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OFWs beat Kuwait amnesty deadline

BY GERARD NAVAL

FOUR days before the amnesty program of Kuwait ends, 1,700 overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) have already been repatriated, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) said yesterday.

The DFA said 177 OFWs arrived from Kuwait yesterday.

The Kuwaiti government's amnesty program began last January 29 and is set to end on February 22.

DFA data showed that majority of those who availed of the am-

nesty are distressed OFWs, who are victims of illegal recruitment and who entered Kuwait through neighboring countries.

Nevertheless, the DFA said many of them still expressed their desire to seek assistance for overseas employment in countries other than in the Middle East.

In addition, repatriated Filipinos will be leaving for their home provinces after receiving P5,000 each in financial assistance.

Guiling Mamondiong, director general of the Technical Education

and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), directed all TESDA regional and provincial offices to assist returning OFWs from Kuwait.

Mamondiong said the OFWs will be given free training and free skills assessment. He said the workers will also get a P100-daily training support fund for their food and transportation.

TESDA offers free training in massage therapy, food processing, bread and pastry production, cookery, haircutting, beauty care, carpentry, electrical installation and

maintenance, pipefitting, masonry, plumbing, and welding.

The agency issues national certificates to those who have finished a technical vocational course or those who have passed the TESDA assessment after completing their skills training.

The Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) called for better protection of migrants while allowing them to be integrated in the host coun-

See OFWs > Page B6

OFWs

try's communities.

In his Message for the 32nd National Migrants Sunday, CBCP - Episcopal Commission on Migrants and Itinerant People chairman Bishop Ruperto Santos said Filipinos should be protected regardless of where they are going.

"A migrant is a person. He has feelings, emotions, and a history. He is created by God, gifted by God with specific talents and

individual skills. Thus, he is not a tool for profits or an instrument for pleasure," Santos said.

Santos expressed hope that host countries will welcome Filipinos into their communities instead of seeing them as sources of disturbance.

"Let them live fully and fruitfully with one another. There should be no attempts to eradicate their ethnicity. This calls for their adoption by or absorption into the community. It is communion with all, in contrast to exclusivity or

isolationism," said Santos.

Vice President Leni Robredo, in her weekly radio show, urged Congress to immediately look into the measures that will protect OFWs.

Robredo underscored the importance of monitoring cases and reports of abuses against OFWs, making it a primary consideration in the deployment of Filipino workers to other countries.

She said OFWs must be "deliberately" given skills training to widen their employment options.

Bias F. Ople Policy Center and Training Institute president Susan Ople, who was a guest in the radio show, recommended amendments to the Migrant Workers Act. Ople underscored the need to ensure that a host country has clear and concrete rules to protect overseas workers.

She said these include having an existing bilateral agreement, being signatory to international conventions, and having its own laws that protect workers. — *With Euan Orias and Angela Lopez de Leon*

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Abu sniper surrenders in Basilan

By ROEL PAREÑO

ZAMBOANGA CITY – A suspected Abu Sayyaf sniper surrendered to the military in Basilan on Saturday.

Ligoda Tanjal, an alleged follower of Abu Sayyaf sub-leader Nurhassan Jamiri alias, told authorities that he was worried that the ongoing military operation would catch and neutralize him in the coming days.

Tanjal surrendered to the members of the Army's 74th Infantry Battalion (IB), according Joint Task Force Basilan chief Brig. Gen. Juvymax Uy.

Tanjal also yielded a rifle and ammunition to the Army in Barangay Banah,

Tipo-Tipo town at around 3 p.m.

Tanjal was the tenth Abu Sayyaf bandit to surrender in Basilan this year.

The military has yet to determine how effective Tanjal as a sniper and how many troopers he had killed.

The suspect was placed under the military custody and has to undergo debriefing process.

"He said he surrendered because he wanted to have a new life, away from banditry and danger. He also said that he was encouraged to lay down arms after learning that his former companions are already undergoing rehabilitation and reintegration program," Uy said.

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1900 1800 1700 1600 1500 1400 1300 1200 1100 1000 900 800 700 600 500 400 300 200 100 0

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● **Blood-letting**

CAMP BANCASI, Butuan City – A blood-letting activity of the Fourth Field Artillery Battalion (4th FAB), Army Artillery Regiment (AAR) yielded 26,550 cc of blood from donors Friday. Capt. Juan T. Pacudan, Civil Military Operations (CMO) officer of the 4th FAB-AAR, said 59 blood donors came from their unit and different units of the Fourth Infantry Division (4th ID), partner organizations and other civilian volunteers. The activity was spearheaded by 4th Commanding Officer Lt. Col. Danilo E. Estrañero. The objective of this activity was to provide safe and adequate supply of blood, which could be used in the future by any recipient in the communities through the Philippine Red Cross, the 4th FAB commander said. (Mike U. Crismundo)

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THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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Bombs, live ammo found in Surigao del Sur

By MIKE U. CRISMUNDO

CAMP BANCASI, Butuan City – Military troops found a large cache of bombs and live ammunition in a far-flung area in Surigao del Sur that was described as enough to blow up government facilities and inflict substantial casualties to civilian communities and patrolling soldiers, according to First Lt. Tere Ingente, regional Army spokesperson of the Northeastern and Northern Mindanao Fourth Infantry Division (4th ID), on Sunday.

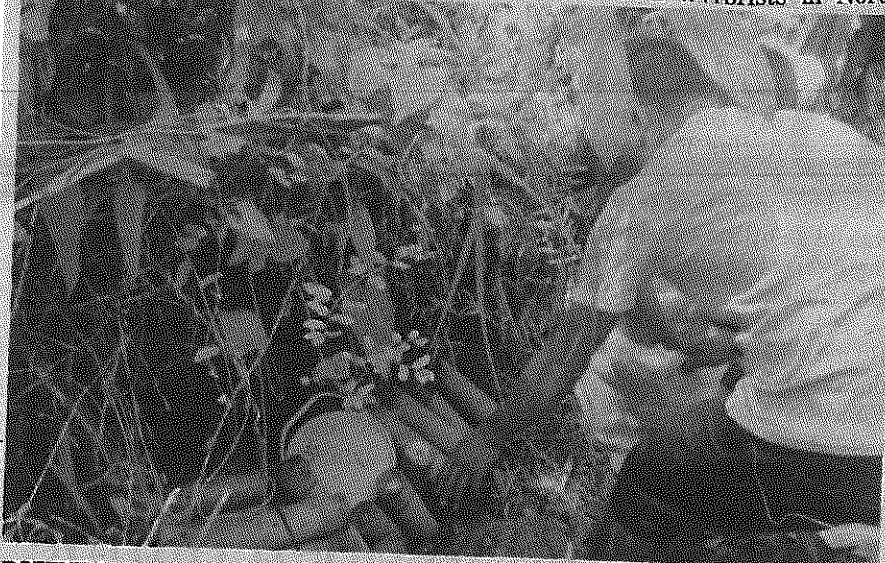
Ingente said the location of the arms cache in Sitio Tingtingon, Barangay Bitaugan in San Miguel, Surigao del Sur was pinpointed by former New People's Army (NPA) members, who recently surrendered to the government, as well as local residents.

es Company (16th SFCoy), operational control (Opcon) unit of the Army's 402nd Infantry Brigade went to the area on Friday, and found the cache with 34 improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and 635 assorted live ammunition, the 4th ID spokesperson said.

"The people of San Miguel just saved their own lives by tipping us off with the exact location of the IEDs and ammunitions, and it shows that they are concerned about their security," Ingente noted.

The recovered items were immediately brought to the headquarters of the 16th SF Coy for further inventory of the other seized war materials, she added.

This developed as the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) has deployed additional troops to the Army Brigade with the objective of crush the remaining NPA terrorists in North-



POTENTIAL DANGER – Pipe bombs are stacked over each other as a huge cache of explosives and ammunition is discovered by the 16th Special Forces Company in the mountainous area of Sitio Tingtingon, Barangay Bitaugan in San Miguel, Surigao del Sur, Friday. (Photo courtesy of 402nd Brigade, 4th Infantry Division)

eastern Mindanao or Caraga region and Northern Mindanao region.

The new brigade, which was pulled out from Daraga, Albay, arrived at the

headquarters of the Army's Northeastern and Northern Mindanao 4th ID in Camp Edilberto Evangelista, Cagayan de Oro City on Thursday.

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5 soldiers wounded in roadside bombing

By AARON RECUENCO

Five soldiers, including an Army junior officer, were wounded in a roadside bombing in Datu Unsay town of Maguindanao around 7:30 a.m. on Saturday.

Chief Supt. Graciano Mijares, director of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) regional police, said armed groups detonated an improvised explosive device (IED) that hit a military truck carrying a group of soldiers in Barangay Meta of Datu Unsay town.

He identified the wounded soldiers as First Lt., Jano Cyril Reyes, PFCs Maguncia, Private First Class Puro, Private First Class Crispo and a certain Private Ramirez, all assigned to the 57th Infantry Battalion.

The bomb attack was believed to have been carried out by remnants of the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) in the province.

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5 soldiers hurt in IED attack in Maguindanao

BY VICTOR REYES

FIVE soldiers, including a junior officer, were injured in a bombing incident perpetrated by suspected members of the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters in Datu Unsay town in Maguindanao yesterday morning.

A police report identified the injured officer as 1Lt. Jano Cyril Reyes. The four others were identified only as privates first class Maguncia, Puroi, and Crispo and private Ramirez.

They were rushed to the Integrated Provincial Health Office where they are in stable condition.

Capt. Arvin Encinas, spokesman of the Army's 6th Infantry Division based in Maguindanao, said the terrorist group was out to avenge its recent losses to the military.

Encinas said troops from the Army's 57th Infantry Battalion were aboard a truck on an administrative mission when an improvised bomb exploded as they reached a bridge in Barangay Meta around 7:30 a.m.

"They're merely on admin movement, not operation," Encinas said of the soldiers who he said came from a command post in Barangay Maitumaig.

"They were mobile and as soon as they reached the bridge in Barangay meta, they were hit by IED explosion. There was no fire-fight, it's an IED explosion aimed at our troops," said Encinas.

"The group (BIFF) knows no other way but to plant IEDs. This is in retaliation to previous setbacks (from the military). They don't know of other means to inflict casualties on soldiers other than the use of IEDs," he said.

Government forces have stepped up operations against the BIFF in Central Mindanao since August last year, resulting in the death of dozens of BIFF members. The operations are being pursued in coordination with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

The BIFF has about 200 to 300 members, mostly former members of the MILF. The BIFF is among the several groups in Mindanao that pledged allegiance with the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria a few years ago.

Encinas said the IED explosion will not set back the military operations being conducted by the military to defeat the BIFF. "We're not scared. Our operations against the BIFF will continue" he said.

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Pahina. 1

2 patay sa engkwentro

PATAY ang isang sundalo gayundin ang isang hinihinang miyembro ng New People's Army (NPA) kasunod ng sagupaan sa bayan ng Sergio Osmeña sa Zamboanga del Norte kamakalawa.

Nabatid mula kay Lt. Col. Marlowe Patria, ang commander ng 53rd Infantry Battalion ng Philippine Army, nagsasagawa ng combat operation ang mga sundalo sa Barangay San Isidro nang makaengkwentro ang mga gerilya.

Nauna rito, naglunsad ng operasyon ang militar matapos magreklamo ang mga residente sa barangay patungkol sa panghahas umano ng NPA.

Tumagal ng 15-minuto ang labanan na ikinamatay ni Sgt. Rolly Barimbao.

Isang hindi pa nakilalang rebelde ang napatay rin sa insidente. Nasamsam mula sa kanya ang isang AK-47 assault rifle.

Sinasabing maraming komunista rin ang nasugatan sa bakbakan.

JEFF GALLOS

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4th batch of Bicolano soldiers dispatched to Marawi City

CAMP Elias Angeles, Pili, Camarines Sur --
The fourth batch of 100 Bicolano soldiers from the Army's 901st Brigade concluded a send-off ceremony at the Naga Airport in this capital town over the weekend to boost the manpower of a newly-formed Army Brigade in Mindanao, a spokesman of the 9th Infantry Division, here, reported.

Army Capt. Joash Pramis revealed that the additional PA personnel will be assigned to the 49th IB, 65th IB and 42nd IB, all tasked to help in the rehabilitation of Marawi City and boost the security in still threatened localities near Marawi by Muslim extremist group ISIS.

Army 901st Brigade commander Col. Larry Mojica told reporters that the ongoing martial law in Mindanao is still a major concern of the Army, adding the gap of personnel under the 901st IB will be taken over by soldiers of the 903rd Brigade.

Sonny Sales

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The Manila Times

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Soldier killed, 2 wounded in Sulu clash with Sayyaf

BY AL JACINTO

ZAMBOANGA CITY: Abu Sayyaf bandits killed a Philippine Army soldier and wounded two others in a firefight in Patikul, Sulu as government forces were pursuing the abductors of a government engineer snatched by armed men on Wednesday.

The Western Mindanao Command (WestMinCom) did not report the fighting but security sources said the encounter happened in Barangay Tugas in Patikul.

The troops were searching for Enrico Nee, an engineer of the Department of Public Works and Highways in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, when gunmen attacked them, triggering a fierce firefight.

There were no reported casualties on the enemy side.

Nee, was abducted on February

14 while waiting for a ride near his home in Barangay San Raymundo in Jolo. The gunmen reportedly dragged him to their get-away vehicle and sped off.

Nee's fate remains unknown, but the abduction happened despite the military's pronouncement that the Abu Sayyaf Group, (ASG) is now on the run because of the government, relentless pursuit of the notorious rebel group linked to the Islamic State.

It was unclear how the bandits managed to sneak into the capital

town where policemen and soldiers were supposed to be on alert as the region is under extended martial rule.

The abduction came several days after troops killed four ASG bandits in a clash in Panamao town where seven soldiers were also wounded. Members of the Marine Battalion Landing Team 3 fought with some 30 gunmen under Abu Sayyaf commanders Sansibar Bensio and Hatib Munap Binda in Mount Bawis.

The soldiers were sent to the area over intelligence reports that several Abu Sayyaf hostages had been spotted there.

Fight with NPA

Meanwhile, in Osmeña, Zamboanga del Sur, another soldier and a New People's Army (NPA) rebel were killed as firefight erupted between troops and a group of

communist insurgents on Sunday.

Major Ronald Suscano, spokesman for the 1st Infantry Division (1ID), said soldiers from the 53rd Infantry Battalion led by 1st Lt. Abner Pilando engaged the communist rebels in a running gun battle in Barangay San Isidro.

He said troops were responding to reports that rebels were harassing villagers when they ran into a band of NPA gunmen; a 15-minute firefight ensued.

He added that the soldiers recovered the body of the slain rebel, whose identity remains unknown.

Major General Roseller Murrillo, 1ID commander, said the operation against the rebels will continue without let-up. "Our soldier died a hero while protecting our people and our communities. We will vigorously pursue these NPA terrorists until they will be left with no choice but surrender or get killed."

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POLICE FILES

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Hinaing ng CAFGUs kay Pres. Duterte at Sec. Lorenzana

SINCE tinaasan na ng honggang bongga ni Pangulong Rody Duterte ang mga sundalo't pulis at iba pang uniformed personnel, hiling ng mga paramilitary unit na CAFGUs (Civilian Armed Forces Geographical Unit) ay sana taasan din ang allowance nila at i-upgrade din ang kanilang mga armas.

Narito ang text sa atin ng isang CAFGU mula sa Bacolod City. *Good am, Sir Joey. Puede po kami makahingi ng tulong sa inyo para makarating kay Pangulong Rody Duterte o kay Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana at sa AFP Chief ang hinaing naming mga CAFGU dito sa Bacolod. Sana po ay madagdagan naman ang allowance namin at magkaroon din kami ng mga benepisyo. Maawa naman sila sa amin.*

Masyado na po kasing mahal ang mga bilihan ngayon, hindi na kasya ang allowance namin na P4,500 isang buwan.

At sana po ay palitan na ang aming baril. Mga sinaunang panahon pa po kasi itong baril namin na garan, karbin na kinakalawang na. No match na kami sa malutakas na baril ng mga rebelde.

Ang humahawak po sa amin dito ay 12 Infantry CAFGU Battalion 31D Region 6. Active Auxiliary CAFGU po kami.

Sana mabigyan din kami ng atensiyon ni Pangulong Duterte. Salamat po. - CAFGU Region 6

Kung binibigyan ng todo todong halaga ng gobyerno ang pagsuko ng mga rebelde, dapat mas bigyan ng importansiya ang sitwasyon ng paramilitary unit na ito ng AFP dahil nasa front din sila ng pakikipagdigma sa mga kalaban ng pamahalaan. Dapat bigyan sila ng sapat na allowance at benepisyo at maaayos na baril tulad ng M16 para hindi magmukhang kawawa pag napasabak sa bakbakan laban sa mga terorista. Mismo!

JOEY GALICIA-VENANCIO

February 2018

The Manila Times

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Military steps up operations after foiled Basilan hijacking

SHARIFF AGUAK, Maguindanao: Maritime units of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) in Zamboanga City area stepped up their operations to scour the waters off Basilan island after a foiled hijacking of a local cargo vessel last Friday.

Capt. Jo-ann Petinglay, spokesman for the Western Mindanao Command (WestMinCom), said a distress call was received from government agencies seeking assistance over an attempt to seajack marine vessel *MV Kudos*, a Philippine flagged cargo vessel at the vicinity of Coco and Sibago Islands in Basilan.

The WestMinCom immediately activated the Anti-Kidnaping Joint Task Force under Rear Admiral Rene Medina, commander of Naval Forces Western Mindanao, who deployed five Navy vessels with elements toward the targeted area.

Similarly, Capt. Ronnie Gil Gavan, commander of the Philippine Coast Guard Southwestern District dispatched two of its watercrafts as augmentation.

"We immediately alerted all units and deployed our assets to thwart

the attack on *MV Kudos* on Sibago," said Rear Admiral Medina.

Meanwhile, two aircraft were dispatched by the Philippine Air Force to conduct aerial survey and patrol.

At about 11:25p.m. on Friday, the troops, with Coast Guard personnel, established radio contact with the crew of *MV Kudos* and Navy troops aboard fast crafts promptly conducted maritime ban and counter action operations at the reported location.

The Philippine Coast Guard personnel provided medical assistance and first aid to some crew who suffered minor bruises from broken objects when the armed group fired upon them in the attempt to seize the vessel.

No one among the crew of *MV Kudos* was abducted.

"We were pleased that the crew did not lose their presence of mind. Their raw courage enabled them to pour hot water on the pirates who were attempting to climb the vessel," said Lt. Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr., WestMinCom commander.

JULMUNIR I. JANNARAL

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The Manila Times

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Navy, Air Force

BY DEMPSEY REYES

patrol PH Rise

BAGUIO CITY: The Philippine Navy and the Air Force are conducting patrols in the Philippine Rise (Benham) in line with President Rodrigo Duterte's order to the military to deploy more assets to secure the area and "chase away" foreign vessels spotted within the 13-million hectare plateau located near Aurora province.

"We have Hamilton vessels that will do the patrolling there," said Rear Admiral Robert Empedrad, the Navy flag officer in command.

The Philippines acquired the Hamilton-class cutters from the US during the term of former president Benigno Aquino 3rd.

Two of the cutters were named BRP Gregorio del Pilar and BRP

Ramon Alcaraz.

The ships were also deployed in territorial areas of the Philippines such as the West Philippine Sea (South China Sea).

Asked whether the ships will "chase away" foreign ships, Empedrad said they will only be patrolling the area.

"We do not know if foreign vessels are there," he added.

Lt. Gen. Galileo Gerard Kintanar

Jr., Philippine Air Force commanding general, said other government agencies will also patrol the area.

"We have sovereign rights and we have sovereignty over some features there so we are going to do both because of our mandates," Kintanar told reporters on the sidelines of the Philippine Military Academy alumni homecoming here.

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The Manila Times

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Govt to crack down on CPP/NPA supporters



TERRORISTS? Members of the New People's Army stand at attention during training exercises in their camp in southern Luzon. PHOTO BY RENE DILAN

BY DEMPSEY REYES

GOVERNMENT officials who are funding the New People's Army (NPA) will be arrested once the court officially declares the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) as a terrorist organization, *The Manila Times* learned recently.

Aside from those who serve as "fronts" of the CPP-NPA, national and local politicians such as governors, mayors, vice mayors, and barangay (village) captains will be included in the crackdown, well-placed military sources told *The Times*.

The sources said military officials have drafted lists containing the names of government officials who have been supporting the communist

rebels by giving them money, firearms and ammunition.

One source said officials, particularly village chiefs from the tri-boundary areas of the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) and Cagayan Valley, are on the list.

The source said all villages within the tri-boundary areas were either "affected" by the NPA or were hotbeds of insurgency.

Governors, mayors and vice mayors in some areas in Northern Luzon are also on the list, according to the source.

The military is gathering evidence, as well as witnesses, to prove that these officials were directly giving financial and armor support to the rebels.

"We are following the legal procedures and we are awaiting the declaration of

► Crack down **A2**

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OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS – Email add: oacpa.army2012@gmail.com – Tel no. (02) 845-9555 Local: 5285, 5295

the court. They might be arrested once the court issued its decision [that the CPP-NPA are terrorist organizations],” the source said.

He said the lists are updated on a regular basis based on the information gathered from NPA rebels who surrendered and from recovered subversive documents.

Aside from CAR and the Cagayan Valley region, some provinces

in Central Luzon including Nueva Ecija and Bulacan are affected by the communist insurgency but these areas are “under control” by the military.

The source said the amount of funds being sent to the rebels is not less than P5 million.

“One million pesos is just a small amount for such transactions. The amount is not less than P5 million since we are talking

about a big amount of money here,” he added.

He said some officials send their monetary support to the rebel group through banks. A representative of the NPA would withdraw the money by using ATMs.

“There are also instances when the NPA and the officials transact (business) through couriers coming from both sides,” the source added.

Sometimes, the official himself will hand the monetary support to the rebels if that official's area is near the NPA lair, the source said.

But the sources said government authorities will move to arrest CPP/NPA supporters once they have gathered ample evidence to prove that these government officials have been giving support to communist rebels.

“Once a warrant has been released, that's the time that we can arrest them for supporting terrorism,” one source said.

Last week, the Philippine Army's 4th Infantry Division (ID) said Interior Secretary Eduardo Año had asked the military to prepare a list of local officials who are supporting the rebels.

To be continued

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Bong Go to face Navy deal probe with nothing to hide – Palace

By ALEXIS ROMERO

President Duterte's longtime aide Christopher "Bong" Go has nothing to hide as he faces today's Senate inquiry into alleged irregularities involving the P15.7-billion procurement of two frigates for the Philippine

Navy, according to a government spokesman.

Presidential spokesman Harry Roque yesterday expressed confidence that Go would be able to disprove allegations that he meddled in the project.

"Expect Secretary Bong Go to tell all, and as instructed by the Presi-

dent, he would likely ask for a transparent Senate inquiry to show that he and the administration have nothing to hide. He would squarely answer questions, in full view of the public," Roque said.

"The whole truth would be finally known... We can expect that the

allegations against the special assistant to the President is just a bum steer or fake news that is forcibly linked to the administration," he added.

Go was accused of favoring a South Korean firm to be the supplier of the combat management

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Bong Go From Page 1

system of the Navy's frigate program.

He has denied the accusation, saying he never intervened in the procurement of the weapons system.

Roque reiterated that the allegations against Go are "untrue and unfounded," saying the Aquino administration was the one that chose Hyundai Heavy Industries as the supplier of the frigates, including the supply of the boat, navigation, communications and combat management systems.

He said the Duterte administration merely signed the notice of award, which declared the supplier as the winning bidder.

Roque said that under Republic Act 9184 or the Procurement Law, the notice of award

cannot be left unsigned unless there is basis for not doing so.

"Before signing the notice, (Defense) Secretary Delfin Lorenzana consulted his lawyers and all officers of the Philippine Navy. Since there is no hindrance, it was signed," the spokesman told radio station *dzMM*.

Roque also refuted Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV's claim that Go was not involved in the frigates deal because he was just taking orders from the President.

"Bong Go is not involved not because someone is giving him orders but because he or anyone in the administration did not participate in that project," Roque said. "Lobbying is no longer possible because the terms and conditions are indicated in the bidding documents. They

can no longer be changed."

Asked if Go would make an exposé during the Senate hearing, Roque said, "The President's aide would only bring with him the truth. We are not hiding anything. If there are lapses, we are sure that the Duterte administration is not responsible for it."

Cabinet officials, including Roque, presidential communications Secretary Martin Andanar and Justice Secretary Vitaliano Aguirre II as well as defense officials will attend the Senate hearing as an expression of support for Go.

The President has defended Go, saying his aide is a billionaire and does not need to profit from the frigate deal.

Fair probe

Sen. Gregorio Honasan vowed to conduct a fair and objective probe into the frigate

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acquisition deal of the Navy, but said the inquiry could be held behind closed doors if the hearing would be tackling sensitive security matters.

The Senate committee on national defense and security, chaired by Honasan, will start today the probe, which was prompted by a resolution filed by Trillanes.

"First, this is in aid of legislation. We are going to focus on the government procurement process, if there is anything we need to amend in the law," Honasan said in a telephone interview.

"I have no intention to subject any person or any institution to unwarranted trial by publicity. The committee is not a court of law," he said.

Honasan said the committee would also determine if there was any abuse of discretion by the parties to the contract,

whose negotiations started during the Aquino administration.

Apart from Go, also invited to the hearing are Lorenzana, Navy flag-officer-in-command Rear Admiral Robert Empedrad and his predecessor Vice Admiral Ronald Joseph Mercado.

Lorenzana earlier said Mercado was removed from his post for allegedly opposing the done deal to buy two frigates from the South Korean shipbuilder, Hyundai Heavy Industries.

Trillanes said he was not questioning the awarding of the entire deal, but only the decision of the defense department to give the contract to a company preferred by Hyundai – Hanwa – over Tacticos Thales, which was preferred by Mercado.

"Until now, Mercado was not given an opportunity to clear his name. His removal remains a mystery," Trillanes told *dzBB*.

"Who knows, maybe there will be a witness or some documents will come out in the hearing and we will know what really happened," he said.

Trillanes believes that "somebody higher" than Lorenzana ordered Mercado's removal from his post.

Empedrad maintained that there was no anomaly in the procurement of frigates.

"With the Senate probe, at least the truth will come out," Empedrad told reporters, noting that he and Mercado are on good terms.

Empedrad believes that Go had nothing to do with the Navy's frigate program.

The military's frigate acquisition project was marred with controversy after Mercado was relieved from his post as Navy chief last December. – With **Paolo Romero, Michael Pungongbayan**

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BONG GO IKAKANTA ANG TOTOO SA FRIGATE DEAL HEARING

ISISIWALAT ni Special Assistant to the President Bong Go ang buong katotohanan sa kanyang pagharap sa Senate hearing ngayong araw sa Frigate deal ng Philippine Navy.

Ito ang tinayak ni Presidential spokesperson Harry Roque kasabay ng pagtiyak na inosente si Go sa kinukwestiyong pinasok na deal ng Navy.

Sinabi ni Sec. Roque na walang kinalaman si Secretary Go sa Frigate deal dahil matagal nang done deal ito sa ilalim pa lamang ng administrasyon ni dating Pangulong Noynoy Aquino.

Gayunman, maring kinondena ni Sec. Roque ang pahayag ni Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV na bagamat inosente si Go sa Frigate deal ay mayroon namang kumpas dito si Pangulong Rodrigo Roa Duterte.

Ipinaliwanag ni Sec. Roque na walang choice si Pangulong Duterte kundi pirmahan ang notice of award bilang bahagi ng kanyang tungkulin dahil kailangang ipagpatuloy ng kanyang

pamahalaan ang napirmahang kontrata ng nagdaang administrasyon.

Inihayag din ni Sec. Roque na maging si Defense Secretary Delin Lorenzana ay ikinosulta ito sa mga abogado at iba pang officers ng Philippine Navy.

Bingyang-diin ni Sec. Roque na kahit sinong opisyal sa kasalukuyang administrasyon ay walang partisipasyon sa kontrata dahil tapos na ang kasunodan at malalagay sa alan-ganin ang snomang gusto itong baguhin.

Iginirit pa ni Sec. Roque na ang kawalan ng pananagutan ni Bong Go ay hindi dahil may nag-

utos sa kanya kundi wala tala-ga itong partisipasyon sa kasunodan na pinasok ng nagdaang administrasyon.

Samantala, tinayak ni Sec. Roque na naninindigan si Pangulong Duterte at maging si Secretary Go na sumalang sa public hearing at hindi sa isang executive session dahil wala naman silang hinatago sa publiko at katotohanan ang bitbit ng kalihim sa pagharap sa Senate investigation sa araw na ito.

Una rito, nilinis ni Sen. Trillanes si Sec. Go sa frigate deal pero mistulang idiniditin nito si Pangulong Duterte dahil isang mas mataas na opisyal umano ang gusto itong imanipula. RNT

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Zambo maritime units step up hunt vs pirates

Maritime units in Zamboanga City area stepped up their pursuit operations to scour the waters off Basilan island following a seajacking attempt on a Philippine vessel that lost propulsion late Friday evening.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines-Western Mindanao Command (AFP-WestMinCom) received a distress call from the Presidential Management Staff and other agencies of government seeking assistance over an

attempt to seajack marine vessel Kudos, a Philippine flagged cargo vessel in the vicinity of Coco and Sibago islands in Basilan at past 10 pm.

Immediately, WestMinCom activated the Anti-Kidnaping Joint Task Force under Rear Admiral Rene Medina, Commander of Naval Forces Western Mindanao, who at once deployed for maritime interdiction five Navy vessels with elements towards the targeted area.

In the same manner, the Phil Coast Guard under Capt. Ronnie Gil Gavan, the commander of the Coast Guard Southwestern District, dispatched two of its water crafts as augmentation.

Deployments were also swiftly done through lateral coordination of the Anti-Piracy Task Force Command. Meanwhile, two aircraft were dispatched by the PAF to conduct aerial survey and patrol. **(Francis T. Wakefield)**

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ISIS, nagre-recruit sa Luzon, Visayas

Kinumpirma ng Philippine National Police (PNP) nangangalap ng mga bago kasapi ang teroristang Islamic State of Iraq and Syra (ISIS) sa Luzon at Visayas.

Sinabi ni PNP chief Ronald Dela Rosa na may natanggap siyang intelligence report na nagre-recruit sa Marawi City at Lanao area, at binibirepika pa ang report.

Sa ngayon tinututukan ng PNP at Armed Forces of the Philippines ang nasagap nilang impormasyon patungkol sa pag-recruit ng ISIS sa mga Muslim areas sa Mindanao at mga nagkalat sa Muslim sa Luzon at Visayas.

Hindi binanggit ni Dela Rosa kung ano ang kanilang

ikinakasang operasyon laban sa teroristang grupo.

Naniniwala ang PNP na maiibsan ang banta ng ISIS sa

Luzon at Visayas sa pamamagitan ng palitan ng information sa militar at iba law enforcement agencies.

Fer Taboy

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LIFT MARTIAL LAW IN MINDANAO

recently heard three *lumad* women give their testimonies on their experience in Mindanao. They are sending a plea to President Duterte to lift martial law in Mindanao. Apparently, the military is using that as an excuse to harass the villagers. The lumad people had decided to establish their own school in their locality as there was none and they felt the need of education for their children. However, the military started accusing them that what they did was illegal, harassing the teachers. At the same time, the military was using drones to spy on them, limiting the amount of rice that they can bring to their village. When the harassment continued, they decided to evacuate the place and settle somewhere else.

The women also fear that putting a price of P20,000 for

each alleged member of the New People's Army could incite violence and create division among the lumad people. Anybody can point out anyone allegedly to be an NPA. In my opinion, such a strategy is a devious manipulation on the vulnerability of people who are poor. It is also reminiscent of the Pharisees paying 20 pieces of silver to Judas to point out Christ—a betrayal. Training their youth to become Cagfus (Citizen Armed Forces Geographical Unit) makes no difference, or at most, just complicates the situation.

So, Mr. President, if you truly love Mindanao as you have always claimed, it is imperative that you lift martial law in Mindanao.

SR. NENITA TAPIA, MM

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2 killed in Zambo del Norte clash between military, NPA

By: Leah Agonoy - @inquirerdotnet

[Inquirer Mindanao](#) / 12:25 PM February 18, 2018

PAGADIAN CITY – A soldier and a suspected New People’s Army (NPA) rebel were killed during a brief clash in Sergio Osmeña town in Zamboanga del Norte on Saturday, the military said on Sunday.

Lt. Col. Marlowe Patria, the commander of the Army’s 53rd Infantry Battalion, said that soldiers led by 1Lt. Abner Pilando were conducting combat operation in Barangay San Isidro when they encountered the communist rebels.

He said the operation was conducted following reports that the rebels were harassing villagers in San Isidro.

Patria said that during the 15-minute firefight, Sgt. Rolly Barimbao was hit and killed. One rebel was also slain, he added.

The body of the slain rebel, who remained unidentified, was recovered together with an ammunition magazine for AK-47 assault rifle. It had been turned over to Sergio Osmeña officials while Barimbao’s remains had already been sent home.

“The NPAs carried their other comrades, who were wounded, as evidenced by the blood stains along enemy tracks,” Patria noted.

Patria also said that pursuit operations were continuing as of Sunday.

“We denounce in strongest terms the continued atrocities of NPAs, which killed one of our soldiers, and their (continued) atrocities against our hapless civilians,” Maj. Gen. Roseller Murillo, commander of the Army’s 1st Infantry Division, said. “Our soldier died a hero while protecting our people and our communities.”

“The cooperation of the civilians, who reported the armed group’s presence in their area, is a strong manifestation that civilians have long been tired of the NPA’s activities such as extortion and harassment,” Murillo added.

Murillo vowed that the military would continue to pursue communist rebels. He, however, also said that they would welcome rebels who would give up arms and surrender.

www.inquirer.net

Navy chief Empedrad says frigates deal probe will make 'truth come out'

By: [Jhoanna Ballaran](#) - Reporter / [@JhoannaBINQ](#)

INQUIRER.net / 02:24 PM February 18, 2018



Rear Adm. Robert Empedrad
INQUIRER PHOTO/JOAN BONDOC

BAGUIO CITY, Philippines—Philippine Navy chief Rear Admiral Robert Empedrad has said that he was confident that the truth would come out in the Senate investigation on the P15.5-billion frigates deal.

"[The probe is] very good, at least the truth will come out," Empedrad said in an interview during the sidelines of the Philippine Military Academy's (PMA) annual alumni homecoming here on Saturday.

Empedrad maintained that there was no anomaly in the Navy's now-controversial acquisition of the Combat Management System (CMS) for the frigates.

The Senate committee on national defense and security will launch its investigation on the deal on Monday. Empedrad, Special Assistant to the President Sec. Christopher Lawrence "Bong" Go, and Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque were set to attend the hearing.

The Inquirer first reported in January that Go allegedly meddled in the Navy's selection of the weapons system for the frigate project of the government.

The report said Go allegedly wanted Hanwha Thales (HTC) of South Korea to provide the combat management systems (CMS) over the Tacticos CMS of Dutch-based Thales Nederland Inc.

Go has denied interfering in the Department of National Defense's selection of the Navy's weapons system supplier. He said he would resign if the allegations against him could be proven true.

President Rodrigo Duterte has also denied Go's involvement, daring his critics to prove his aide's involvement and he would immediately fire him. /je