

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



TEAM ARMY
Serving the people. Securing the land.

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OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

NEWS CLIPPINGS

21 February 2018

Wednesday

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

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

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TODAY'S WEATHER FORECAST FEBRUARY 21, 2018 | WEDNESDAY

EASTER LILIES
ARISE AND BRING BLESSING
SECTION OF THE COUNTRY
at 05:30 am - February 21, 2018

LAOAG CITY: 23-31°C	TUGUEGARAO CITY: 21-33°C
BAGUIO CITY: 14-25°C	SBMA/CLARK: 24-33°C
LAGAYTAY CITY: 20-31°C	CEBU CITY: 22-33°C
PUERTO PRINCESA: 25-31°C	DAVAO CITY: 25-31°C
MANILA: 25-31°C	TAALBAN CITY: 23-32°C
MAKIN & SOUTH HARBOR: 25-32°C	MAKIN & SOUTH HARBOR: 25-31°C
ZAMBOANGA CITY: 25-33°C	MAKIN & SOUTH HARBOR: 23-32°C
	MAKIN & SOUTH HARBOR: 24-32°C

EXTENDED WEATHER FORECAST	FEB 22 THU			FEB 23 FRI			FEB 24 SAT			EXTENDED WEATHER FORECAST	FEB 22 THU			FEB 23 FRI			FEB 24 SAT		
	METRO MANILA	23°C	33°C	☁	25°C	32°C	☁	23°C	32°C		☁	PUERTO PRINCESA	25°C	32°C	☁	24°C	31°C	☁	24°C
TUGUEGARAO	21°C	32°C	☁	22°C	30°C	☁	22°C	29°C	☁	ILOILO/BACOLOD	25°C	32°C	☁	25°C	32°C	☁	25°C	31°C	☁
LAOAG	22°C	30°C	☁	22°C	30°C	☁	22°C	30°C	☁	METRO CEBU	25°C	31°C	☁	25°C	31°C	☁	24°C	30°C	☁
BAGUIO	15°C	24°C	☁	15°C	23°C	☁	15°C	23°C	☁	TACLOBAN	24°C	31°C	☁	24°C	30°C	☁	23°C	29°C	☁
SBMA/CLARK	24°C	32°C	☁	24°C	32°C	☁	24°C	32°C	☁	CAGAYAN DE ORO	23°C	32°C	☁	23°C	31°C	☁	24°C	30°C	☁
TAGAYTAY	21°C	31°C	☁	21°C	30°C	☁	21°C	30°C	☁	METRO DAVAO	25°C	31°C	☁	24°C	30°C	☁	24°C	30°C	☁
LEGAZPI	25°C	31°C	☁	24°C	31°C	☁	24°C	31°C	☁	ZAMBOANGA	25°C	32°C	☁	24°C	32°C	☁	24°C	32°C	☁

☁ Partly cloudy to at times cloudy with rain/shower.

☁ Partly cloudy to at times cloudy with rain/shower and/or drizzle/squalls.

☁ Cloudy skies with rain/showers and/or drizzle/squalls.

2) February 2018

Malaya
The National Newspaper

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More troops deployed in drive to crush NPA

BY VICTOR REYES

THE Army's 901st Brigade has been redeployed from the Bicol region to the eastern part of Mindanao as part of the military's continuing effort to defeat the communist New People's Army.

The brigade arrived at the headquarters of the 4th Infantry Division in Camp Evangelista in Cagayan de Oro City on Thursday last week.

Maj. Gen. Ronald Villanueva, 4th ID commander, said the redeployed unit is composed of 80 men led by the brigade's commander, Col. Larry Mojica. Villanueva said the brigade is now operating in the Bukidnon, North Cotabato, and Davao areas.

He said the 19th and 92nd Infantry Battalions, which came from the Central Mindanao, have been attached to the brigade. Another battalion, the 88th IB, will soon be placed under the brigade.

"It's meant to cover the area

where we have a blind spot," said Villanueva on the redeployment of the 901st brigade. He said the brigade will help accomplish the military's objective to crush the NPA.

Maj. Ezra Balagtey, spokesman of the AFP's Eastern Mindanao Command, expressed confidence that the redeployment of the brigade will lead to the restoration of peace in the areas.

"The 901st Brigade will augment troops in Northern Mindanao and Caraga Regions to help 4th ID in crushing NPA terrorists. Further, the brigade will be deployed in the priority areas of 4th ID," added Balagtey.

"They will help in the accomplishment of the objective given by higher headquarters, we are sticking with that. (The objective) is to crush the NPA," said Balagtey.

President Duterte terminated peace negotiations with the com-

See MORE ► Page B6

MORE

munist-led National Democratic Front in November last year due to series of rebel attacks against military and civilian targets.

Also yesterday, the 56th IB arrived in Mindanao to augment the 10th Infantry Division, based in Compostela Valley, in the fight against the communists. The battalion used to operate in Aurora

province.

"They will be operating in the 10th ID area, they are going to be additional force against the NPA," said Balagtey of the 56th IB. A battalion is composed of around 500 officers and men.

EX-NPAs MEET WITH DUTERTE

President Duterte is due to

have snacks today in Malacañang with 241 former NPA members. They are part of the 683 NPA members who surrendered to the Armed Forces in Eastern Mindanao last year.

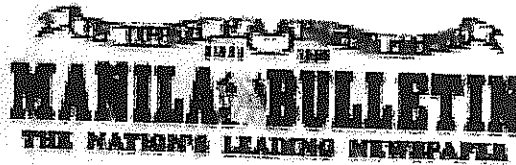
Balagtey said the 241 former rebels are composed of 38 women and 203 men who used to operate in the Compostela Valley and Davao del Norte. They were flown to Manila

yesterday morning from Davao City, and toured by the military to Luneta Park and Fort Santiago in Manila.

On February 7, Duterte also had snacks with the first batch of 217 former rebels.

Balagtey said the third batch, composed of 225 former rebels, will also dine with Duterte and given the same tour but no date has been set.

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Off to Mindanao

The Army's Seventh Infantry Division held a send-off ceremony for 50th Infantry Tago Battalion at the 710 ID Grandstand in Fort Magsaysay, Aurora Epi, on Monday. The 50th IB, one of the most accomplished battalions of 710 ID, will be deployed to Mindanao area to support the campaign plan of the Philippine Army in one of the major islands of the country. The battalion has been successful in the conduct of Community Support Program (CSP) and other in the province of Aurora. There was even a motion by the LGUs of Aurora submitted to the higher headquarters to request for the retention of the battalion but the movement of 50th IB has been scheduled for this year. (Francis T. Wakefield)

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Pahina. 3

Bomb expert, 4 pang NPA tiklo

ARESTADO ang limang hinihinalang miyembro ng New People's Army (NPA) kabilang ang umano'y eksperto sa paggawa ng bomba sa Ilagan City, Isabela kamakalawa.

Ayon kay Army Capt. Jefferson Somera, ang 5th Infantry Division spokesman, si Mauncio Sagun ang sinasabing pinuno ng NPA Training, Demolition and Explosives Team at bihasa sa paglikha at paghawak ng mga pampasabog at landmine.

Nasukol si Sagun sa kanyang bahay sa Barangay San Antonio Centro at kasamang dinampot ng mga otoridad sina Mario Turqueza, 65; Maximiano Domingo, 41; Ariel Peñalor, 48; at Bernard Peñalor, 21, pawang mga taga-San Mariano, Isabela province.

Ang apat na inaresto ay kabilang sa mga na-recruit ng NPA Sparrow Unit, ang attack group ng rebeldeng grupo.

Nasamsam mula sa kanila ang tatlong granada, isang kalibre 9mm, isang kalibre .38 pistola, mga blasting cap at detonating cord.

JEFF GALLOS

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Malaya
The National Newspaper

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2 arrested for blast in Maguindanao

BY VICTOR REYES

TWO suspects in last Sunday's roadside bombing in Datu Unsay town in Maguindanao were arrested later that day, the military said yesterday.

Ornisalam Andakay and Kapadlong Mamalak were arrested at around 10:30 a.m. last Sunday in Barangay Meta, near the area where the explosion occurred, by forces of the 57th Infantry Battalion, 21st Mechanized Company, and 63rd Division Reconnaissance Company at around 10:30 a.m. last Sunday, said Capt Jo-ann Petinglay, spokesman of the military's Western Mindanao Command.

The two yielded a rifle, a shotgun, and ammunition.

The explosion resulted in the wounding of an Army lieutenant and four enlisted personnel.

Petinglay said the bomb was made from a 105-mm high explosive projectile, based on the post-blast investigation conducted by the 32nd Explosive Ordnance Disposal Team and 3rd Explosive Ordnance Disposal Company.

Petinglay said the military is still determining if the two suspects are members of the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters which the military earlier tagged as primary suspect in the attack.

"As of now, we consider them as lawless elements," she said.

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

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Soldier dies in skirmish with Reds

By NONOY E LACSON

KUTA SANG-AN, Labangan, Zamboanga del Sur – A lone soldier, whose identity has been purposely concealed by authorities pending information of his kin, was reportedly killed when troops under the 53rd Infantry Battalion's (53IB) Joint Task Force ZAMPELAN encountered several members of the New People's Army in Barangay San Isidro, Sergio Osmeña, Zamboanga del Norte, Monday at around 8:30 p.m.

The troops, as led by Lt. Abner C. Pilando, were patrolling the area when attacked by the communist guerrillas.

Lt. Col. Marlowe E. Patria, commanding officer of the 53IB, said the fire fight lasted some 15 minutes before the guerrillas scampered into the darkness.

Government forces recovered the body of a dead NPA fighter after the skirmish, along with a magazine for an AK-47.

"We denounce in strongest terms the continued atrocities

of NPAs which killed one of our soldiers and their continuous atrocities against our hapless civilian," Patria said.

Philippine Army 1st Division commander, Maj. Gen. Roseller G. Murillo, commended the dead soldier as a "hero."

He said, "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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Manila
Standard

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Maguindanao residents surrender loose firearms

BY JULMUNIR I. JANNARAL

SHARIFF AGUAK, Maguindanao: For the Moro, owning more than one gun is not only a "status symbol" but also a necessity -- for self-defense and to protect his property against lawless elements.

Thus, owning guns, whether legally or illegally, remains prevalent today in the same manner that Moros are legally allowed to have four wives as long as they give all of them equal financial support.

But, considering that Mindanao is under martial law until the end of the year, Maguindanao residents have begun to regard gun ownership in a new light and are

supporting the military's campaign against loose firearms.

On Monday, Maguindanaoans started surrendering their loose firearms to the Philippine Army's 6th Infantry Division (6th ID) based in Camp Siongco, Awang, Datu Odin Sinsuat.

"The military's intensified campaign against loose firearms continues and has earned the public support of local officials and residents

of Maguindanao," Major Gen. Arnel dela Vega, commander of the 6th ID and Task Force Central said.

Residents and a member of a private army in Maguindanao surrendered at least nine high-powered firearms with magazines and ammunition to the 2nd Mechanized Infantry Battalion stationed in Datu Salibo.

The battalion is under the 601st Infantry Brigade.

Quiapo Dalandas, chairman of Barangay Damabalas, Datu Piang, voluntarily turned over one locally made caliber 50 sniper rifle and two US caliber M1 Garand rifles modified into caliber 7.62 M-14 rifles.

Edris Sindatok, chairman of Barangay Madia, in Datu Saudi Ampatuan, handed over one US caliber-30 M1 Garand rifle mod-

ified into 7.62 M14 rifle and one US 5.56 Colt M16 rifle.

Mantila Tambak of Task Force Itihad (Unity) of Barangay Ambadao, Datu Piang, surrendered one US caliber 30 M1 Garand rifle and one US caliber 5.56 Elisco M16 rifle.

Meanwhile, Abe Andal, reportedly a member of a private army, yielded one US caliber 5.56 Elisco M-16 rifle with attached locally made M203

Brig. Gen. Diosdado Carreon, 601st Brigade commander, told the residents: "I appreciate your commendable action and genuine gesture in giving up your firearms," even as he encouraged other Maguindanaoans who are still illegally bearing firearms to voluntarily surrender so that they will not be liable for charges of illegal possession of loose firearms.

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Residents caught in tug-of-war between AFP, leftist group

BY YAS D. OCAMPO

DAVAO CITY – On one hand, human rights groups here are accusing the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) of "forcing to surrender" participants of an anti-drug awareness campaign in a public school in Montevista town, Compostela Valley province last Saturday.

And on the other is the military, saying that they were merely rescuing the participants allegedly being recruited to join the New People's Army (NPA).

In an interview with Manila Bulletin, Karapatan Southern Mindanao spokes-

person Jay Apiag said they received a report from the Pederasyon sa mga Asosasyong Mag-uuma ug Lumad sa Agusan ug Davao (Pamulad) late afternoon Sunday that the military allegedly interrogated and detained participants, including a volunteer teacher and a minor, in a seminar dubbed "Youth Anti-Drugs Workshop" in New Dalaguit Elementary School in New Dalaguit, Montevista.

"According to Pamula, it was around 2 p.m. of Feb. 17 when several soldiers from the 25th IB (Infantry Battalion) arrived at the school, where a cultural workshop was being held, and interrogated the participants," Apiag said

Tuesday, adding there were 25 persons who attended the workshop.

He said four persons were taken by the military, including a minor and the workshop instructor Eugene Laurente, who is a volunteer teacher of the Assumption College of Davao Community Extension Program. Two other participants Darlene Dasig and Gredelix Ornopia were also taken.

Apiag said the four were taken to a hospital in Montevista for medical check-up and to the police station, where they were asked to sign release papers.

But Apiag said that after signing the release papers "they were taken back to the army headquarter's in Montevista

for questioning"

The four were released around 9 p.m. Monday night, Apiag added.

"Our priority now is to provide them with psycho-social intervention because they are really traumatized, they are being forced to surrender," he said.

However, the 10th Infantry Division denied that the people in their custody were innocent.

Capt. Jerry Lamosao, 10th ID spokesperson, said that the military was conducting "rescue operations" of residents from Barangay Dalaguit. He said that the event was not really an anti-drug workshop, but a "recruitment program" of the NPA.

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The Manila Times

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Duterte reconsiders stance on Reds, still open to talks

PRESIDENT Rodrigo Duterte has opened anew the possibility of reviving peace talks with communist rebels, after a meeting with Norway's special envoy to the peace process.

"The Norwegian officials came here to explore the possibility of talking [with the Reds] again. I have to consult my military people.

►RedsA2

■ REDS FROM A1

Duterte

Why? Because they will die, not me," Duterte said during the 10th biennial convention and 20th founding anniversary celebration of the Chinese-Filipino Business Club Inc. on Monday night.

In the meeting last week, Norwegian envoy Idun Tvedt was said to

have reiterated the commitment of the Norwegian government to assist the Philippines in peace negotiations with the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), its armed wing the New People's Army (NPA), and negotiating arm the National Democratic Front (NDF).

"I will talk to the military. If [they] would agree, I might [reconsider]," Duterte added.

Palace spokesman Harry Roque Jr. however said the possibility of reviving the peace talks was unclear especially after six members of the police Special Action Force were wounded in an ambush by the NPA in Antipolo City on Sunday morning.

Roque said the peace talks would be worthless if the Reds were not interested in real peace. "As of now, [the resumption of

peace talks] is unclear. They are pushing for peace talks but they always use force," Roque said.

Roque said Duterte would listen to the military.

"If the military recommends the continuation [of the peace talks], I think that the recommendation will be considered [by Duterte]. But as of now, a recommendation has yet to surface," Roque said.

Duterte terminated the peace talks between the government and the communist rebels, under Proclamation 360 issued on November 23.

Duterte also signed Proclamation 374 declaring the NPA and CPP as terrorist groups.

CPP founder Jose Maria Sison had warned that the NPA could kill one soldier a day until the govern-

ment reopened the peace talks.

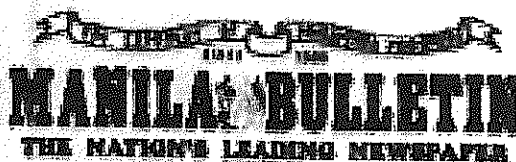
Duterte retorted by saying he could order government forces to kill five NPA rebels for every soldier killed.

Duterte also said that he would train indigenous peoples in Mindanao to be militiamen and give them a bounty of P20,000 for each NPA rebel killed.

RALPH U. VILLANUEVA

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2nd batch of former NPAs to dine with PRRD today

FRANCIS T. WAKEFIELD
YAS D. OCAMPO

The second batch of former rebels, who will dine with the President in Malacañang flew to Manila yesterday via two Philippine Air Force (PAF) C-130 aircraft from the Davao City International Airport.

The group was composed of 241 former members of the New People's Army (NPA), mostly from Compostela Province and Davao Del Norte. Thirty-eight of them are women.

They are part of the 683 former NPA rebels from different parts of Eastern Mindanao that were presented to the

President on December 21, 2017, at Panacan, Davao City.

Armed Forces of the Philippines-Eastern Mindanao Command (AFP-EastMinCom) spokesman Major Ezra L. Balagtey said the rebel returnees are set to dine with the Chief Executive in Malacañang today.

Balagtey said the activity aims to give the surrenderers a better perspective in life, particularly in peace-building and nationalism. It is part of the government's continuing activity of reintegrating the former rebels in the mainstream society.

He said the group will also be given

a tour of Luneta Park and Inframuros, Manila, while a welcome ceremony will be held at Camp Aguinaldo to be hosted by AFP chief of staff General Rey Leonardo Guerrero.

Prior to their dinner with the President, they will also get a chance to interact with other former NPA members who now work as advocates of peace

and development.

The second phase of the tour is expected to conclude on February 22 before they return to Davao City via C-130 aircraft.

The first batch composed of 215 former rebels were given a tour of Manila, and shared a meal with the President last February 6 to 8.

to

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MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

Page: 1

Duterte wants ₱100,000 bounty for every dead Red

By GENALYN D. KABILING

President Duterte is considering increasing the reward for the death of each communist rebel to as much as ₱100,000.

All the bounty hunters need to do is present the head of the dead communist insurgent to get the reward, according to the President.

Next week, I will increase it to make it ₱30,000, then I'll increase ▶ 5

Duterte wants ₱100,000... ◀ 1

it to ₱100,000. Sila na magpapatayan [They will kill each other]," Duterte said before a gathering of Filipino-Chinese business community at the Manila Hotel.

"No need to bring me the body. Bring me the head," the commander-in-chief said, adding he would ask the military officials to verify the identity of the rebels before the bounty is given.

The President earlier offered ₱25,000 for every communist rebel killed by government forces in a bid to save on the government's anti-insurgency expenses. Duterte made the offer in retaliation to communist leader Jose Maria Sison's threat to kill one soldier a day.

Duterte said he has computed that it was cheaper to make the bounty offer than spend on the counterinsurgency operations.

"They cannot be more than 3,000,"

he said about the estimated number of communist rebels. "Sa ₱25,000, makamuraako [I'll save money]," he added.

Meantime, the President said he would consult the military on whether or not the government would resume peace negotiations with the communist rebels.

Duterte admitted that he recently met with the officials from Norway who tried to "explore the possibility" of reviving the peace negotiations.

"I have to consult my military people. Why? Silayungnamamatay, hindinamanako [They are the ones getting killed, not me]. I will talk to the military. If you would agree, I might," he said.

"I am not thinking about it even. Why? Because now, it's beyond my control," he added.

He said if the military decides to press ahead with the operations against the rebels, it would be fine with him.

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POLICE FILES

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P100K sa bawat mapapatay na NPA - Duterte

KUKUNSAULTAHIN muna ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte ang tropang militar bago pasukin ang posibilidad na aluking muli ng peace talks ang National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP).

Ayon sa pangulo, ang mga sundalo kasi ang namamatay sa pakikipaglaban sa komunistang grupo.

Sinabi ni Duterte na bumisita sa kanya kama-kailan ang ilang Norwegian officials para i-explore ang posibilidad na ibalik ang peace talks.

“So I’m talking to the Communists. The Norwegian officials came here to explore the possibility of talking again. I have to consult my military people. Why? Eh sila’yung

namamatay eh, hindi naman ako. Sabi ko, “I will talk to the military. If you would agree, I might”, ayon sa pangulo.

Sinabi pa ni Duterte na kung siya lamang ang masusunod ay ayaw na niyang pag-aksayahn ng panahon ang pakikipag-usap sa komunistang grupo.

Kasabay nito, sinabi ng pangulo na tataasan pa niya ang pagbibigay ng pabuya sa mga Lumad at CAFGU members na makapapatay ng isang rebelde.

Mula sa dating P25,000 ay gagawin niya itong P100,000 at hindi na rin daw kailangang dalhin sa kanya ang mga bangkay ng mga rebelde kundi ang kanilang mga ulo na lamang na nakalagay sa ice box.

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Du30: Peace talks depend on AFP

President Duterte said the Armed Forces of the Philippines would decide whether peace talks with communist rebels would resume, saying "they're the ones who are dying."

In a speech before members of the Chinese Filipino Busi-

ness Club Inc. on Monday night, Mr. Duterte said although he met with Norwegian officials who had been facilitating the talks, he would have to give weight to what the military would say about the talks.

But the President's spokesperson, former human

rights lawyer Harry Roque, said rebels were engaged in double talk. "While they are saying that they want to continue the peace talks, they continue to use force," Roque said.

Mr. Duterte, however, reiterated his offer of P25,000 reward for every rebel that sol-

diers would kill.

He said he planned to increase the offer to up to P100,000. "No need to bring me the body. Bring me the head. Put it in Styrofoam (container), show it to me," he told his businessmen audience.

—LEILA B. SALAVERRIA INQ

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Rody wants Filipino soldiers to train in China

By ALEXIS ROMERO

President Duterte wants Filipino soldiers to conduct training in China as he continues to seek warmer ties with Beijing despite the longstanding dispute in the South China Sea.

Duterte said there is a need for "balance" in terms of the training destination of soldiers because most of them prefer to pursue their studies in the United States, perceived as a rival of China.

"Most of the Filipino soldiers would immediately choose America. They have forged such bond," the President said during the 20th anniversary of the Chinese-Filipino Business Club in Manila last Monday.

"My suggestion is the next batch should go directly to China... so there would be balance. In fact there is an academy there for our good professional Chinese soldiers. Maybe China can accommodate them also and let them not really to fight the Americans but terrorism," he added.

But Duterte clarified that the Philippines would not cut its ties with its traditional ally the US, which he has accused of interfering with the Philippines' internal issues.

"Let us be very clear on this, we are in good terms with America. Special terms, military alliance – that's why we cannot enter into another military alliance with any country because there's only one," he said, referring to the Mutual Defense Treaty between Manila and Washington.

"Philippines now is veering towards China. But we maintain good relations

We have this (Philippines-US) pact defense deal, we will honor it, I don't know when. But if we go to war, everything wilts," the President added.

Duterte claimed that the war among countries now is "on trade, not territory."

Presidential spokesman Harry Roque said the Philippines cannot afford to declare war over the South China Sea row.

"We're in good terms with both the US and China. So, it is not to our national interest to go to war, which is what some people want. They perceive our (position on China to be weak), they want to assert our national sovereignty I guess through military means," Roque said.

"But the President is saying, 'We don't have to do that. We are in good terms with the Americans. We're on excellent terms with the Chinese. If there's conflict between them, so be it. But we will not take part in it,'" he added.

Roque said the US has no reason to be concerned because the Philippines will continue to honor its treaty obligations.

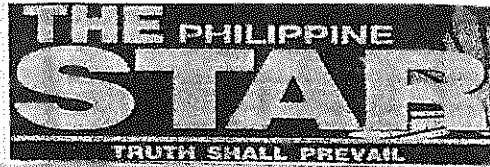
"At the same time, as a matter of foreign policy, we're in excellent friendly relations with China which has resulted in tangible results, including terms of military assistance at the time when we needed the assistance," he said.

Duterte has expressed hopes that the tensions in the region would not escalate as he claimed that North Korea, which had boosted its nuclear capabilities, seemed to be "tempering" its policies.

"North Korea is the wild card and it appears to be tempering its policies... I have to pray... once, twice, when it enters my mind about what's happening with the world. One mistake and if all those nuclear weapons are launched, China will join the fray, Russia, Britain, France and Iran," he said.

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Palace hosts 2nd dinner for ex-NPA rebels tonight

By EDITH REGALADO

DAVAO CITY – President Duterte is set to host another dinner tonight for a new batch of former rebels

Some 241 former New People's Army (NPA) guerrillas who have surrendered will be feted at a dinner with the President in Malacañang. They came from the provinces of Davao del Norte and Compostela Valley.

The surrenderees, 38 of them female, left for Manila yesterday on board two military transport planes from the Davao International Airport.

They are part of the 683 former rebels from Eastern Mindanao that were presented to the President last Dec. 21.

The trip to Manila, including the visit to Malacañang, aims to give the rebel returnees a better perspective on life, particularly in peace building and nationalism. It is part of

the government's continuing activity of reintegrating the former rebels into mainstream society, officials said.

Part of the Manila tour of the former NPA rebels will be a historical and heritage trip to Rizal Park and Intramuros in Manila while a welcome ceremony will be held today at the Armed Forces of the Philippines headquarters in Camp Aguinaldo to be hosted by AFP chief Gen. Rey Leonardo Guerrero.

Before the dinner with the President, the former rebels will also get a chance to interact with other former comrades who now work as advocates of peace and development.

The tour of the second batch of former rebels is expected to conclude tomorrow, while the tour of a third batch of NPA surrenderees will be determined later by the Appointments Office of

the President.

Three more NPA rebels surrendered in Ilocos Sur over the weekend.

The former rebels would undergo vocational courses with the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA).

"We are committed and more than willing to accommodate NPAs who want to return to the fold of the law and take part in building a nation of peace for progress and development," Eastmincom commander Gen. Benjamin Madrigal Jr. said.

Last November, Duterte terminated the peace talks with communists, whom he accused of pushing for a power-sharing setup that goes against the 1987 Constitution.

The President was also angered by the continuing NPA attacks against government forces and civilians and the collection of revolutionary taxes

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from businesses

Duterte, who had a friendly relationship with communists when he was mayor of Davao City, has also declared the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and the NPA as "terrorist organizations."

Duterte said the resumption of peace talks with the communists would depend on the recommendation of the military.

Duterte said he had informed officials of Norway, the third party facilitator of peace talks, that he would have to consult with the Armed Forces before deciding on whether to resume the talks.

"So I'm talking to the communists. The Norwegian officials came here to explore the possibility of talking again. I have to consult my military people. Why? They are the ones dying, not me. I said 'I will talk to the military.' If you

would agree, I might," the President said.

During his meeting with Norwegian special envoy to the peace process Idun Tvedt in Davao City last Thursday, Duterte said the Philippines is committed to peace but it should be attained "with due regard for the national interest."

But if the President would have his way, he would not even think about negotiating with the communists.

"I am not thinking about it even. Why? Because now it's beyond my control. How do you feel? What's your take? It is good for us to fight forever or should we talk?" Duterte said during the 20th anniversary of the Chinese-Filipino Business Club in Manila.

While raising the possibility of resuming the talks, Duterte said he would increase the bounty for every NPA member killed to

P30,000 from P25,000, and even joked about decapitating rebels.

Duterte reiterated that he would save money if he offers bounty instead of launching a counterinsurgency campaign.

"If I offer P25,000, I will save money. That's true. Next week, it will increase. I will increase it to P30,000. Then I can increase it to P100,000, they are the ones who will kill each other," the President said.

Presidential spokesman Harry Roque said the resumption of peace talks is unlikely for now.

"While they are calling for the resumption of the peace talks, they continue to use violence. While we want peace, holding peace talks will not mean anything if they are not interested in genuine peace," Roque said. — **With Alexis Romero, Artemio Dumfao**

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'Marawi attackers set sights on 2nd city'

Islamic State (IS) group-linked militants planned but failed to attack another southern Philippine city shortly after troops crushed their siege of Marawi last year, the leader of the country's largest Muslim rebel group said yesterday.

Al Haj Murad Ebrahim of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front said the plot to attack either Iligan or Cotabato city fell apart after the Marawi siege ended, but the extremists have continued to recruit new fighters to recover from their

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Marawi From Page 1

battle defeats.

Murad said his group relayed intelligence about the planned attacks on the two cities, which are bustling commercial hubs, to government forces through ceasefire channels established during years of peace talks. He made the comments at a forum with foreign news correspondents, stressing how his group has helped battle terrorism.

President Duterte and military officials have also said that remnants of the radical groups behind the five-month siege that devastated Marawi were hunting for new recruits and plotting new attacks.

Duterte mentioned the

threats in a speech late Monday in which he criticized Canada for imposing restrictions on the use of combat helicopters the Philippines has sought to buy. He has ordered the military to cancel the purchase.

"They are about to retake another city in the Philippines or to take another geographical unit but I couldn't use the helicopters," Duterte said, explaining that the Bell helicopters could not be employed in combat assaults.

Duterte has not elaborated on the nature of post-Marawi attack threats.

Murad's group, which the military estimates has about 10,000 fighters scattered most-

ly in the marshy south, hopes Congress will pass legislation this year implementing a 2014 autonomy pact with the government.

He said the prospects appear bright, but added that the rebels are aware that the government failed to enforce peace pacts in the past, prompting disgruntled rebels to form breakaway groups.

The rebel leader warned that restive young Muslims in the southern Mindanao region, homeland of Muslims in the predominantly Roman Catholic nation, may be drawn to extremism if the peace efforts fail.

As IS group militants lose bases in the Middle East, "we will increasingly find them in our midst as they seek new strategic grounds where the hold of

government is weak such as in Mindanao," Murad said.

Last year, Murad said his group lost 24 fighters who were defending rural communities from breakaway militants who have aligned

with the IS. "We know we cannot decisively win the war against extremism if we cannot win the peace in the halls of Congress," Murad said.

The new Muslim autonomous zone, which generally

covers five poor provinces, is to replace an existing one that is seen as a dismal failure. The new plan grants much more autonomy, power and guaranteed resources to the region.

— AP

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**Manila
Standard**

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MILF warns of Marawi -type attacks

THE chief of the Philippines' main Muslim rebel group warned Tuesday jihadists loyal to the Islamic State group, flush with looted guns and cash, could seize another Filipino city after Marawi last year.

Murad Ebrahim has billed his Moro Islamic Liberation Front, which has made peace with the government, as a rival to IS for the hearts and minds of angry young Muslims in the impoverished south of the mainly Catholic nation.

Murad said the MILF was battling pro-IS groups for influence in schools as the

jihadists worked to infiltrate madrasas (Islamic religious schools) and secular universities.

At the same time IS gunmen were making their way into Mindanao from Malaysia and Indonesia, he added, but gave no estimates.

A five-month siege flattened the city of Marawi on the southern island of Mindanao, the Philippines' main Islamic centre, and claimed more than 1,100 lives.

Murad told reporters conditions on the ground were still ripe for another Marawi-style siege.

"This ISIS group continues to penetrate us because they are being displaced in the Middle East and they want to have another place," Murad said, using another name for IS.

"The chances of having another Mara-

wi cannot be overruled."

In a related development

• President Rodrigo Duterte vowed to fight and end terrorism in the country as he recognized the help of China as well as Russia when local terrorists attacked and occupied Marawi City last year.

In his speech during the 10th Biennial National Convention and the 20th Founding Anniversary of the Chinese-Filipino Business Club Inc., the President said the two countries provided weapons and ammunitions to the military during the five-month long siege.

Chinese Ambassador Zhao Jianhua has previously said terrorism is a common enemy of the Philippines and China.

The Marawi attackers found and looted stockpiles of munitions, cash and jewelry from homes—some owned by MILF mem-

bers—before the city was retaken by US-backed Filipino troops in October, he said.

"When they [MILF members] fled from Marawi they [could] not bring their vaults. That is where the ISIS was also able to get so much money and now they're using it for recruitment," he added.

"It's very sad. In our country some people say buying weapons and ammunition is just like buying fish in the market."

The combination of weak central government authority, the presence of rebel groups and long-running blood feuds means Mindanao is awash with weapons, he added.

Mamja signed a peace deal with the 10,000-member MILF in 2014 after decades of Muslim rebellion in Mindanao for independence or self-rule that had claimed more than 100,000 lives. **AFP with Vito Barcelo**

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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



TERROR THREAT. Murad Ebrahim, chairman of Moro Islamic Liberation Front, gestures as he speaks during a Foreign Correspondents Association of the Philippines forum in Manila on Feb. 20, 2018. The chief of the Philippines' main Muslim rebel group warned on Feb. 20 that jihadists loyal to the Islamic State group could seize another Filipino city after Marawi last year. **AFP**

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Another Marawi City siege possible, warns MILF chief

By Ted Tuvera
and Mario J. Mallari

The chief of Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) yesterday warned that jihadists loyal to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), flushed with looted guns and cash, could seize another Mindanao city after Marawi last year.

MILF chairman Murad Ebrahim has billed his group, which has made peace with the government, as a rival to ISIS for the hearts and minds of angry young

Muslims in Mindanao.

Murad said the MILF was battling pro-ISIS groups for influence in schools as the jihadists worked to infiltrate *madrasas* or Islamic religious schools and secular universities.

At the same time ISIS gunmen were making their way into Mindanao from Malaysia and Indonesia, he added, but gave no estimates.

A five-month siege flattened Marawi City in Lanao del Sur province and claimed more than 1,100 lives.

Murad told reporters conditions on

the ground were still ripe for another Marawi-style siege.

"This ISIS group continues to penetrate us because they are being displaced in the Middle East and they want to have another place," Murad said, using another name for ISIS.

"The chances of having another Marawi cannot be overruled."

The Marawi attackers, led by Maute brothers Omar and Abdullah Maute and Abu Sayyaf leader Isnilon Hapilon, found and looted stockpiles of munitions, cash

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and jewelry from homes – some owned by MILF members – before the city was retaken by military troops in October.

“When they (MILF members) fled from Marawi they (could) not bring their vaults. That is where the ISIS was also able to get so much money and now they’re using it for recruitment,” he added.

“It’s very sad. In our country some people say buying weapons and ammunition is just like buying fish in the market.”

The combination of weak central government authority, the presence of rebel groups and long-running blood feuds means Mindanao is awash with weapons, he added.

In 2014, the government signed a peace deal with the 10,000-member MILF after decades of Muslim rebellion in Mindanao for independence or self-rule that had claimed more than 100,000 lives.

Murad urged President Duterte’s government to speed up the passage of Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL) to flesh out the peace accord, warning pro-ISIS militants were recruiting for a new attack.

“If the (self-rule law) will not be passed now I think it will develop a situation where these extremist groups can recruit more adherents, because it will prove their theory that there is no hope in the peace process,” he said.

“Since they have the capability also to supply money and then they also have the ability to make explosives, bombs, they can just use these young recruits to work out their plan.”

The ball is in military’s court

While the MILF is still waiting for the passage of BBL, Duterte the other night said that it is now the military’s call if the peace talks with the communist National Democratic Front (NDF) should proceed or not.

The Commander in Chief said he had assured the Royal Norwegian Government (RNG) that he remains to be open in pursuing negotiations with the rebels.

Envoys from Norway, the third party facilitator in the stalled talks between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the NDF, met with Duterte in Davao City last week.

Duterte said state security forces should have a say in his decision in talking peace with the communists since they are the ones at the forefront of the government’s campaign against the 49-year-old Maoist insurgency.

“So I’m talking to the communists. The Norwegian officials came here to explore the possibility of talking again,” the President said.

“I have to consult my military people. Why? Because they are the ones getting killed. That’s why I told them, ‘I will talk to the military. If you would agree, I might (proceed with the talks),’” he added.

The NDF is the negotiating arm of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and the New People’s Army (NPA) which were both labeled by the President as “terrorist organizations.”

While peace talks are still in the

offing, the military is pouring in more troops in Davao region – considered as among the few remaining areas heavily influenced by the NPA, apparently to pursue its mission of degrading the capability of the communist group.

The Army’s 56th Infantry Battalion (IB), of the 7th Infantry Division (ID), was redeployed to Davao after years of serving Aurora province.

Maj Gen Felimon Santos Jr., commander of 7th ID, led a simple sendoff ceremony for the 56th IB on Monday afternoon.

Santos expressed optimism that just like its very good performance in Aurora province, the 56th IB would do better in Mindanao.

“We are assured that 56IB had been exceptional in the conduct of their duties and responsibilities in their previous area of responsibility. The fact that residents of Aurora do not want to let go 56IB indicates that Tatag troopers played a vital role in maintaining the peace and sustaining the development of the province,” Santos said.

“I am confident that 56IB will surpass their performance in Luzon even if it requires some adjustments in Mindanao,” he added.

Dine with the President

The second batch of former New People’s Army (NPA) fighters, composed of 241 individuals, are scheduled to dine with Duterte tomorrow at Malacañang Palace.

Ma. Ezra Balagtey, spokesman for the military's Eastern Mindanao Command (Eastrincom), said that the former rebels were flown to Manila from Davao City yesterday aboard two Air Force C130s.

The group was composed of 241 former NPA rebels, mostly from Compostela Valley province and Davao del Norte. Of the number, 88 are females while 203 are males.

"They are part of the 683 former New People's Army rebels from different parts of Eastern Mindanao that were presented to the President on December 21, 2017, at Panacan, Davao City," Balagtey said.

The 241 are scheduled to have dinner with the President on Thursday.

It can be recalled that the first batch composed of 215 former rebels were toured in Manila and had a dinner with the President last February 6 to 8.

Last February 16, 50 of the 215 were enrolled to undergo Technical-Vocational Education Training with Tesda XI as part of their social integration program.

Lt. Gen. Benjamin Madrigal Jr., Eastmincom commander, reiterated the command's willingness to assist NPAs who are willing to surrender.

"We are committed and more than willing to accommodate NPAs who want to return to the folds of the law and take part in building a nation of peace for progress and development," Madrigal said.

"The programs lined up for the 683 former rebels and the community programs being implemented in the different communities are manifestations of the social economic reforms being implemented by the government," he added.

With AFP

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The Manila Times

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Military welcomes former NPA rebels

THE military's Eastern Mindanao Command (EastMinCom) announced on Tuesday that the Armed Forces is welcoming about 241 former communist rebels this Wednesday at Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon City.

The group comprised of 203 male and 38 female former rebels boarded two C-130 aircraft of the Philippine Air Force and were flown to Manila from the Davao City International Airport.

Maj. Ezra Balagtey, EastMinCom spokesman, said that the former rebels who surrendered to the military were mostly from the provinces of Compostela Valley and Davao del Norte.

"They are part of the 683 former New People's Army (NPA) rebels from different parts of Eastern Min-

danao who were presented to the President on December 21, 2017, at Panacan, Davao City," Balagtey said.

Earlier this month, the first batch of former rebels arrived in Manila and where were toured around historic places such as Intramuros, Malacañang and Luneta Park.

Prior to their trip to Manila, 50 of the 215 former rebels were enrolled in technical vocational educational courses at the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority in Davao region, as part of the former NPA rebels' integration into society.

The second batch of former NPA fighters will participate in the same activity, Balagtey said.

"The activity aims to give the [former rebels] a better perspective in life particularly in peace building and nationalism. It is part of the government's continuing program to reintegrate the former rebels into mainstream society," he added.

Armed Forces Chief Gen. Rey Leonardo Guerrero will lead the welcome ceremony this morning at the military's general headquarters.

DEMPSEY REYES

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POLICE FILES

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400 nalang miyembro ng Abu Sayyaf, pero 11 pa hawak na bihag

DAHIL sa pagsuko ng kanilang mga kasamang naratakot mahuli at mapatay ng mga otoridad o nais nang magbagong-buhay, bumaba na lang sa 400 ang mga miyembro ng Abu Sayyaf Group.

Ayon kay Joint Task Force Sulu commander Brig Gen Cirilito Soberana, batid nila ang magandang epekto ng programa ng gobyerno at ng Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) dahil sa dami ng mga sumusukong bandido.

Kabilang dito ang pagpapadala nila sa Sulu ng hindi bababa sa 10 batalyon na kinabibilangan ng mga special units at companies na sumabak din sa Marawi City at Zamboanga del Sur, para mas mapagiging pa ang operasyon ng militar laban sa mga bandido.

Ayon pa kay Soberana, kulang pa ito dahil sa limang batalyon ng JTF Sulu ang ipinadala sa Marawi, isa pa lang ang nakakabahik. Samantala, sa ngayon ay may hawak pang 11 bihag ang bandidong grupo.

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Malaya
The National Newspaper

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'Defeats in Middle East driving IS fighters to PH'

FOREIGN Islamic State fighters forced out of Syria and Iraq have been arriving in the Philippines with the intent of recruiting, and they have plans to attack two Philippine towns, the head of the country's largest Muslim rebel group said yesterday.

More than 1,100 people were killed last year when the Maute terror group attacked and held Marawi City for five months, leading to massive destruction across the scenic lakeside town.

That could happen in other cities if Congress fails to pass a law to allow Muslims in the southern Philippines to run their own affairs, according to Ebrahim Murad, leader of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front,

a separatist group which signed a peace deal with the government in return for greater autonomy.

"Based on our own intelligence information, foreign fighters who were displaced from the Middle East continued to enter into our porous borders and may be planning to take two southern cities - Iligan and Cotabato," Murad said.

The two cities are 38 km and 265 km respectively from Marawi.

Murad said fighters from Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Middle East were known to have entered the Philippines, including a Middle Eastern man holding a Canadian passport.

That man went to a stronghold of the Abu Sayyaf militant group, notorious for kidnapping and piracy, Murad said.

Murad said militants had been recruiting fighters in remote Muslim communities, exploiting delays in the passage of legislation aimed at addressing long-standing Muslim grievances, the Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL).

"These extremists are going into madrasas, teaching young Muslims their own version of the Koran, and some enter local universities to influence students, planting the seeds of hatred and violence," he said.

Such a scenario would be a major headache for the military, which is fighting on multiple

fronts on the southern island of Mindanao to defeat home-grown Islamic State loyalists, bandits and communist insurgents.

Mindanao is under martial law. The military has said remnants of the militant alliance that occupied Marawi were trying to regroup and were using cash and gold looted from Marawi to recruit.

Murad's statement echoed those of President Duterte, who last month urged lawmakers to pass the BBL, or face re-igniting war with separatists after two decades of peace.

"We cannot decisively win the war against extremism if we cannot win the peace in the halls of Congress," Murad said. -- Reuters

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Pahina. 5

PHILIPPINE ARMY THANKS STEPHEN SPEAKS BAND

The Philippine Army, represented by Army Support Group commander BGen Roy T. Devesa (concurrently Acting PA Chief of Staff), thanked the Stephen Speaks Band led by Rockwell Ryan Rippergate of the "Passenger Seat" and "Out of my League" fame for their benefit concert for soldiers wounded in action in Marawi.

Rippergate last toured the Philippines 12 years ago, in 2005, a couple of years after his band's album with Warner Music turned platinum. "I cannot lie... I am very excited to return. I have been looking forward to this, and planning for it, for years," he said in a Facebook post in August last year.

Rippergate's social media posts show how he "absolutely loves this country, the people, the culture."

In his Facebook post on January 28 from Iloilo City, Rip-

pergate said: "Dinagyang, one of the biggest festivals in all the Philippines, and maybe the coolest one I've ever been to anywhere. I took about 500 selfies with fans, and I am constantly amazed at how the Filipino love my music."

General Devesa agrees. "Yung songs nila very very inspirational for people experiencing difficulty, hardship. These are all temporary. We can always stand up again, continue to fight, continue to move on. The only way we will be dead is when we stop or we quit," he told the wounded soldiers present during the band's concert at the Headquarters, Philippine Army in Fort Bonifacio on Saturday night, February 17.

"Tonight is about two things. It's about charity and patriotism. For the past several years and more recently, we have seen a display of an



extraordinary patriotism of our soldiers. Naniniwala tayo narito sa Philippine Army, halos lahat, yung patriotism dito napaka... very, very high. Sabi nila, hindi pa tapos ang laban, we hope to continue to fight not only to deter external threats but we continue to fight our internal problems. Not physically, but in other things we continue to fight our own biases, our own bigotry, and our own intolerance (so that later on we will have a truly lasting peace in the country. But we can assure you, our soldiers here in the Philippine Army, they are ready to fight for our freedom, for our country anytime, (even) our wounded, whenever there is need to fight our helpless civilians,"

General Devesa said.

"For the past few years at the Philippine Army, (you know how) close our organization is, we always say that charity begins at home. (Whenever we have) problems, the (help) comes from inside. But recently with the Marawi incident, we have seen that our home is not bounded by the four walls of Fort Bonifacio and our residences here. Our home includes the Filipino nation, and now we can say that our home includes the international community," he added.

General Devesa has said it all on behalf of the Philippine Army and the Filipino people. Mabuhay ang Filipino! Mabuhay ang may pusong Pinoy! Mabuhay, Stephen Speaks!

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ONLINE NEWS

21 FEBRUARY 2018

inquirer.net

New batch of ex-NPA rebels to dine with Duterte

By: Frances Mangosing- Reporter / @FMangosingINO

INQUIRER.net / 04:57 PM February 20, 2018

A new batch of former communist rebels is set to have dinner with President Rodrigo Duterte on Wednesday.

The 241 ex-members of the New People's Army arrived in Manila from Davao City on Tuesday, the Eastern Mindanao Command said in a statement.

They were flown by two C-130 cargo planes of the Philippine Air Force. Of the 241 former rebels, 38 are females.

"They are part of the 683 former New People's Army (NPA) rebels from different parts of Eastern Mindanao that were presented to the President on December 21, 2017, at Panacan, Davao City," the Eastmincom said.

Just like the first batch of 215 former rebels who met with Duterte early this month, they will tour historical sites like Luneta Park and Intramuros.

They will also be welcomed by Armed Forces chief Gen. Rey Leonardo Guerrero on Wednesday morning at Camp Aguinaldo. The former rebels will return to Davao City on Thursday. /je

inquirer.net

Duterte to let military decide on peace talks with Reds

By: Nestor Corrales- Reporter / @NCorralesINQ

INQUIRER.net / 02:24 PM February 20, 2018

The fate of the peace talks with the communist rebels remains in the hands of the military, President Rodrigo Duterte said Monday night.

Duterte issued the statement three months after the collapse of the peace negotiations with the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP), and following the visit of Norwegian government officials, the third party facilitator in the peace process.

"So I'm talking to the communists. The Norwegian officials came here to explore the possibility of talking again. I have to consult my military people. Why? Eh sila 'yung namamatay eh, hindi naman ako. Sabi ko, 'I will talk to the military. If you would agree, I might [consider resuming the peace talks]'," Duterte said in a speech at the Manila Hotel on Monday evening.

But the President said he would not "waste his time" thinking about the possible resumption of peace talks.

"Ngayon, hindi ko paggastusan ng panahon. I am not thinking about it even. Why? Because now it's beyond my control. I have to get the [military's recommendation]. How do you feel? What's your take? It is good for us to fight forever or mag-usap tayo?" he noted.

But if the military would recommend to pursue the fight against the New People's Army (NPA), Duterte said he would not object to this.

"And I will tell you, 'pag sabi nila, 'Ubusin na lang natin, Mayor', oh it's fine. Sabi ni Sison, hamburgero, 'kill one soldier a day'. Eh di sinabi ko, 'You kill one NPA and I'll give you ₱25,000'," he said. /kga

inquirer.net

DBM studies pension raise for cops, soldiers

Philippine Daily Inquirer / 07:02 AM February 20, 2018

CAMP OLIVAS, Pampanga — The Department of Budget and Management (DBM) has started computing how much the national government needs to cover the cost of increasing the pension of retired policemen, soldiers and other uniformed personnel, the chair of the House appropriations committee said on Monday.

“The DBM is crunching the numbers,” said Davao City Rep. Karol Alexei Nograles on the sidelines of the 27th Philippine National Police founding day celebration here.

He said the pension increase was incorporated into the proposed national budget for 2019.

But he said looking for sources to fund this year’s P65-billion allocation—which raised the pay of policemen and soldiers—had been a challenge for the government. —**Tonette Orejas**