

Army Vision: By 2031, 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

03 January 2018

Wednesday

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

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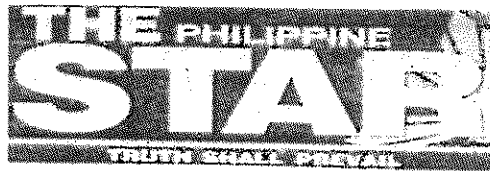
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THE PHILIPPINE STAR
TRUTH SHALL PREVAIL

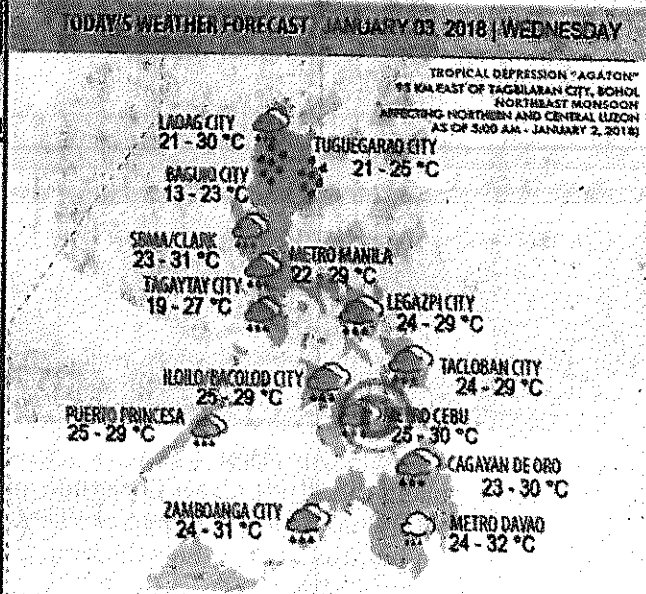
NEWS
MONDAY - FRIDAY
11AM & 5PM

PILIPINAS HD
WEEKDAYS
6AM, 6:30 PM & 9PM
WEEKENDS
6AM

AR21
CREDIT FOR PHILIPPINE NEWS

Panahon.TV
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SUNRISE	SUNSET	MOONRISE	MOONSET
6:22 AM	5:35 PM	7:02 PM	7:12 AM
LOW TIDE	HIGH TIDE	MANILA SOUTH HARBOR	
10:24 AM JAN 2	6:25 AM JAN 8	6:14 AM -0.40 Meter	10:26 PM 1.32 Meter



EXTENDED WEATHER FORECAST	JAN 4 THU	JAN 5 FRI	JAN 6 SAT	EXTENDED WEATHER FORECAST	JAN 4 THU	JAN 5 FRI	JAN 6 SAT
METRO MANILA	21 °C 28 °C	22 °C 29 °C	22 °C 29 °C	PUERTO PRINCESA	25 °C 30 °C	25 °C 31 °C	25 °C 32 °C
TUGUEGARAO	20 °C 24 °C	21 °C 27 °C	21 °C 24 °C	ILOILO/BACOLOD	25 °C 31 °C	26 °C 31 °C	26 °C 32 °C
LAGOAG	20 °C 29 °C	21 °C 29 °C	21 °C 30 °C	METRO CEBU	25 °C 31 °C	25 °C 31 °C	25 °C 31 °C
BAGUIO	12 °C 22 °C	13 °C 23 °C	13 °C 23 °C	TACLOBAN	24 °C 30 °C	24 °C 31 °C	24 °C 32 °C
SBMA/CLARK	23 °C 30 °C	23 °C 31 °C	24 °C 31 °C	CAGAYAN DE ORO	23 °C 31 °C	23 °C 31 °C	24 °C 31 °C
TAGAYTAY	18 °C 26 °C	19 °C 27 °C	19 °C 28 °C	METRO DAVAO	25 °C 32 °C	25 °C 33 °C	25 °C 33 °C
LEGAZPI	25 °C 30 °C	25 °C 31 °C	25 °C 31 °C	ZAMBOANGA	24 °C 32 °C	24 °C 32 °C	24 °C 33 °C

Partly cloudy to at times cloudy with rainshowers

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

Cloudy skies with rainshowers and/or thunderstorms

Light rains

03 January 2017



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Agaton kills 2 in Cebu

By JAIME LAUDE and HELEN FLORES

Heavy rains spawned by Tropical Depression Agaton caused a landslide in Cebu, killing a 63-year-old woman and another person before dawn yesterday.

Agaton – the first tropical cyclone for 2018 – barreled through parts of the Visayas and Mindanao, triggering flash floods and landslides in areas still reeling from back-to-back storms Urduja and Vinta, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) said.

The fatalities were Flora Matas and Richie John Rivas Pimentel, 29, both of Malabuyoc town in Cebu.

Matas, her husband and their three children were at home in Sitio North Suba, Barangay Looc when a landslide occurred, burying their house at around 5:30 a.m. Matas' husband and their children survived.

Rescuers retrieved the vic-

tim's body an hour later.

Pimentel died after floodwaters swept away the ladder he used, causing him to fall and hit his head on the concrete pavement.

Power was out in Cebu due to rains and strong winds.

Agaton made five landfalls over Socorro, Surigao del Norte at 1 a.m.; Claver, Surigao del Norte at 1:15 a.m.; Jagna, Bohol at 4 a.m.; Santander, Cebu at 5 a.m. and Bais City, Negros Oriental at 7:30 a.m. It was expected to slam into Palawan last night.

The center of Agaton was spotted at 185 kilometers east-southeast of Puerto Princesa City, Palawan as of 4 p.m., according to PAGASA.

Despite hitting landmass

Turn to Page 8

Agaton From Page 1

five times, Agaton maintained its strength of 55 kilometers per hour near the center and gustiness of up to 65 kph. It was forecast to move westward at a speed of 28 kph.

As of 5 p.m., only the province of Palawan, including Cuyo Island, remained under Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal No. 1.

PAGASA weather specialist Arnel Rojas said the weather condition has improved in other areas hit by Agaton.

Rojas said scattered to widespread moderate to heavy rains are expected over areas under Signal No. 1 as well as in the Bicol region, Eastern Visayas, Southern Quezon, Panay Island and the rest of the Mimaropa (Mindoro, Marinduque, Romblon and Palawan).

"Residents of these areas must undertake precautionary measures against possible flash floods and landslides and should coordinate with their local disaster risk reduction and management offices," he said.

The highest volume of rain

from Agaton was recorded in Maasin, Southern Leyte at 200.2 millimeters in 24 hours, followed by Surigao City at 178.8 mm, Rojas said.

Sea travel remained risky in areas under Signal No. 1 and in the seaboard of Northern and Southern Luzon, eastern seaboard of Central Luzon, eastern and western seaboard of the Visayas and eastern seaboard of Mindanao due to the surge of northeast monsoon and Agaton.

Agaton is expected to exit the Philippine area of responsibility tomorrow.

The northeast monsoon will continue to bring rains over the rest of Luzon, including Metro Manila, in the next few days.

Thousands flee homes

The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) said over 1,200 people fled their homes in Central Visayas and Caraga region at the height of heavy rains.

NDRRMC spokesperson

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Romina Marasigan said at least 301 families or 1,287 individuals were displaced by Agaton. The affected families are temporarily taking shelter in evacuation centers.

A majority of the evacuees were from Loboc, Bohol and Toledo City in Cebu.

At least 27 families from Barangays Buenavista and Quezon in Masbate were evacuated due to flash floods.

Several families also fled their homes in Capiz, Dinagat Islands and Surigao del Norte.

Landslides were reported in Silay City in Negros Occidental.

Residents of Barangays Paraiso and Fabrica in Sagay City, also in Negros Occidental, were evacuated due to flash floods.

Agaton also flooded several villages in Capiz.

Meanwhile, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) said its field offices have activated operation centers to monitor the impact of Agaton.

Replenishment of prepositioned food packs is ongoing in areas affected by

the tropical depression, the DSWD said.

Passengers stranded, flights canceled

More than 6,400 passengers were stranded in various ports after the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) suspended sea travel.

The stranded passengers were monitored in Cebu, Cagayan de Oro, Iloilo, Negros Occidental, Sorsogon, Surigao, Ozamiz, Dapitan, Butuan and Southern and Western Leyte.

PCG spokesman Capt. Armand Balilo said 78 rolling cargoes and ships as well as 10 motorboats were also stranded.

The PCG canceled trips of fast craft and roll on-roll off (Roro) vessels in Iloilo and Bacolod due to heavy rains.

Roro vessels were barred from leaving the ports of Escalante and San Carlos in Negros Occidental.

Flag-carrier Philippine Airlines (PAL) and Cebu Pacific canceled domestic flights yesterday due to inclement weather brought by Agaton.

The Manila International Airport Authority announced the following canceled flights: Cebu Pacific flights 5J 895/896

Manila-Caticlan, 5J 325/326
Manila-Legazpi; 5J 647/648
Manila-Palawan; 5J 639/640
Manila-Palawan and two Cebu flights DG 6073/6074
Manila-Tablas and DG 6177/6178
Manila-Masbate.

PAL Express flights 2P 2203/2204 Manila-Roxas; 2P 2921/2922 Manila-Legazpi

and 2P 5903/5904 Manila-Roxas were also canceled.

PAL and Cebu Pacific said they would mount additional flights today to accommodate the affected passengers. –

With Janvic Mateo, Evelyn Macairan, Gilbert Bayoran, Rudy Santos, Jennifer Rendon, Celso Amo



Workers in a broom manufacturing shop in Paknaan, Mandaue City in Cebu try to salvage reusable materials as their production area gets wiped out by flashfloods.

FREEMAN

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3RD STORM WREAKS HAVOC IN VISMIN

STORY BY THE INQUIRER STAFF

Tropical Depression 'Agaton,' the third weather disturbance to hit the country in as many weeks, caused landslides and flooding that killed at least three people and displaced thousands in Visayas and Mindanao. **A2**

3rd storm wreaks havoc in VisMin

FROM A1

By the Inquirer Staff
@Team_Inquirer

Still reeling from deadly back-to-back storms over the past two weeks, the Visayas and Mindanao once again faced heavy rains on Tuesday, this time dumped by Tropical Depression "Agaton," triggering landslides and flooding that claimed the lives of at least three people.

Agaton also displaced thousands and knocked out the electricity in Negros Oriental and Aklan provinces and parts of Cebu province.

A number of flights were canceled at Ninoy Aquino International Airport due to bad weather.

In Cebu province, an elderly woman was killed in a landslide while a man died after he fell and hit his head on the pavement as Agaton knocked out the electricity.

A 17-year-old girl drowned at a beach resort in Isabela City, Basilan province, around 11:45 a.m. on New Year's Day due to storm surges.

"There were huge waves and strong current. It was abnormal on Jan. 1 and we considered it Agaton-related," said Jamju Rivera, the city disaster risk reduction and management officer.

Landslides were reported at San Fernando, Romblon province, Alegria and Ginatilan towns in Cebu province, and in Iligan City.

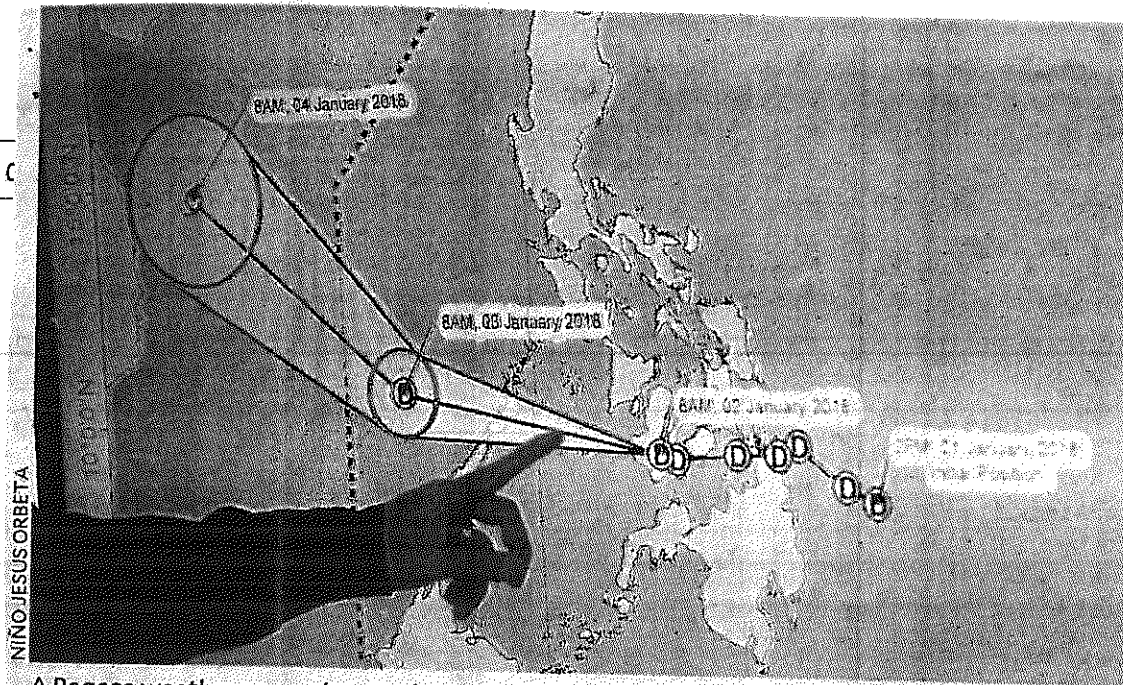
A number of towns in Cebu, Eastern Samar, Biliran, Leyte and Bohol provinces were flooded.

No rest since Christmas

Agaton was poised to hit Palawan province with gusts of 65 kilometers per hour later on Tuesday night. It was expected to cross Sulu Sea, moving west at 28 kph, with its next landfall in the evening in the vicinity of Puerto Princesa City, according to the weather bureau.

Storm Signal No. 1 was hoisted in the province, including Cuyo Island.

"The residents are really sad



A Pagasa weatherman points to the expected path of Tropical Depression "Agaton."

It is tough that we have three storms coming one after another. People have lost their livelihood and have had no rest since Christmas," Palawan information officer Gil Acosta told Agence France-Presse (AFP).

Last month, Tropical Storm "Urduja" (international name: Kai-tak) killed 47 people in the Visayas, while Tropical Storm "Vinta" (international name: Tembin) killed at least 240, mostly in Mindanao.

Palawan accounted for 37 of the recorded deaths from Urduja, with 60 other people still missing, Acosta said.

The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) reported on Tuesday that 611 families had been evacuated in the provinces of Capiz, Zamboanga del Norte, Agusan del Sur, Surigao del Norte, Surigao del Sur, Dinagat Island and Agusan del Norte.

Another 285 families sought refuge at eight evacuation centers in Central Visayas and Caraga regions, said NDRRMC spokesperson Mina Marasigan.

Stranded

More than 3,000 people were stranded at ports in Northern Mindanao, Eastern Visayas and Central Visayas. Once a tropical storm warning signal is hoisted over an area, sea travel is automatically sus-

pending by the Coast Guard.

Flora Basadre, 64, was sleeping inside her house at Barangay Looc, Malabuyoc town, Cebu province, when it was hit by a mound of earth that cascaded from the mountains about 4 a.m. on Tuesday, said Julius Regner of the Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office.

A 39-year-old man died of head injury when he jumped off the window after waking up without the lights on. "His neighbors were shouting at him that there was a brownout [but he didn't hear them]," Regner said.

In Iligan City, rescuers fished out of the water Anifa Maulod, 17. She died on the way to hospital.

No sailing

At least 3,583 travelers were stranded after the Coast Guard barred 23 vessels from sailing in Eastern Visayas.

Also affected were 129 buses and cargo trucks headed to Luzon and Mindanao from the ports of Southern Leyte, Leyte and Northern Samar, according to the Coast Guard.

Hundreds of travelers who flocked to the City of Calapan's port to return to work and school in Metro Manila were stranded on Tuesday after fast ferries Oceanjet and Supercat suspended their trips.

More than 250 people were evacuated from flooded areas in Biliran, Eastern Samar and Leyte.

Scores of families also moved to safe places at the towns of Palo and Tanauan, both in Leyte province, and in Romblon and Palawan, and at least 55 families at Jipapad town in Eastern Samar.

Bohol flooding

In Bohol, 25 families left their homes about 10 a.m. on Monday after Loboc River overflowed. They took shelter at Camaya-an High School.

By Tuesday morning, water level at the town's Poblacion Ondol was waist-deep, rendering the streets impassable to vehicles.

Some houses at Barangays Villaflor and Jimilian were flooded.

Agaton is expected to leave the Philippine area of responsibility on Wednesday afternoon after its sixth and final landfall in Palawan on Tuesday night.

—REPORTS FROM NESTLE SEMILLA, JOEY A. GABIETA, ROBERT DEJON, LEO UDTOHAN, JULIE ALIPALA, DIVINA SUSON, MART SAMBALUD, FRINSTON LIM, MADONNA T. VIROLA, MARICAR CINCO AND REDEMPTO D. ANDA IN THE PROVINCES; JAYMEE T. GAMIL, JEANNETTE I. ANDRADE, RONNEL W. DOMINGO AND JEROME ANING IN MANILA; AND AFP INQ

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Army cpl, 26 others rapped for firing guns

AN Army corporal may face criminal charges, dishonorable separation from the service and forfeiture of all his privileges and retirement benefits if he is found guilty of indiscriminately firing his weapon during the New Year.

"The police are now investigating the incident," said Lt. Col. Ray Tiongson, Army spokesman. "Cpl. Richard John Quijano is an active member of the Philippine Army while Staff Sgt. Jaime Mindalano retired from the military service [on] Dec. 31, 2016." *Next page*

Army...

From A1

Tiongson said that while the Army has no jurisdiction over retired personnel, Quijano could also be liable for the illegal discharge of firearms under Army regulations and other infractions of the Articles of War.

"As we have established in the past, the Philippine Army does not condone nor tolerate misdemeanors committed by its personnel," he said.

Earlier, Taguig City police arrested Mindalano and Quijano, who is assigned to the Light Reaction company, Special Operations Command, for indiscriminate firing, alarm and scandal, illegal possession of firearms and ammunition, physical injury, direct assault, resisting arrest and serious disobedience.

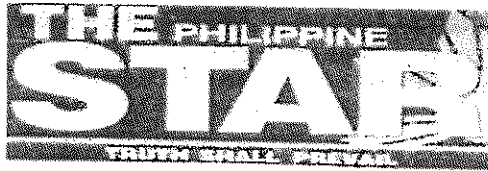
They seized two .45 caliber pistols, a 9mm pistol, a .38 caliber revolver and assorted ammunition from the two suspects.

Their illegal activities were reported to the authorities by their victim, Jolly Moreno, who was hit in his right mid-section by a ricocheting bullet during the New Year's festivities.

Police arrested 26 people for illegal discharging their firearms over the holiday season, Philippine National Police chief Ronald dela Rosa said Tuesday.

Dela Rosa also attributed the decline in firecracker-related injuries to President Rodrigo Duterte's executive order banning the use of firecrackers by private individuals. **PNA**

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AFP to resume offensive vs NPA as truce ends

By JAIME LAUDE

The military will resume combat operations against the New People's Army (NPA) today.

Maj. Gen. Noel Clement, commander of the 10th Infantry Battalion based in Mawab, Compostela Valley, said the resumption of military offensives follows the end of the holiday ceasefire unilaterally declared by both parties.

"This is the best time to end this problem and let our country develop and improve the lives of the people," Clement said.

Malacañang declared a ceasefire from 6 p.m. of Dec. 23 to 11:59 p.m. of Dec. 26, and from 6 p.m. of Dec. 30 until 11:59 p.m. of Jan. 2.

The NPA declared a unilateral ceasefire from 6 p.m.

of Dec. 23 to 6 p.m. of Dec. 26 and 6 p.m. of Dec. 30 to 6 p.m. of Jan. 2.

Arsenio Andolong, Department of National Defense spokesman, said soldiers were set to hit the ground running again at 11:59 last night.

"We will resume combat operations unless the commander-in-chief orders otherwise," Andolong said.

He said addressing the communist insurgency remains a priority of the military, noting that the peace and order situation is critical to the country's development.

"Some...local economies are not prospering because

of the activities of terrorists, especially those engaged in kidnapping, arson and extortion," Andolong said.

The military said the strength of the NPA is down to only 3,800 compared to 24,000 from the 1980s to the '90s.

'Prove good faith'

As this developed, Malacañang challenged the communists anew to "prove good faith" after Communist Party of the Philippines founder Jose Ma. Sison urged President Duterte anew to resume peace talks.

"They need to show and prove good faith...Despite the ceasefire, they attacked our soldiers," presidential spokesman Harry Roque said, referring to the recent encounter in Compostela Valley.

'Lay more bricks for peace'

In a statement, Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process Jesus Dureza stressed the need to "lay more bricks for peace."

Dureza said the peace process is a "never-ending work."

"Challenges are aplenty, some insurmountable, but that's part of the whole process. Let's help lay more bricks. Those next after us will surely carry on," he said.

"Building blocks...have been erected since peace efforts started many, many years ago by those who came before us," Dureza said. "Those bricks are there, intact, in place and are just waiting for more bricks to be laid."

– With Jose Rodel Clapano, Alexis Romero

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Holiday truce ends, military resumes offensive vs Reds

By Francisco Tuyay

SOON after the holiday truce with the communists ended, the government shifted to higher gear its nationwide operations Tuesday against the terrorist group, military

officials said.

Soldiers, who spent time with their families on New Year's day, grabbed their backpacks and their firearms once more and returned to their routine as soldiers to fight the enemy of the state. *Next page*

Holiday... From A1

The resumption of military operations against enemy forces started in the provinces of Compostela Valley, Davao Region, Lanao del Norte, and Bukidnon, considered hotbeds of New People's Army rebels and Islamic state-inspired fighters.

Hot pursuit operations are taking place in Davao Oriental against the NPA rebels who staged two separate attacks—at an army patrol base in Barangay Tubaon and at a community near Tuabao village on Christmas Day.

The rebels also attempted to snatch Arbilito Catampao, a militiaman manning the post, the officials said.

Hours after the attack in Davao Oriental, rebels of the Guerrillas Front 34 harassed a Caggu patrol base under the 72nd Infantry Battalion in Melale Village in Laak, Compostela Valley.

The two NPA-initiated attacks have been considered by the Armed Forces a violation of its unilaterally declared truce.

"Yes, now is the best time to end this problem and let our country develop and improve the lives of the people," said Maj. Gen. Noel Clement, commander of the Army's 10th Infantry Division base in Compostela Valley.

So far, there are no reports of fighting between government forces and the NPAs in the countryside.

Clement said wide scale hunt against the NPAs would be heightened in the coming days aimed at stamping out the decades-long insurgency.

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END OF HOLIDAY CEASEFIRE

MILITARY URGES NPA REBELS TO SURRENDER OR FACE FULL-SCALE OFFENSIVE



COMMUNIST INSURGENCY A spokesperson for the New People's Army's Melito Glor Command leads the 49th anniversary celebration of the Communist Party of the Philippines. —CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

By **Delfin T. Mallari Jr.**
and **Madonna T. Virola**
@InquirerSLB

The military on Tuesday urged communist rebels to surrender or face a full-scale offensive after the two sides terminated their separate unilateral ceasefires for the Christmas and New Year holidays.

Malacañang also said it was not inclined to resume peace talks, which were canceled early in December last year by President Duterte, who later declared the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and its armed wing, the New People's Army (NPA), terrorist organizations.

"They (rebels) still have the time to think about the welfare of their respective families. And we assure the rebels who will surrender that the government will provide all the necessary assistance to them," said Col. Teody Toribio, acting spokesperson for the military's Southern Luzon Command.

All-out operations

Toribio said government forces in the Southern Tagalog and Bicol regions would launch all-out counterinsurgency operations to crush the NPA after the end of the truce at midnight on Tuesday.

Army troops on Mindoro Is-

land said they were extending their "open arms to [those] rebels who decide to walk the path of genuine peace, meaningful progress and principled lives," according to Capt. Christopher Cuenca, spokesperson for the Army's 203rd Infantry Brigade.

The government declared a two-part ceasefire—from 6 p.m. on Dec. 23 to 11:59 p.m. on Dec. 26 and from 6 p.m. on Dec. 30 to 11:59 p.m. on Jan. 2. The rebels observed their own truce on the same dates.

Peace negotiations

On Sunday, CPP founding chair Jose Maria Sison said his

New Year's wish was for the two sides to return to the negotiating table.

Presidential spokesperson Harry Roque on Tuesday said there was little chance of that.

If the rebels wanted to resume talks, "they need to show and prove good faith," he said.

Roque noted that the rebels violated their own ceasefire.

On Christmas Day, NPA fighters tried to abduct a member of the Cagwu Active Auxiliary in Compostela Valley and harassed a military outpost in the same province. —WITH A REPORT FROM LEILA B. SALAVERRI-
A INQ

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PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER

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Maguindanao clashes trap tribe members

Fighting erupts anew in Teduray villages; ARMM execs say aid can't get through

By Edwin Fernandez
@inquirermindanao

SHARIFF AGUAK, MAGUINDANAO—About 1,600 members of Teduray communities here could not leave their homes in the towns of Datu Unsay and Datu Saudi Ampatuan as fighting continued between soldiers and Islamic State-inspired gunmen, officials said on Tuesday.

Fatima Kakanan, director of the Office of Southern Cultural Communities in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), said these "lumad" (indigenous peoples) were trapped in their communities after clashes broke out on Christmas Day.

"They could not go out [of the] two sitios (subvillages) and we could not reach them for food and relief assistance," Kakanan said. "We are worried over their safety. We are trying our best to reach them for food supplies."

The trapped civilians were in the remote Sitio of Bagong in Barangay Maitumaig in Datu Unsay town, and in Sitio Kyamko on Hill 224 in Barangay Kabingi in Datu Saudi Ampatuan.

Their villages are about 5 kilometers away from where government troops and members of the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) are fighting in the contiguous villages of Maitumaig (Datu Unsay), Kambingi (Datu Saudi Ampatuan) and Kubentog (Datu Hofer town).



Teduray villagers fleeing the fighting in their communities in three towns in Maguindanao province receive relief packs and other items from the government of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. —EDWIN FERNANDEZ

Kakanan said the residents were hesitant to leave for fear that they would step on landmines. She said a Teduray died after stepping on an improvised bomb on Dec. 26.

Relief workers from the ARMM Humanitarian Emergency Action Response Team (ARMM-Heart) failed to enter the area to bring aid after the military advised them that BIFF men rigged the route to the two villages with explosives.

Burned houses

The military said 18 more Teduray houses were burned by BIFF members in Barangay Kubentog in Datu Hofer on Dec. 31, after setting on fire a dozen other houses in the village of Limpogo in that town on the same day.

Lt. Col. Gerry Besana, chief of

the 6th Infantry Division's Civil Military Operations Office, said the BIFF, led by Esmail Abubakar, who is also known as Commander Bungos, fired their guns indiscriminately while the burning was going on.

Artillery fire

Besana said members of the 57th Infantry Battalion had been directing artillery fire toward Mt. Firis, considered holy ground for the Teduray lumad and straddling Datu Unsay, Datu Hofer and Datu Saudi Ampatuan towns, due to the presence of about 80 BIFF fighters there.

The military said the BIFF wanted to take over Mt. Firis because it was where their leader, Ameril Umbra Kato, launched the group in 2008.

Ramil Masukat, ARMM dis-

aster risk reduction and management officer, said ARMM-Heart on Monday distributed relief aid and food packs to 1,780 Teduray in Datu Unsay.

Maguindanao Gov. Esmail Mangudadatu also ordered the distribution of 50 sacks of rice and other nonfood provisions to affected families, Lynette Estandarte, Maguindanao medical team leader, said.

The BIFF attacks on the Teduray communities in Maguindanao started when the military launched another major operation against the gunmen before Christmas.

Besana said the BIFF had suspected the Teduray to have provided information about their presence to the military.

On Christmas Day, the gunmen also razed three Teduray houses in the area.

On Dec. 29, BIFF gunmen seized six Teduray in Datu Hofer town but four of them escaped.

But the gunmen, on the same day, shot and killed Teduray leader Diego Met Dagadas in the upland village of Mt. Firis in Datu Saudi Ampatuan.

Senior Supt. Agustin Tello, Maguindanao police director, said the local government had been aiding Teduray evacuees staying at the Datu Hofer town center.

The International Committee of the Red Cross, in a report in December, said the military operations against the BIFF in Maguindanao had displaced more than 11,000 families since August last year. INQ

03 January 2017

BusinessMirror

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Military ops vs NPA resumes with end of holiday truce

MILITARY operations against the New People's Army (NPA) are set to resume unless President Duterte orders otherwise.

This was stressed by Department of National Defense (DND) Spokesman Arsenio Andolong when asked on whether government forces can go on the offensive with the conclusion of the Yuletide truce effective midnight Wednesday.

"As far as the rules of engagements are concerned, when the ceasefire lapses tonight [Tuesday] at 11:59 p.m. then that automatically means that we will resume offensive combat operations unless the Commander in Chief orders otherwise," he added.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines implemented a unilateral cease-fire during the Yuletide season, which started 6 p.m. of December 23 to 6 p.m. of December 26 and 6 p.m. of December 30 up to 6 p.m. until 11:59 p.m. this January 2.

Andolong said the government is determined to resolve the insurgency threat as its solution is critical for national development.

"It is really a national priority, our peace and order situation is critical to achieving national development, we have areas [where] local economies are not prospering because of the activities of the terrorists, especially those engaged in kidnapping, arson, extortion and it is of paramount importance and in fact as far as DND is concerned, it is part of the policy guidance of the National Defense Secretary Delfin N. Lorenzana to conduct focused operations so that this may be achieved," he added. *PNA*

03 January 2017



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03 January 2017

Malaya
The National Newspaper

Page: B2

Combat ops against NPA resume today

BY VICTOR REYES

MILITARY combat operations against the New People's Army rebels are due to resume today as the government's unilateral New Year truce with the communists ended at 11:59 p.m. Tuesday.

"When the ceasefire lapses tonight (Tuesday night) at 11:59 (p.m.), that automatically means that we will resume combat operations, unless the commander-in-chief orders otherwise," said Arsenio Andolong, spokesman of the Department of National Defense.

President Duterte declared a Christmas truce from December

23 to 26, and a New Year's truce from December 30 to January 2. The communists reciprocated the government declaration to cover the same dates.

Andolong said the traditional yuletide truce "was generally successful although there were skirmishes that happened."

He said the NPA attacked a military detachment in Davao Oriental on December 25 and attempted to abduct a government militiaman in Compostela Valley on December 26.

AFP spokesman Col. Edgard Arevalo said the two incidents "show the duplicity and deception

of the communist terrorists in saying one thing while doing the opposite."

Maj. Gen. Noel Clement, commander of the Army's 10th Infantry Division operating in the Davao region, said the military will step up operations against the NPA "so we can finally put a stop to their atrocities and extortion."

Andolong said government is serious in ending the insurgency problem which he said has set back development in the countryside.

"It is really a national priority. Our peace and order situation is critical to achieving national development... Local economies are not prospering because of the ac-

tivities of the terrorists, especially those engaged in kidnapping, arson, and extortion," he said.

Andolong also said it is "really hard" to solve the insurgency problem overnight as it has been dragging on for nearly 50 years now and "we have a unique situation where we are simultaneously fighting several fronts."

"But in terms of seriousness (in ending the communist insurgency), the government is serious because if we are not able to solve this, we would have a hard time achieving development, we will have a hard time achieving progress," he said.

03 January 2017

The Manila Times

Page: A2

Military resumes operations vs NPA

THE military will resume combat operations against the communist New People's Army (NPA) now that the holiday truce is over, the Department of National Defense (DND) said on Tuesday.

DND spokesman Arsenio Andolong said starting at 12 a.m. on Wednesday, the military will pursue operations against the communist rebels.

"The insurgency problem is really a national priority. Our peace and order situation is critical to achieving national development," Andolong told reporters.

"We have areas that local economies are not prospering because of the activities of the terrorists especially those engaged in kidnapping, arson, extortion," he added.

Andolong said the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) is facing "plenty of enemies on several fronts" but it is serious in ending the communist insurgency "because it would be hard to achieve progress if this will not be addressed."

Maj. Gen. Noel Clement, commander of the Philippine Army's 10th Infantry Division, said they will commence pursuit operations against the NPA rebels who



SAFE FOR NOW Women fighters of the New People's Army chat at their camp in Quezon province. PHOTO BY RENE DILAN

attacked troops while the holiday ceasefire was in force.

"Now is the best time to end this problem and let our country develop and improve the lives of our people," Clement said. "We will also do this so we can finally put a stop

to their atrocities and extortion."

AFP public affairs chief Col. Edgard Arevalo said all ground units will pursue NPA members who violated their own ceasefire declaration by attacking government troops and harassing civilians

"Our soldiers will resume proactive combat measures nationwide to protect vulnerable communities from armed threats and deceptions of the NPA," he said in a statement

DEMPSEY REYES

03 January 2017



Pahina. 1

AFP balik na sa combat ops vs NPA

Balik na muli sa combat operations ang tropa ng Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) laban sa teroristang New People's Army (NPA).

Inihayag kahapon ni Defense spokesman Arsenio Andolong na pormal ng nagtapos ang holiday truce na idineklara ng gobyerno laban sa CPP-NPA dakong alas-11:59 ng gabi ng Martes.

"Effective 1200 (midnight) simula na, as far as the rules of engagements are concerned, when the ceasefire lapses tonight at 1159 then that automatically means that we will resume offensive combat operations unless the Commander in Chief orders otherwise," pahayag ni Andolong.

Una nang ipinatupad ng AFP ang Suspension of Military Operations (SOMO) laban sa NPA terrorists, ang armed wing ng CPP upang bigyang daan ang tigil putukan sa panahon ng kapaskuhan nitong

2017 at pagsalubong sa Bagong Taon.

Ang tigil putukan ay nagsimula alas-6 ng gabi noong Disyembre 23 hanggang alas-11:59 ng gabi ng Dis. 26, 2017 at mula alas-6 ng gabi ng Disyembre 30 hanggang 11:59 ng gabi sa Enero 2, 2018.

Binigyang diin ni Andolong na isa sa mga prayoridad at misyon ng AFP ay ang tapusin ang 47 taong terorismo na inihahasik ng komunistang mga terorista para makamitan ang peace and order sa buong bansa. (Joy Cantos)

03 January 2017



Pahina. 1

CPP-NPA, pinatunayan na kalaban ng estado

PINATUNAYAN lang ng Communist Party of the Philippines- New People's Army na sila ay mga kalaban ng estado.

Ito ang reaksyon ni Presidential Communications Office Secretary Martin Andanan sa balita ng grupo na pababagsakin nila ngayong 2018 si Pangulong Rodrigo Roa Duterte.

Ayon kay Sec. Andanan, kung planong pabagsakin ng isang grupo ang Pangulo, nangahulugan din ito na gusto rin nitong pabagsakin ang buong

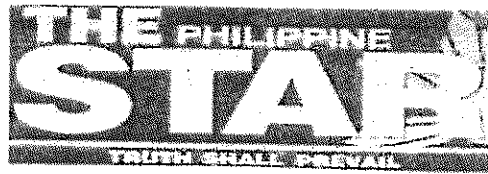
sambayanan na bumoto sa Pangulo.

Binigyang-diin ni Sec. Andanan na hindi na mahhirapang magpasya ang korte na maglabas ng desisyon hinggil sa proklamasyon ng Pangulo na teroristang grupo ang New People's Army dahil sa pahayag na ito ng CPP.

Matatandaan na una nang tinawag na mga terorista ni Pangulong Duterte ang NPA dahil sa mga pag-atakung ginagawano sa mga tropa ng gobyerno.

KRIS JOSE

03 January 2017



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Duterte's SC appointee to handle opposition petition vs ML

By EDU PUNAY

The petition of opposition lawmakers in the Supreme Court (SC) against the one-year extension of martial law in Mindanao has been assigned to an appointee of President Duterte.

An insider in the SC said the petition filed last week by opposition lawmakers led by Albay Rep. Edcel Lagman was raffled to Associate Justice Noel Tijam, Duterte's second appointee to the high court. While the petition was filed during the holiday break of the SC, Tijam had to review it and recommend the issuance of an order requiring the executive department to submit its comment since the Constitution sets deadline for the high court to resolve the petition.

Upon Tijam's recommendation, the SC through Chief Justice Ma. Lourdes Sereno, issued the order last week requiring the Office of the Solicitor General to answer the petition and submit its comment within 10 days.

In their petition, Lagman and company asked the SC to issue a temporary restraining order "before the effectivity on Jan. 1, 2018 of the challenged re-extension" of martial law.

The other petitioners were Reps. Tomasito Villarin (Akbayan Citizens' Action party-list), Edgar Erice (Caloocan City,

2nd District), Teddy Baguilat Jr. (Ifugao), Gary Alejano (Magdalo party-list) and Emmanuel Billones (Capiz, 1st District).

Petitioners pointed out that under the 1987 Constitution, the phrase "imminent danger" was deleted, as part of the safeguards against abuse of power.

"'Rebellion' or 'invasion' is neither a state of mind nor state of fear. It must be actual, not contingent. It must be real, not contrived," they stressed.

The lawmakers also said that the "leadership and supermajority of Congress of the Philippines" violated the safeguards of the Constitution when it "approved baselessly and with prudent alacrity" Duterte's request for an extension of martial law.

Duterte cited the "continuing crime" of rebellion by the New People's Army in his request for one-year extension of martial law, which Congress approved via an overwhelming 240-27 vote last month.

Solicitor General Jose Calida said he would seek the dismissal of the new petition, arguing that the extension of martial law was necessary even if the Marawi siege stemming from the attack of local terror group Maute-IS in May last year has already ended.

He also argued that the validity of the extension of martial law was resolved by Congress as provided for in the Constitution.

03 January 2017

MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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AFP-Visayas to implement new dev't, security plan

By MINERVA NEWMAN

CEBU CITY — The Armed Forces of the Philippine (AFP) prepares its troops for the six-year implementation of the AFP Development Support and Security Plan (DSSP) or “Kapayapaan 2017-2022,” a strategic framework in “winning the peace” for inclusive socio-economic and human development of the Filipinos.

Col. Medel Aguilar, chief of the U-7 AFP-Visayas Central Command told Manila Bulletin that despite the government’s efforts to win peace and war against terrorism and insurgency, structural problems continue to exist and haunt development in the countryside.

Aguilar said the previous Internal Peace and Security Plan (2010-2016) adopted a “Bayanihan” concept of waging sustaining peace. It was people-oriented based on the understanding of the root causes of insurgency involving everyone in the communities.

“We had gains. There were major terrorist and insurgency groups that opted to talk peace and non-violent tracks with government – MILF, MNLF, CPLA and the RPMP/RPA-ABB,” Aguilar added.

According to Aguilar, the Visayas regions remain peaceful with pockets of insurgency in the Guihulngan and the ‘CHICKS’ (Candoni, Hinoba-an, Ilog, Cauayan, Kabankalan and Sipalay City) areas in Negros Island and attempts to exploit the mass base in Bohol and in

Northern Samar.

“However, they did not prosper in Bohol and the rest of the provinces in Central Visayas because the anti-insurgency campaign movement of the region is tightly packed at the ‘Purok’ level system,” Medel added.

The Bohol Peace Model is an acknowledged working mechanism against insurgency and terrorism. This is the same “Purok” level system that is also being mobilized for rescue and response during disasters and a chain link in information for anti-criminality programs, the AFP-CentCom spokesperson explained.

Medel bared that the important mission now of the AFP under this plan is “development support operations” to civil authorities and all other stakeholders to sustain peace, ensure security and help maintain public order to foster the foundation for inclusive socio-economic growth of the country.

Medel said, governance is now part of the AFP’s operations and activities. “Winning the peace must be centered on compassion and radical changes in the bureaucracy including the AFP,” Medel added.

Medel explained that the AFP operations are now anchored on Duterte’s major policies that include the institutionalization of peace and order; inclusive socio-economic growth and development agenda; streamlining the bureaucracy and pursuing an independent foreign policy.

ONLINE NEWS

03 JANUARY 2017

Military not condoning personnel's illegal actions

From the Philippine News Agency (Jan 2):

The Philippine Army (PA) does not tolerate any illegal acts committed by any of its personnel.

This was emphasized by Army spokesperson Lt. Col. Ray Tiongson when asked on what the PA plans to do with its personnel caught indiscriminately firing their weapons during the New Year's festivities.

"The police is now investigating the incident. Corporal Richard John Quijano is an active member of the Philippine Army while Staff Sergeant Jamael Mindalano has already retired from the military service since December 31, 2016. While the Philippine Army has no jurisdiction over the retired personnel, Corporal Quijano may face criminal charges, dishonorable separation from the service and forfeiture of all his privileges and retirement benefits if found guilty," he added.

Also, Tiongson said the PA has strict regulations against illegal discharge of firearms and other infractions of the Articles of War.

"As we have established in the past, the Philippine Army does not condone nor tolerate misdemeanor committed by its personnel," he added.

Earlier, Taguig City Police Station operatives arrested Mindalano and Quijano of the Light Reaction Company, Light Reaction Regiment, Special Operations Command for indiscriminate firing, alarm and scandal, illegal possession of firearms and ammunition, physical injury, direct assault, resisting arrest and serious disobedience.

Also recovered from their possession were two .45 caliber pistols, a 9mm pistol, a .38 caliber revolver and assorted ammunition.

Their illegal activities were reported to authorities by their victim, Jolly Moreno, who was hit in his right mid-section by a ricocheting bullet during the festivities.

Meanwhile, Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) spokesperson Col. Edgard Arevalo echoed Tiongson's statement.

"The police is now investigating the incident. If proven guilty, they will be punished accordingly," Arevalo said.

"As we have established in the past, the AFP does not condone nor tolerate any misdemeanor of military personnel," the AFP spokesperson stressed.

<http://www.pna.gov.ph>

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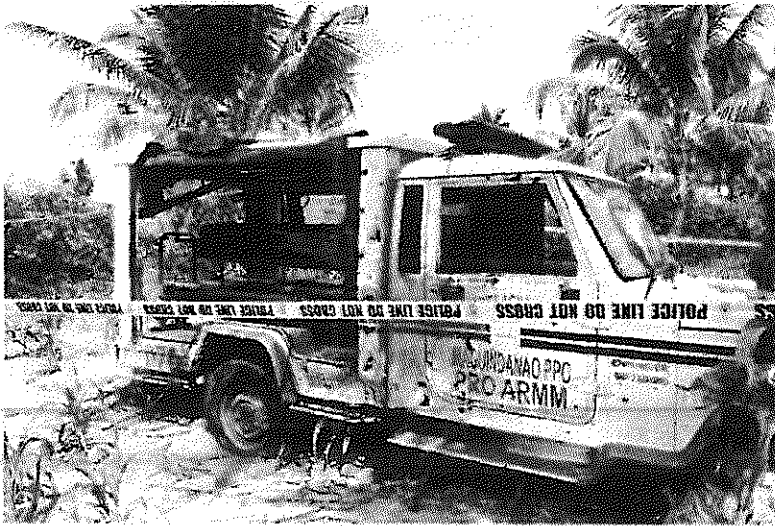
Cop killed, 7 others injured in roadside blast in Maguindanao

From the MindaNews (Jan 2):

SHARIFF AGUAK, Maguindanao -- A police officer was killed while five others were injured when a bomb exploded as the police patrol's vehicle passed some 400 meters away from the headquarters of the Philippine National Police's Provincial Police Office in the poblacion at around 8:10 p.m. Sunday, New Year's eve.

Two soldiers from the 57th IB were injured when another improvised explosive device (IED) went off some 50 meters from the provincial hospital Monday morning, less than a kilometer away from Sunday night's blast.

Sr. Supt. Agustin Tello, chief of the Provincial Police Office (PPO) of Maguindanao, said the driver of the police vehicle lost control, swerving towards the cornfield on the right side of the road.



SPO4 Max Kaibat of the Police Provincial Office in Maguindanao did not make it to New Year 2018. He was killed when an improvised explosive went off as their vehicle passed the road near their headquarters in Shariff Aguak town at 8:10 p.m. on December 31. Five others were injured. Less than 12 hours later, another roadside blast was reported less than a kilometer away, injuring two soldiers. MindaNews photo by FERDINANDH B. CABRERA

Tello said the police has been patrolling the area following security threats from the Bangsamoro Islamic Liberation Front (BIFF) since Christmas and immediately after a brownout struck the town Sunday night.

Police blamed the blast on an improvised explosive device (IED) allegedly planted by the BIFF.

Killed was SPO4 Max Kaibat, leader of the patrol team.

On New Year's day, another IED went off along the highway, less than a kilometer away in Barangay Limongo in neighboring Datu Hoffer town at 7:34 a.m. injuring two soldiers from the 57th IB who were then conducting road security for those delivering humanitarian assistance for Indigenous Peoples (IPs) who fled their villages following a series of attacks by the BIFF.

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Two soldiers were injured in a roadside blast at 7:34 a.m. in Shariff Aguak town, Maguindanao, less than a kilometer from the site of the roadside blast at 8:10 p.m. on December 31, 2017, which killed a police officer and injured five others. The soldiers were providing road security for humanitarian assistance to reach Indigenous Peoples who fled their villages when the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) attacked their villages. The improvised bombs were allegedly planted by the BIFF. MindaNews photo by FERDINANDH B. CABRERA

BIFF elements were reported to have set on fire at least 16 houses of the Tedurays, Lambiangans and Dulangan Manobos on Sunday.

<http://www.mindanews.com>

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4 injured in Maguindanao ambush

From the Mindanao Examiner (Jan 2):

Four people were injured when unidentified gunmen ambushed a truck carrying picnickers in the troubled province of Maguindanao in southern Philippines, police said Tuesday.

Police said the truck was carrying over 2 dozen people and heading to Digos City in Davao del Sur province when ambushed early Monday morning in the town of Pagalungan. The victims came from North Cotabato's Midsayap town and among the wounded was a nine-year child and the driver, July Pacquira, 31.

Two others wounded in the attack have been identified as Roland Custodio, 30, and Carol Samaranos, 29. Police said the driver did not stop even though he was shot and drove until they reached the safe zone and sought help from authorities.

No individual or group claimed responsibility for the ambush, but the province is known lair of rebel groups. Maguindanao Governor Esmael Mangudadatu did not give any statement on the attack or the violence in Maguindanao, one of 5 provinces under the Muslim autonomous region.

<http://mindanaoexaminer.com>

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Alert auxiliary cop foils Cotabato bomb attack

From the Philippine News Agency (Jan 2):

COTABATO CITY -- An alert police deputy prevented what could have been a bloody New Year for families spending the holidays at the Rizal Park here after he alerted police of his discovery – an improvised bomb.

Senior Supt. Rolly Octavio, city police director, did not name the police auxiliary but lauded him for his alertness.

At about 1:30 p.m. on Monday, a suspected improvised bomb was found beside the city plaza stage where people mingled to celebrate the New Year.

Army and police bomb experts quickly responded and deactivated the explosive. No one has claimed responsibility for the attempt.

Octavio said the explosive device was made from black powder in a mineral water container with two kilos of size 2 nails, blasting cap, timer and detonating cord.

Police said it was meant to kill and maim people considering the powerful device was planted in a place filled with merry makers. The local police force remained on full alert following the incident.

<http://www.pna.gov.ph>

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421 Teduray families displaced by BIFF attacks

From the MindaNews (Jan 2):

A total of 421 families of Indigenous Peoples in Maguindanao — Tedurays, Lambiangans and Dulangan Manobos — in their claimed ancestral domain that the military has referred to as the “Mt. Firis Complex,” fled their homes following a series of recent attacks by the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) that started shortly before Christmas.

The Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao’s Humanitarian Emergency Action Response Team (ARMM-HEART) recorded a total of 421 families — 136 families in Hill 224 and 285 families in Datu Hoffer town.

Jo Henry, ARMM-Heart spokesperson, said Monday morning that they were on their way to distribute relief goods to the 285 displaced families in Datu Hoffer.



Relief distribution of the ARMM’s Humanitarian Emergency Assistance Response team (HEART) at the municipal gym in Datu Hoffer, Maguindanao on New Year’s Day for 285 families displaced during a series of attacks by the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters. Photo courtesy of ARMM-HEART

Timuay Jovel Tenorio told MindaNews on Monday that a total of 347 families have sought refuge in his area in Sitio Bagung, Barangay Kabengi in Datu Saudi Ampatuan.

Tenorio said 16 houses in Sitio Makon, Barangay Limpungo in Datu Hoffer town, were set on fire by the BIFF on Sunday.

In a press statement on December 28, the Army’s 6th Infantry Division said the BIFF attacked civilian communities in Datu Hoffer and Datu Unsay in Maguindanao.

It said the BIFF burned houses made of light materials in a Teduray Community at Sitio Makon, Brgy Iginampong, Datu Unsay; emplacing and blasting of improvised explosive device (IED) at Sitio Perez, Brgy Maitumaig, Datu Unsay killed an innocent civilian and kidnapping and killing of two indigenous people (IPs), Alex Mintos and Hector Mintos, who are residents of Brgy Limpungo, Datu Hoffer.

The Joint Task Force Central vehemently condemned the “acts of terror” against the civilian populace.

The 6th ID press statement said an air strike was launched at Datu Unsay on Christmas Day, December 25, following the burning of houses that resulted to the killing of four BIFF members and wounding of five others.

The BIFF, founded by Ustadz Amiril Umra Kato, broke away from the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in March 2010 and has since broken into three factions.

Kato suffered a stroke in November 2011 and passed away on April 14, 2015.

<http://www.mindanews.com>

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Scout Rangers receive Kalashnikov rifles

From Update Philippines (Jan 2):

Department of National Defense (DND) Secretary Delfin Lorenzana visited the First Scout Ranger Regiment (FSSR) on December 28, 2017.

FSSR is a Philippine Army Special Operations Command unit specializing in anti-guerrilla jungle warfare, raids, ambushes, close quarters combat, urban warfare and sabotage.

During his visit, Secretary Lorenzana handed over Kalashnikov rifles (AK) to the said unit.

In October 2017, President Rodrigo Duterte personally accepted 5000 units of Kalashnikov rifles from the Russian government.

The Russian government also turned over one million units of cartridges with steel core bullets for said rifles.

5,000 units of steel helmets and 20 units of Ural-4320 multi-purpose trucks from the Russian government were also turned over.

<https://www.update.ph>

Navy receiving missile system, anti-submarine helicopter in 2018

From Update Philippines (Jan 2):

Two more platforms which will help boost the Philippine Navy (PN)'s capabilities to defend the country's vast maritime domains are expected to be delivered this 2018. This was bared by Defense spokesperson Arsenio Andolong when sought for an update on other deliverable items for the PN this year.

First among the deliverables is the Rafael Advanced Defense Systems Ltd's Spike ER (extended range) missile systems which will be fitted on three of the Navy's brand-new multi-purpose assault craft (MPAC) which was activated last May 22.

The weapons are on anti-ship mode meaning it can engage surface vessel targets and is capable of penetrating 1,000 mm (39 inches) of rolled homogeneous armor and has a maximum range of five miles.

And while not giving the exact dates for the delivery of the missiles and its platforms for security purpose, Andolong said the weapons would be delivered to the country "very early in the first quarter of the year."

The missiles and launchers were supposed to be delivered by December but this did not materialize due to some transportation issues.

Second on the deliverables for the PN are two brand-new AgustaWestland AW-159 "Wildcat" anti-submarine helicopters which are expected to arrive the last quarter of 2018 and early 2019, Andolong added.

He did not further elaborate on what weapons and surveillance systems the AW-159s would be carrying for security reasons.

The above-mentioned helicopters will be based on the two frigates on order from Hyundai Heavy Industries.

The AW-159 (previously called the Future Lynx and Lynx Wildcat) is an improved version of the Westland Super Lynx military helicopter.

It has a crew of two, has a maximum speed of 291 km/h (181 mph), range of 777 km (483 miles), ferry range of 963 km (598 miles) and an endurance of one and a-half hours (four hours and 30 minutes if fitted with an auxiliary fuel tank).

<https://www.update.ph>

'Rumblings' in the Navy over chief's relief?

From Malaya Business Insight (Jan 3):

THE military's Board of Generals has recommended three senior Navy officers as Navy chief, to replace Vice Adm. Ronald Joseph Mercado who was unceremoniously sacked last month.

The three are led by Rear Adm. Robert Empedrad who is the acting Navy chief in concurrent capacity as the AFP's deputy chief of staff for retirees and reservists affairs.

A senior military official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the two others recommended by the board were Rear Adm. Giovanni Carlo Bacordo and Rear Adm. Rommel Ong.

Empedrad is a member of the Philippine Military Academy Class of 1986, whose members include PNP chief Ronald dela Rosa. Bacordo is from PMA Class 1987 and is commander of the Naval Sea Systems Command. Ong, also of PMA Class 1987, is the Navy's inspector general.

The senior military officer said Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana is pushing for Empedrad who was named acting Navy chief after Mercado was relieved on December 19, but Empedrad "is not the most qualified" among the three.

The officer said there are "questions" about Empedrad's qualifications "because he did not command any Naval Force (equivalent to Division in the Army)."

"(It should be) either Bacordo or Ong," said the source. "They are definitely more qualified. Selection should be based on merit and qualification."

The source said Empedrad "will further divide the Navy" and there are "rumblings" in the Navy over the frigate project and Mercado's unceremonious relief.

Lorenzana said he recommended to President Duterte Mercado's relief for ignoring his directives regarding the Navy's frigate acquisition program. He said Mercado's acts were tantamount to insubordination. He said Mercado had been pushing for a combat management system (CMS) produced by a French firm for two frigates being built by Hyundai Heavy Industries of Korea for P18 billion, including the weapons system and ammunition.

Lorenzana was against Mercado's position, saying the installation of the CMS should be left to Hyundai which is reportedly set to install a cheaper and less capable CMS.

<http://www.malaya.com.ph>

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Army's 3ID new chief bats for local peace talks

From the Manila Times (Jan 1):

The new commanding general of the Philippine Army's 3rd Infantry Division (3ID) based in Jamindan, Capiz said he is open to facilitate localized peace talks with the communist rebels.

Brigadier General Dinoh Dolina, who took over the post of Major General Jon Aying on Friday, December 29, said the local government unit should pursue the peace talks with the New People's Army (NPA), as the Army is willing to help in the negotiation process.

He called on the communist rebels to surrender because soldiers will always be ready to fight if the NPA choose to continue the armed struggle.

"We are here to protect the people and secure the state. There is no need to shed blood in order to attain peace," he said

The mountainous town of Jamindan is home to NPA rebels in Western Visayas operating in the provinces of Capiz and Iloilo.

Earlier, President Rodrigo Duterte cancelled the peace negotiations with the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army-National Democratic Front and Dolina said he will focus on his marching order to neutralize the rebels in his area of responsibility.

He added that a battalion from Mindanao is expected to return to the region this year and an additional battalion will also be organized as part of the force multipliers that greatly helps troops in maintaining peace in the island.

He also urged the cooperation of the civilians and valuable support of all stakeholders to achieve their goal.

Dolina was previously assigned at the Armed Forces of the Philippines headquarters in Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City and took over the command from Aying in a ceremony held at Camp Macario Peralta in Jamindan.

Aying, who retired on Monday, served as commander of the 3ID for 13 months. He was also commander of both the 61st Infantry Battalion and 303rd Infantry Brigade in Negros Occidental.

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AFP, PNP hunt BIFF suspected of New Year bombings in Maguindanao

By

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Soldiers on guard in Shariff Aguak, Maguindanao. (Reuters file)

SHARIFF AGUAK, Maguindanao — Joint police and military forces are hunting down gunmen of the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters suspected of setting off two separate roadside bombs that left a police officer dead and seven other state security personnel wounded over the New Year's.

The first bomb, which was detonated at 8 p.m. on December 31, killed Shariff Aguak police officer Max Kaibat, who died while undergoing surgery at the Maguindanao Provincial Hospital, just meters away from the blast site.

Police Officer 3 Jalison Abdullah, PO1s Archie Ansare Amelista, Ricardo Almonia, Alimodin Nuphay and Zainoden Abdullah, all of the town police force, were injured.

The Shariff Aguak policemen were patrolling the town when their vehicle was hit by the explosion, Senior Superintendent Agustin Tello, Maguindanao police director, said in a report.

At 7 a.m. on New Year's Day, the second bomb was detonated in Barangay Limpongo, Datu Hofer town as an Army truck was passing by.

Shrapnel wounded Privates First Class Nelmar Acaso and John Mark Roquero of the 57th Infantry Battalion.

Authorities believe the twin bombings were carried out by the BIFF, which has been the target of government offensives since Christmas Day.

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