

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



TEAM ARMY

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OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

NEWS CLIPPINGS

24 January 2018

Wednesday

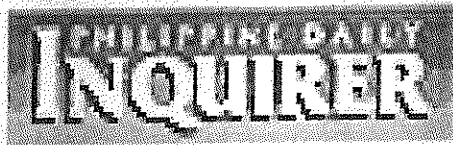
Army Core Purpose: Serving the people. Securing the land.

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BALANCED NEWS • FEARLESS VIEWS

TODAY'S WEATHER FORECAST | JANUARY 24, 2018 | WEDNESDAY

LAOAG CITY 22 - 30 °C

TUGUEGARAO CITY 30 °C

BAGUIO CITY 15 - 24 °C

SBMA/CLARK 24 - 32 °C

TAGAYTAY CITY 22 - 27 °C

METRO MANILA 23 - 29 °C

LEGAZPI CITY 24 - 31 °C

ILOILO/BACOLOD CITY 25 - 30 °C

TACLOBAN CITY 24 - 28 °C

PUERTO PRINCESA 24 - 31 °C

METRO CEBU 25 - 29 °C

CAGAYAN DE ORO 24 - 29 °C

ZAMBOANGA CITY 25 - 32 °C

METRO DAVAO 24 - 31 °C

SUNRISE 6:25 AM

SUNSET 5:51 PM

MOONRISE 11:15 AM

MOONSET 11:51 PM

NEW MOON JAN 17 10:17 AM

FIRST QUARTER JAN 25 8:20 AM

LOW TIDE 9:21 AM 0.06 Meter

HIGH TIDE 1:50 AM 0.68 Meter

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 rain

	JAN 23	JAN 24	JAN 25	JAN 26	JAN 27	JAN 28
METRO MANILA	22 - 28 °C	23 - 27 °C	22 - 27 °C	21 - 26 °C	24 - 28 °C	25 - 27 °C
TUGUEGARAO	21 - 29 °C	21 - 29 °C	24 - 29 °C	24 - 28 °C	25 - 30 °C	25 - 31 °C
LAOAG	22 - 30 °C	21 - 28 °C	24 - 31 °C	24 - 31 °C	24 - 32 °C	24 - 32 °C
BAGUIO	15 - 23 °C	15 - 21 °C	25 - 31 °C	25 - 30 °C	24 - 33 °C	24 - 33 °C
SBMA/CLARK	23 - 31 °C	24 - 30 °C	26 - 30 °C	26 - 29 °C		
TAGAYTAY	22 - 27 °C	21 - 26 °C			TACLOBAN	24 - 28 °C
LEGAZPI	24 - 29 °C	24 - 28 °C			CAGAYAN DE ORO	25 - 30 °C
PUERTO PRINCESA	24 - 31 °C	24 - 31 °C			METRO DAVAO	24 - 32 °C
ILOILO/BACOLOD	25 - 31 °C	25 - 30 °C			ZAMBOANGA	24 - 33 °C
METRO CEBU	26 - 30 °C	26 - 29 °C			<p>SAGOT KO, PADALA MO!</p>	

MONDAY - FRIDAY
11 AM & 5 PM

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

24 January 2018

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER

Page: A1

ECONOMY GROWS 6.7% AMID BPO SLOWDOWN

The Philippines' growth rate is the fastest in the region after China's 6.9 percent and Vietnam's 6.8 percent. Despite the country's GDP expansion, more Filipinos said they experienced hunger last December.

By Ben O. de Vera
and Doris Dumlao-Abadilla
@InquirerBiz

The Philippine economy, as measured by the gross domestic product (GDP), grew 6.7 percent in 2017, among the fastest in the region despite a slowdown in the business process outsourcing (BPO) industry.

In the fourth quarter, GDP grew at a slower rate of 6.6 percent, a pace similar to that a year ago but slower than the 7-percent expansion in the third quarter.

GDP, the total value of goods produced and services rendered in a given period, does not measure well-being or inequality.

The economy grew last year, though

slower than the 6.9 percent posted in 2016, even as more Filipinos said they experienced hunger last December, indicating that the benefits of economic expansion did not trickle down to the poor. (See story on Page A3.)

News of the GDP expansion also came in the wake of an Oxfam report that the richest 1 percent cornered 82 percent of the wealth generated in

2017, while the poorest half of humanity got nothing.

Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Ernesto M. Pernia said the GDP growth last year was the fastest in the region after China's 6.9 percent and Vietnam's 6.8 percent.

"The [growth] was good but lower than expectations," said Jonathan Ravelas, chief strategist at the country's

leading lender BDO Unibank.

Ravelas, however, said "the recovery in consumption and further improvement in government spending highlighted the underlying strength of the economy."

Growth slightly slowed last year in the absence of election-related spending that boosted growth in 2016, according to Pernia.

A3

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FROM A1

He noted that GDP growth rates in 2005 and 2011—both postelection years—dove deeper to 4.8 percent from 6.7 percent in 2004 and to 3.7 percent from 7.6 percent in 2010, respectively.

“You can see that our decline is really very moderate at 0.2 percent of 1 percentage point,” he said.

Pernia acknowledged that the BPO industry, worth \$23 billion and employing 1.15 million people, was a “major contributing factor to this decline.”

The sector, which has become a major pillar of the Philippine economy, includes call centers and offices that carry out such functions for overseas companies as accounting, medical and legal transcription, software design, animation and even architecture.

Growth drivers

Industry officials said investment fell 31.3 percent year-on-year in the three months to last June, with threats by US President Donald Trump to bring back jobs outsourced abroad cited as a key factor.

There was also concern in the Philippines that automation and artificial intelligence could

eventually steal call-center jobs. National Statistician Lisa Grace S. Bersales said manufacturing, trade, as well as real estate, renting and business activities were the growth drivers in the fourth quarter.

From October to December, the industry sector grew 7.3 percent year-on-year; services, 6.8 percent; and agriculture, 2.4 percent, reversing the 1.3-percent decline in the same three-month period in 2016, Bersales said.

Services contributed 3.9 percentage points to total GDP growth; industry, 2.5 percentage points; and agriculture, 0.3 percentage point, Bersales said on Tuesday.

In the fourth quarter, robust government spending on public goods and services as well as double-digit growth in external merchandise trade sustained the economic expansion—the 10th straight quarter that GDP growth was above 6 percent.

Exports

“Growth in the fourth quarter was backed by robust growth of 14.3 percent in public spending—that was really the main driver, public spending—which was an increase from 4.5 percent in the previous year,” Bersales said.

On the expenditure side,

Pernia said external demand improved with growth in exports of goods bouncing back to 20.2 percent from 17.2 percent in the third quarter, offsetting the services exports sector's slowdown to 12.6 percent from 19.9 percent.

Pernia said domestic demand growth strengthened to 7.3 percent in the fourth quarter from 6.4 percent in the third.

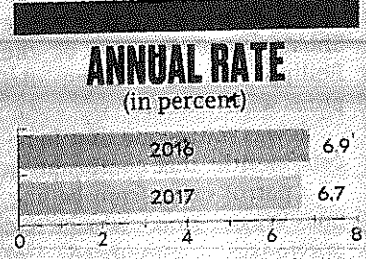
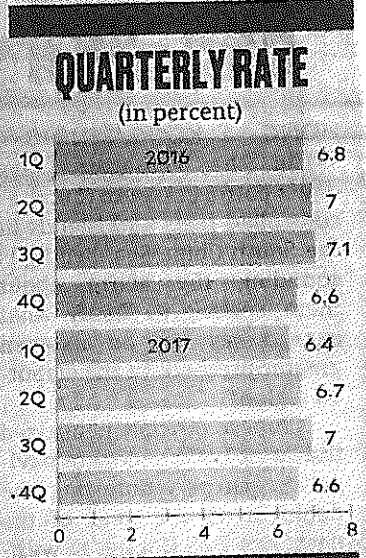
He said fixed investments accelerated to 9.3 percent with growth in durable equipment improving to more than 12.1 percent, indicating businesses' continued confidence in the long-term prospects of the economy.

In line with the “Build, Build, Build” infrastructure program, public construction spending jumped by a fourth in the last quarter, according to Pernia.

Slowing capital formation

April Lynn Lee-Tan, head of research at leading online stock brokerage COL Financial, said growth decelerated in the fourth quarter due to the slower increase in capital formation or investments.

In a research note, Tan noted that growth in capital formation reached 8.2 percent year-on-year in the fourth quarter, down from 8.7 percent in the



SOURCE: Philippine Statistics Authority

third, bringing full-year capital formation growth to 9 percent, down from 23.7 percent in 2016.

This was in turn attributed to the significant drop in private sector construction growth to 3.3 percent in 2017 from 11.5 percent in 2016. —WITH A REPORT FROM AFP INQ

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Page: 1

'IS looted gold, cash in Marawi'

P2 B loot used to recruit for new attacks

MARAWI CITY — Islamist insurgents looted cash, gold and jewelry worth tens of millions of dollars when they occupied this city last year — treasure one of their leaders has used to recruit around 250 fighters for fresh attacks.

The military said Humam Abdul Najib escaped from Marawi City, which the militants had hoped to establish as a stronghold for Islamic State (IS) in Southeast Asia, before

it was recaptured by the military in October after five months of ferocious battles and aerial bombardment.

Since then, Najib, also known as Abu Dar, has used the booty looted from bank vaults, shops and homes in Marawi to win over boys and young men in the impoverished province of Lanao del Sur, military officers in the area said. Hardened mercenaries are also joining, lured by the promise of money.

As a result, IS followers remain a potent threat in Southeast Asia even though hundreds of militants were killed in the battle for Marawi, the officers said.

"Definitely they haven't abandoned their intent to create a caliphate in Southeast Asia," Joint Task Force Marawi deputy commander Col. Romeo Brawner told *Reuters*.

"That's the overall objective,

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IS From Page 1

but in the meantime, while they are still trying to recover and build up again – fighters and weapons – our estimate is they are going to launch terrorist attacks," he added.

Last Saturday, militants wounded eight soldiers in two attacks in Lanao del Sur, according to Brawner, the first such violence since the recapture of Marawi.

In the early days of the occupation of Marawi last May, as black-clad fighters burned churches, released prisoners and cut the power supply, other militants targeted banks and the homes of wealthy citizens, commandeering hostages to help with the plunder.

"It was in the first week. They divided us into three groups with seven people each," J.R. Montesa, a Christian construction worker who was captured by the militants, said.

Using explosives, the militants blew open the vaults of the city's three main banks, Landbank, the Philippine National Bank (PNB) and the Al Amanah Islamic Bank, Montesa told *Reuters* in a town near Marawi. They trucked away the booty, easily slipping out of Marawi because a security cor-

don was not fully in place.

They also raided jewelry stores, pawnshops and businesses.

Landbank and Al Amanah did not respond to requests for comment. The PNB said recovering losses because of the Marawi fighting was a concern, but did not give details.

The Islamic celebration of Ramadan was looming at the time the militants struck and banks, businesses and homes had more money than usual, according to Marawi police chief Ebra Moxsir. The Maranaos, the ethnic group that dominates the area around Marawi, are mostly Muslims.

"There was a lot of money inside the battle area," Moxsir told *Reuters*. "Maranaos keep millions of pesos in safety vaults in their homes. Gold, also. It is a tradition of the Maranao to give gifts of money (during Ramadan)."

Montesa said vans they loaded with the spoils of the raids were "overflowing" with money, gold and other valuables stuffed into every crevice of the vehicles.

"They were saying it was a gift from Allah. They would say 'Allahu Akbar' (God is great) while we were stealing," he said.

The military and police have

also been accused by rights groups and Marawi residents of looting during the conflict.

Brawner said a small number of soldiers had been disciplined for looting but the practice was not widespread.

The center of Marawi – home to its major banks, main market and grandest residences – however, was under the control of militants for months.

Brawner said authorities were unclear exactly how much was taken by the militants.

"It's hard for us to say. We have heard about P2 billion (\$39.4 million) but that's just an estimate," he said.

The government also said the regrouping of militants in Mindanao was dangerous.

Presidential spokesman Harry Roque told *Reuters*. "There is always the danger of these groups regaining strength enough to mount another Marawi-like operation."

Najib is believed to have fled Marawi early in the battle. There are conflicting reports about whether he had a dispute with other leaders or left as part of a preconceived plan.

He attempted to return in August with 50 to 100 more fighters to reinforce the militants, who by then were losing ground, but he was prevented.

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by an improved security cordon, Brawner said.

"According to reports, they were able to recruit another 100 to 150. So the estimate is 250 all in all, and this includes children," he said. "They are trying to recruit orphans, relatives of the fighters who died and sympathizers."

Parents of children are offered as much as P70,000 (\$1,380) plus a monthly salary of as much as P30,000 (\$590) to hand over their sons to the group, according to security sources and community leaders briefed on the recruitment.

The average family income in the Philippines is P22,000 per month, according to a 2015 government survey. It was about half that in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, where Marawi and surrounding areas lie.

Brawner said local residents had told the military that the militant group was also offering bonuses of up to P10,000 (\$200) for killing a soldier.

Manila-based security expert Rommel Banlaoi said more experienced fighters had also been recruited. These were "mercenaries" attracted by the payouts, he said, but Najib has also tapped into disaffection among Maranaos angered by the destruction of large parts of Marawi by the Philippine military's bombing campaign.

"That kind of narrative is being used by the ISIS to lure people to continue the fight," Banlaoi said, using another

acronym for the Islamic State.

With the looted funds and a loyal following, Najib, could become the new "emir" of the IS in Southeast Asia following the death of Isnilon Hapilon in the battle for Marawi, security analysts said.

Najib is a hardened fighter and cleric who studied in the Middle East and reportedly trained with militants in Afghanistan, according to them. He co-founded Khalifa Islamiyah Mindanao, an insurgent group formed in about 2012 that launched a series of bombings in Mindanao.

"He is a very, very important person because he has been there from the start," Banlaoi said.

Najib had links to Al-Qaeda, which earned him the nickname "al Zargawi of the Philippines," a reference to the slain leader of Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), Abu Musab al Zargawi. AQI morphed into the IS, to which Najib pledged allegiance in 2014.

Najib, according to Banlaoi, worked closely with Mahmud Ahmad, a Malaysian militant believed to have died in Marawi who was the key conduit between the Philippines fighters and the IS leadership in Syria and Iraq.

Banlaoi said the recruitment effort by the pro-IS remnants led by Najib was "massive and systematic."

"If you are well funded, you can do a lot of things," Banlaoi said. – Reuters

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Soldiers helping Mayon evacuees ambushed by NPA

By CELSO AMO

LEGAZPI CITY – A soldier was wounded in an ambush staged by New People's Army (NPA) rebels in Guinobatan, Albay on Monday.

Personnel of the 83rd Infantry Battalion were on a military truck on their way to Barangay Doña Mercedes in Guinobatan, Albay to evacuate residents after the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology raised Mayon Volcano's alert level to 4 when they were waylaid.

Pfc. Gilno Canuel was wounded in the exchange of gunfire, which also left sev-

eral NPA guerrillas wounded, Senior Inspector Malou Calubaquib, Bicol police spokesperson, said.

Guinobatan police officers set up a checkpoint along the provincial road in Barangay Tinago following the incident.

"I am appealing to the NPA to help us bring the evacuees to a safe area," Cedric Daep of the Albay Provincial Security and Emergency Management Office told a press conference yesterday.

The Army's 9th Infantry Division is helping evacuate residents affected by Mayon Volcano's eruption.

2 NPA rebels held

In Agusan del Sur, two NPA rebels with pending warrants were arrested in La Paz town on Monday.

Crisanto, 63, and Blim, 25, both surnamed Mondejar, were arrested based on warrants issued by Agusan del Sur Regional Trial Court Branch 6 Judge Kimal Salacop on Nov. 23, 2017.

Chief Superintendent Noli Romana, Caraga police director, said they have intensified their campaign against persons with pending warrants under the Philippine National Police's Manhunt Charlie.

'Pure hogwash'

As this developed, the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) turned down President Duterte's call for them to surrender.

"Duterte's call for the NPA to surrender in exchange for cash, housing and jobs is pure hogwash," the CPP said in a statement posted on its website.

The government is intensifying its efforts to entice more rebels to surrender to make it appear that the NPA is weakening, the statement added – **With Ben Serrano, Artemio Dumlao, Jose Rodel Clapano**

24 January 2018



Page. 2

2 NASUGATAN SA LABAN DINAKMA

Mga natitirang terorista sa Lanao, isa-isang tinutugis

Nadakip ng militar ang dalawang kapwa sugatan at hinihinalang terorista kasunod ng engkurwentrang sumiklab nang salakayin ng Philippine Army kahapon ang hideout ng mga ito sa Pagayawan, Lanao del Sur.

Nagsasagawa ngayon ng masusang imbestigasyon laban sa dalawang hindi kinilalang suspek, na nasugatan sa pakikipaglaban sa mga tauhan ng 1st Infantry Division ng Army, na sumalakay sa dalawang hideout ng mga terorista sa mga bayan ng Masinat Pagayawan.

Sinabi ni Joint Task Force Ranao

deputy commander Col. Romeo Brawner na nasa 200 ang aktibong miyembro ng mga terorista sa Lanao del Sur na pinamumunuan ng ilang kumander.

Inihayag pa ni Brawner na patuloy ang kanilang intelligence monitoring sa lokasyon ng isang Kumander Abu Dar, na una nang nasangkot sa pagnanakaw ng milyun-milyong pisong cash sa mga bangko, subalit nakatakas umano sa kasagsagan ng digmaan ng puwersa ng gobyerno laban sa Maute-ISIS sa Marawi City noong nakaraang taon.

Kinumpirma rin ni Brawner na anim

na sundalo ang nasugatan sa nasabing bakbakan, at nagpapagaling na sa ospital ang mga ito.

Nakarekober din, aniya, ang mga sundalo ng matataas na kalibre ng baril mula sa mga terorista.

Magugunitang pinasabog ng militar ang dalawang bangkang de-motor na sinakyan ng nasa 10 terorista na kanilang nakasagupa nitong Sabado ng inadaling araw. Pinariniwalaang nasawi ang lahat ng sakay sa nasabing bangka.

Fer Taboy

24 January 2018



Pahina. 3

7 NPA, 35 suporter, sumuko sa militar

CAMP NAKAR, Lucena City - Pitong teroristang New People's Army (NPA) at 35 tagasuporta ang sumuko sa mga awtoridad sa lalawigan ng Masbate, ayon sa ulat ng Southern Luzon Command. Ayon kay SOLCOM Commander Lt General Danilo Pamonag, isinuko rin ng NPA ang kani-kanilang armas sa 2nd Infantry Battalion, 903rd Infantry Battalion, 9th Infantry Division ng Phil. Army. Kabilang sa mga armas na isinuko ay dalawang M16 Armalite rifle, cal 30 Garand, tatlong cal 38 revolver, cal 45 pistol at improvised explosive device (IED). Kasunod nito, sumuko naman ang 35 miyembro ng Militiang Bayan na supporter ng NPA sa Bicol Region gayundin ang kanilang anim na baril. Ang mga sumukong terorista ay sasailalim sa Comprehensive Local Integration Program (CLIP) upang mapagkalooban ng pera kapalit ng kanilang armas na isinuko, livelihood assistance at iba pang social benefits. **Tony Sandoval**

24 January 2018



Pahina. 1

5 dekadang rido natuldukan: 24 armas isinuko

Ni JOY CANTOS

Umaabot sa dalawang pu't apat na armas ang isinuko sa tropa ng Joint Task Force (JTF) Zampelan matapos ang mahigit 5 dekadang rido (clan war) sa pagitan ng dalawang magkalabang angkan sa Lanao del Sur noong Lunes.

Kinatawan ni Lanao del Sur Vice Governor Mamin-tal Adiong Jr., habang ang Joint Task Group (JTG) Haribon ay kinatawan naman ni Col. Generoso Ponio na siyang nangasiwa para magkaayos ang dalawang prominenteng ang-

kan sa pagitan nina Vice Mayor Jafar Dipatuan ng Bacolod-Kalawi at Mayor Al Fatah Pacalina Balindong ng Tugaya.

Sinabi ni Captain Jo-Ann Petinglay, spokesperson ng AFP Western Mindanao Command ang seremonya sa pagkaka-sundo ng magkalabang angkan ay isinagawa sa himpilan ng JTG Haribon sa Camp Ranao, Marawi City bandang alas-12 ng tanghali.

Kabilang sa isinukong mga armas ay dalawang cal. 50 Barret, anim na M14 Armalite rifles, pitong M16 Armalite rifles, apat na M203 grenade launcher, tatlong M79 grenade, cal. 30 rifle at Browning Automatic rifle (BAR).

Pinasalamatan naman ni Lt. Gen. Carlito Galvez, ang PNP at Army's 1st Infantry Division sa pagkakaayos ng magkalabang angkan upang hindi na muling ma-ulit pa ang pagdanak ng dugo.

24 January 2018

The Manila Times

Page: 2

50-year 'rido' settled in Lanao Sur

BY JULMUNIR I. JANNARAL

SHARIFF AGUAK, Maguindanao: Five decades of "rido" or clan war between two prominent families in Lanao del Sur was settled on Monday with at least 24 high-powered firearms turned over to the military.

Lanao del Sur Vice Gov. Mamtal Adiong Jr. and Col. Gen. Erosio Ponto of the Army's Joint Task Group Haribon initiated the talks that eventually ended the feud between the families of Vice Mayor Jafar Dipatuan of Bacolod-Kalawi town and Mayor Al Fatah Pacalna Balindong of Tugaya town.

The ceremony and traditional proceedings between the warring clans was held at the headquarters of the JTG Haribon in Campo Ranao, Marawi City.

Turned over were two cali-

ber 50 Baret (locally made), six M14 rifles, seven M16 rifles, four M203 grenade launchers (attached to M16), three M79 GLs, one caliber 30 rifle and a Browning automatic rifle.

"We would not tolerate any incidents of rido and we will continue to support all activities that will put an end to family feuds within our area of operations," said Maj. Gen. Roseller Murillo, commander of Joint Task Force Zampelan.

"In the past days, we have conducted aggressive actions in stopping warring groups that have disturbed peaceful communities in Lanao del Sur and we will continue to do just that because we will not allow them to do so," he said.

Meanwhile, Lt. Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr., commander of the Western Mindanao Command lauded the task force and expressed

appreciation to the regional government and Lanao del Sur officials for helping them in the settlement of one of the longest running feuds in the region.

The rido is considered among the bane of development in Mindanao, especially if prominent and influential families are concerned, that also accounts for the numerous deaths and killings among generations.

24 January 2018



Pahina. 1

Sundalo nalambat sa shabu

NATIMBOG ng pulisya ang isang Army corporal sa isinagawang anti-drug buy-bust operation sa isang hotel sa Purok Chico Hills, Barangay Tuburan sa Pagadian City kamakalawa.

Nakilala ang nahuling militar na si Corporal Lehambor Bacay Acosta, 31, nakatalaga sa 1st Signal Battalion Army Signal Regiment ng Joint Task Force Basilan.

Ang operasyon ay pinangunahan ng mga operatiba ng Station Drug Enforcement Unit ng Pagadian City police kasama ang mga kasapi ng Zamboanga del Sur Provincial Drug Enforcement Unit.

Nabatid na isang pulis ang nagsilbing poseur-buyer na nagpanggap na bibili ng shabu sa halagang P1,000 mula sa suspek at hapag-usapan nila na sa loob ng hotel isasagawa ang transaksyon.

Nakuha mula sa suspek ang isang plastic sachet na naglalaman ng hinihinalang shabu, dalawang aluminum foil at dalawang P500 na ginamit bilang marked money sa operasyon. Nakakulong ngayon sa selda ng Pagadian City Police Station ang suspek habang inihahanda ang paghahain ng reklamang paglabag sa Republic Act (RA) 9165 o ang Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002.

Samantala, wala pang inilabas na pahayag ang militar ukol sa pagkakaaresto sa isa nilang tauhan sa pagbebenta ng ilegal na droga.

JEFF GALLOS

24 January 2018



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Residents of Gulnobatan, Albay disembark from a military truck during a rescue operation yesterday amid fears of a major eruption over the next few days.

EPA-EFE

24 January 2018

INQUIRER

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LOOTED CASH, GOLD HELP ISLAMIC STATE RECRUIT FOLLOWERS IN PH

MARAWI CITY—Islamist insurgents looted cash, gold and jewelry worth tens of millions of pesos when they occupied this city last year, treasure one of their leaders has used to recruit around 250 fighters for fresh attacks.

The military said Humam Abdul Najib escaped from Marawi, which the militants had hoped to establish as a stronghold for the Islamic State (IS) group in Southeast Asia, before it was recaptured by the military last October after five months of ferocious battles and aerial bombardment.

Since then, Najib, also known as Abu Dar, has used the booty looted from bank vaults, shops and homes in Marawi to win over boys and young men in the impoverished province of Lanao del Sur, according to military officers in the area.

Hardened mercenaries are also joining, lured by the promise of money, they said.

As a result, IS followers remain a potent threat in Southeast Asia even though hundreds of militants were killed in the battle for Marawi, the officers said.

Overall objective

"Definitely, they haven't abandoned their intent to create a caliphate in Southeast Asia," Col Romeo Brawner, the deputy commander of Joint Task Force Marawi, told Reuters.

"That's the overall objective, but in the meantime while they are still trying to recover and build up again—fighters and weapons—our estimate is they are going to launch terrorist attacks," Brawner said.

On Saturday, militants wounded eight soldiers during two attacks in Lanao del Sur, Brawner said, the first such vio-

lence since the recapture of Marawi.

In the early days of the occupation of Marawi last May, as black-clad fighters burned churches, released prisoners and cut the power supply, other militants targeted banks and the homes of wealthy citizens, commandeering hostages to help with the plunder.

"It was in the first week. They divided us into three groups with seven people each," said J.R. Montesa, a Christian construction worker who was captured by the militants.

Using explosives, the militants blew open the vaults of the city's three main banks, Landbank, Philippine National Bank (PNB) and Al Amanah Islamic Bank, Montesa told Reuters in a town near Marawi.

They trucked away the booty, easily slipping out of Marawi because a security cordon was not fully in place.

They also raided jewelry stores, pawnshops and businesses.

Landbank and Al Amanah did not respond to requests for comment. PNB said recovering losses because of the Marawi fighting was a concern, but did not give details.

The Islamic celebration of Ramadan was looming at the time the militants struck and banks, businesses and homes had more money than usual, said Marawi police chief Ebra Moxsir.

The Maranao, the ethnic group that dominates the area around the city, are mostly Muslims.

"There was a lot of money inside the battle area," he told Reuters. "Maranaos keep millions of pesos in safety vaults in their homes. Gold, also. It is a tradition of the Maranao to give gifts of

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money [during Ramadan]."

Montesa said vans they had loaded with the spoils of the raids were "overflowing," with money, gold and other valuables stuffed into every crevice of the vehicles.

"They were saying it was a gift from Allah. They would say 'Allahu Akbar' (God is great) while we were stealing," he said.

The military and police have also been accused by rights groups and by Marawi residents of looting during the conflict.

Brawner said a small number of soldiers had been disciplined for looting, but the practice was not widespread.

But the center of Marawi—home to its major banks, main market and grandest residences—was under the

control of militants for months. Brawner said authorities were unclear exactly how much was taken by the militants.

"It's hard for us to say. We have heard about P2 billion but that's just an estimate," he said.

"In the first days, when we were not able to establish that security cordon around the main battle area, that was the time when they were able to slip out with their war booty," he added.

The government also said the regrouping of militants in Mindanao, which has been marred by Islamic and communist uprisings for decades, was dangerous.

Presidential spokesperson Harry Roque told Reuters: "There is always the danger of these groups regaining strength

enough to mount another Marawi-like operation."

Najib is believed to have fled Marawi early in the battle. There are conflicting reports about whether he had a dispute with other leaders or left as part of a preconceived plan.

He attempted to return last August with 50-100 more fighters to reinforce the militants, who by then were losing ground, but he was prevented by an improved security cordon, Brawner said.

"According to reports, they were able to recruit another 100 to 150. So the estimate is 250 all in all, and this includes children," Brawner said. "They are trying to recruit orphans, relatives of the fighters who died and sympathizers."

Parents of children are offered as much as P70,000, plus a monthly salary of as much as P30,000, to hand over their sons to the group, according to security sources and community leaders briefed on the recruitment.

The average family income in the Philippines is P22,000 a month, according to a 2015 government survey. It was about half that in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, where Marawi and surrounding areas lie.

Brawner said local residents had told the military that the militant group also offered bonuses of up to P10,000 for killing a soldier.

Rommel Banlaoi, a Manila-based security expert, said more experienced fighters had also been recruited.

These were "mercenaries" attracted by the payouts, Banlaoi said, but Najib has also tapped into disaffection among Maranao angered by the destruction of large parts of Marawi by the military's bombing campaign.

"That kind of narrative is being used by [IS] to lure people to continue the fight," Banlaoi said.

Next emir?

With the looted funds and a loyal following, Najib could become the new "emir" of IS in Southeast Asia following the death of Isnilon Hapilon, a leader of the bandit group Abu Sayyaf, in the battle for Marawi, according to security analysts.

Najib is a hardened fighter and cleric who studied in the Middle East and reportedly trained with militants in Afghanistan, they say.

He cofounded Khalifa Islamiyah Mindanao, an insurgent group formed in 2012 that launched a series of bombings on the island. —REUTERS

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AFP spots Chinese ships near Panatag Shoal

By Mario J. Mallari and Ted Tuvera

Four Chinese coast guard ships and one fishing vessel were spotted yesterday in the vicinity of Philippine-owned Panatag Shoal or Scarborough Shoal in Zambales during a routine monitoring flight in the area by the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP).

Lt. Col. Isagani Nato, spokesman of the AFP-Northern Luzon Command (Nolcom), said that the monitoring flight went on smoothly without any untoward incident.

According to Nato, AFP personnel, accompanied by media, saw four "white" Chinese ships and a fishing vessel within the vicinity of Panatag Shoal - which is located about 124 nautical miles off Masinloc town.

Nato said that there were also at least five Filipino fishing vessels present in the area during the 30-minute surveillance flight aboard one of the Air Force's C295 aircraft.

"There were four coast guard ships and one fishing vessels of the Chinese and five Filipino fishing boats," said Nato, who was with the group.

"There was no challenge," he added.

Nato said that the monitoring activity was part of the regular three to four aerial reconnaissance being conducted in the area by the AFP.

"There was no problem in the area when we were there," Nato said.

"The relationship of the fishermen there is okay, from the way we see it, there is no problem," he added.

Nato also said that the number of Chinese ships present in the area does not change.

He added that there were no construction activities monitored.

Panatag Shoal was the venue of the two-month standoff between Philippine authorities and the Chinese in 2012 after Filipino security forces attempted to arrest Chinese poachers caught in the area.

Chinese coast guard ships were quickly deployed in the area and have maintained their presence since then.

Meanwhile, Malacañang expects Beijing not to break its good faith by starting a new reclamation project near the contested Scarborough Shoal amid its brewing tension with Washington.

Presidential spokesman Harry Roque told a Palace briefing yesterday that the Philippine government hopes China won't pursue its threat of creating a new artificial military base as a protest to the passing through of a US Warship along the disputed portion of the South China Sea.

Reports said a US-guided missile *USS Hopper* came within 22 kilometers of Scarborough Shoal last Wednesday night, angering China.

In a commentary on Beijing's state-run newspaper *The People's Daily*, Beijing said that "in order to earnestly protect peace in the South China Sea, China must strengthen and speed up the building of its abilities there."

"China's new reclamation project will have an impact on the obligation of good faith on their end," Roque said.

"We are hoping that they will not go contrary on their obligation of good faith," he added.

Roque has previously indicated that the Philippines will not take sides on the new issue between China and the US, insisting that the Philippines' main interest in the Scarborough Shoal is local fishermen's right to do business in the area.

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AFP gets ammo, explosives from US

Representatives of the Joint United States Military Assistance Group have delivered ammunition and explosives to the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) to enhance its counterterrorism capabilities.

The delivery at Subic Bay last Jan. 18 was made under the Mutual Logistics Support Agreement (MLSA).

The AFP receives select ammunition and equip-

ment from US military stock through an accelerated purchase process reserved for allies and close partners of the US under the MLSA.

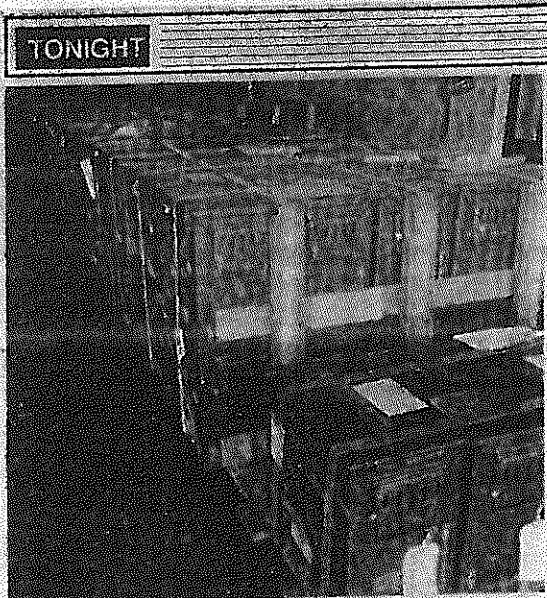
"The United States is a proud and steadfast ally of the Philippines and will continue to engage in mutually beneficial military cooperation to enhance the capabilities of our forces," the US embassy said in a statement.

- Pia Lee-Brago

24 January 2018



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TONIGHT

Ammunition and explosives delivered from the U.S. to the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) at Subic Bay, Luzon. This delivery is one of many recent deliveries from the U.S. through the Mutual Logistics Support Agreement (MLSA) that enhance the AFP's counterterrorism capabilities and directly support AFP members engaged in current counterterrorism operations.

U.S. equipment delivery to AFP to hike interoperability, effectiveness

REPRESENTATIVES from the Joint United States Military Assistance Group delivered ammunition and explosives to the Armed Forces of the Philippines through the Mutual Logistics Support Agreement (MLSA) last January 18.

These transfers help further the military interoperability, readiness, and effectiveness of both U.S. and the Philippines. Through the MLSA, the AFP is able to receive select munitions and equipment from U.S. military stock through an accelerated purchase process reserved for allies and close partners of the United States.

The munitions and weapons deliveries will enhance the AFP's counterterrorism capabilities.

The United States is a proud and steadfast ally of the Philippines and will continue to engage in mutually beneficial military cooperation to enhance the capabilities of our forces.

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AFP launches mobile computer literacy program

BY MINDU D. CRISTOFANO

SAN MIGUEL, Surigao del Sur – The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) on Tuesday launched its mobile education literacy computer program for lumad (native) communities in Caraga region.

The AFP utilized three container vans containing computers, laptop and other school needs for training.

Dubbed as “Gabay aral alang sa kabataang lumad,” the 401st Infantry (Unity) Brigade based in Camp Datu Macapandong in Awa New Leyte, Prosperidad, Agusan del Sur and 402nd Infantry (Stingers) Brigade based here launched the program on Tuesday.

Forty-two lumad students (Manobo) formed the first batch which would avail of the one-

month mobile literacy computer program.

The program is being supported by the Department of Education (DepEd), Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (Tesda), National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) and the local government units (LGUs).

“After this first batch, we intend to bring this program to all lumad communities in Caraga region,” 402nd Brigade Civil Military Operations (CMO) officer Capt. Al Anthony Pueblas told *The Manila Bulletin* on Tuesday.

Last year, the Army’s North-eastern and Northern Mindanao Fourth Infantry (Diamond) Division tapped 125 soldiers, who belong to indigenous peoples (IP) groups, for an education program that will be implemented in their home communities.

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11 Marines injured in road mishap

R. MONOY Z. LACSON

ZAMBOANGA CITY - Eleven Marines and an elementary school principal were injured, two of them were in serious condition, after the service vehicle they were riding in fell into a ravine in the village of Salaan Saturday afternoon.

Police Director for Zamboanga peninsula Chief Supt. Billy Beltran said the soldiers were escorting personnel of a national TV network back to the city proper after they conducted an out-reach program at Baluno Elementary school at Sitio Baluno in the village of Salaan in this city when the incident happened at about 2:50pm.

According to Beltran, the convoy was negotiating a steep, descending and narrow road near the Lugakit Elementary School when the vehicle bearing

the TV personnel slowed down.

This prompted T/Sgt. Paterno Ramillano Jr. to slam on the brakes, but these malfunctioned as the vehicle careened towards the vehicle bearing the TV personnel.

To avoid the other vehicle, Ramillano veered the wheel to the left, without realizing that it led to a ravine and a river embankment.

Ramillano was seriously injured together with Baluno Elementary School principal Joseph Abalo.

Those who suffered minor injuries were Sgt. Roy Rodriguez y Romeo, Pfc. Ryan Magsayo y Culipano, Pvt. Jay-ar Galera y Padron, Pvt. Jestony Parba, Pfc. Cresly Olasiman y Basalo, Pfc. John Galapate, Sgt. Raymon Bastonero y Delaroso, Pvt. Mark Villasenor y Sarmiento, Pvt. Rene Jay Perin, and Cpl Edward Obag.

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If I exceed my term, shoot me, Duterte orders troops

MAWAB, COMPOSTELA VALLEY—President Duterte on Monday issued one of his most forceful denials that he would stay in power beyond his term, ordering soldiers and policemen to “shoot me,” or commit what could be tantamount to murder, if he was still in Malacañang even for just a day beyond his term.

“If I exceed (my term) even for a day, I’m asking the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the police not to allow me or anybody else to mess up with the Constitution,” Mr. Duterte said in a speech at the opening of a marketplace for soldiers here.

“If I exceed my term, shoot me,” he told soldiers listening to his speech.

Is he serious?

High-ranking military officials in Mindanao refused to comment on the President’s order, but one colonel, who refused to be identified, said it



President Duterte checks out a sniper rifle donated by China in June last year at Clark Freeport. —JOAN BONDOC

was really the military’s duty to protect the Constitution.

There was no way to check if Mr. Duterte was serious or just cracking a joke for emphasis.

It was the latest denial by the President of reports linking current attempts to amend the Constitution to shift

to a federal form of government, with a supposed plot to perpetuate Mr. Duterte and his officials in power.

Mr. Duterte’s lieutenants in the House of Representatives, led by Speaker Pantaleon Alvarez, were working on a constituent assembly to open

amendments to the Constitution and pave the way for a shift to a federal form of government.

Critics, including militant groups, claimed that the unseen driving force behind the bid to amend the Constitution was Mr. Duterte and his officials’ desire to stay in power beyond 2022, when the President’s six-year term expires.

Like Marcos?

Opposition Rep. Edcel Lagman likened Mr. Duterte to the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos, who stayed in power for more than 20 years.

Alvarez said if the federal government took form this year, the 2019 midterm elections may be canceled, which would mean the terms of office of local government officials and members of Congress would be extended without an election mandate.

—FRINSTON LIM INQ

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The Manila Times

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Editorial

CPP-NPA's ill will and motive

"NO thanks" came the reply of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and its armed wing, the New People's Army (NPA), to President Rodrigo's generous offer of livelihood and housing to Red fighters willing to lay down their arms.

The response was made in a statement sent to the press on Tuesday afternoon.

"Duterte's call for NPA members to surrender, in exchange for cash, housing and jobs, is pure hogwash," the NPA said.

The statement is premature and is indicative of the malice and bad faith the CPP-NPA has shown since the beginning of the Duterte administration.

It pointed to the counterinsurgency program CLIP (Comprehensive Local Integration Program), which it described as a "hold-over of the US-Arroyo regime's *Oplan Bantay Laya*." It claimed, without providing evidence, that the CLIP had served as a "source of corruption for AFP (Armed Forces of the Philippines) generals and ranking officials."

Duterte made the assurance of protection over the weekend as two former NPA members yielded to the government in simple rites at the Matina Enclaves in Davao City.

Malacañang said: "The Chief Executive pledged that NPA surrenderees would be welcomed and accepted, assured the rebel returnees of the government's protection and assistance as they begin to immerse [themselves] in the civilian way of life."

Each of the former rebels was given a housing unit, financial assistance, food packs and a smartphone.

The President's offer of protection and a return to civilian life appeared sincere by all indications, unlike the CPP-NPA leadership's show of treachery during the peace negotiations by attacking government forces, including a presidential convoy, during a ceasefire.

The CPP-NPA should not begrudge its members who have grown tired of four decades of fruitless armed struggle, nor should it take offense at the government's offer of assistance to them.

Tuesday's statement was, in fact, a new low for CPP-NPA propaganda, as it also disrespected the achievements of the good men and women of the Armed Forces, particularly those who fought in the five-month siege of Marawi City.

"Red fighters are not like AFP soldiers," the CPP-NPA said. "They are not enticed to join the armed struggle through promises of high salaries, sex with starlets and bright new toys. They do not seek constant flattery for what they do, which is to serve the people selflessly and with humility."

What hypocrisy! Perhaps the CPP-NPA propaganda machine should take a look at Joma Sison's lifestyle in exile in the Netherlands, where at one point the CPP founder was himself pictured with a sexy starlet, Ara Mina.

Such was Sison's frivolity, while Red fighters—lured and indoctrinated in the passé ideology of armed struggle, placed themselves in harm's way, separated from their families and friends.

Red fighters are certainly better off with Duterte's offer of protection, housing and livelihood, than wait for Sison's false promise of communist utopia.

ONLINE NEWS

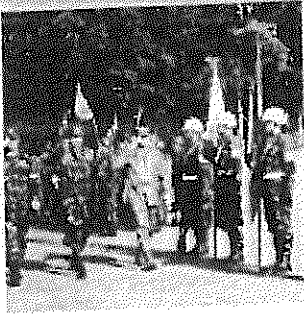
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MARAWI LIBERATOR | CGPA visits 1ID

Posted by Alvin Santiago

KUTA MAJOR CESAR L SANG-AN, Pulacan Labangan, Zamboanga del Sur (DWDD) –
A full military honor was rendered to Lieutenant General Rolando Joselito Delizo Bautista AFP, Commanding General, Philippine Army, as he visited his former unit.



Maj Gen Roseller G Murillo AFP, Commander, 1ID, hosted the military honor with the presence of Tabak troopers and Civilian employees at the Division Grandstand.

Immediately after the arrival honor, Lt Gen Bautista proceeded to Tabak Fatima Shrine for the Command Conference which was followed by the inauguration and blessing of the G4 quarters.

The highlight of his activities for the day was his brief talk to men to all Tabak troopers where Lt Gen Bautista expressed his gratitude for the warm welcome extended to him.



Plaque of Recognition – Maj Gen Roseller G Murillo AFP, Commander, 1ID, presents the Urbem Liberata memento to LtGen Rolando Joselito Delizo Bautista AFP, Commanding General, Philippine Army, for his successful campaign during the Marawi rebellion.

(In photos from left to right: Maj Gen Gapay, Dr Isabel Cojuanco Suntay, Maj Gen Murillo, Lt Gen Bautista, Brig Gen Donato, Brig Gen Bareng and Brig Gen Fortes)

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

"It is my pride and privilege visiting the fightingest division of the Philippine Army and will always be grateful for the full support showered upon me which brought my career to where I am today", said Lt Gen Bautista.

He also shared his memories being the former Commander of the division and the reminiscences being the Commander of Joint Task Force Ranao who liberated Marawi City last October 2017.

Afterwards, Lt Gen Bautista presented the Plaque of Recognition to Dr Isabel Cojuanco Suntay, Co-founder, Tarlac Heritage Foundation Inc, for her invaluable contribution and unparalleled dedication uplifting the morale and welfare of the officers and men of the 1st Infantry (Tabak) Division, Philippine Army and to the victims of Marawi siege.

Dr Suntay initiated the housing projects for the internally displaced persons in Marawi City that generated overwhelming public support.

Before going back to Headquarters, Philippine Army in Metro Manila, Lt Gen Bautista and party also visited Marawi City to inspect the progress of the rehabilitation projects initiated by Dr Suntay. **1ID / MCAG**

PEACE ATTAINED | JTF Lanao facilitates end to Bloody Clan War in Lanao del Sur

Posted by Alvin Santiago

KUTA MAJOR CESAR L SANG-AN, Pulacan Labangan, Zamboanga del Sur (DWDD) – The Joint Task Force “Ranao” facilitated the settlement of a decades old “Rido” or violent family feud between the two big political clans in Lanao del Sur today.

Colonel Generoso M Ponio INF (GSC) PA, Commander of 103rd Infantry Brigade under Joint Task Force “Ranao” led the settlement of the violent family feud or “Rido” between the families of Tugaya Municipal Mayor Al Fatah Pacalna Balindong and Bacolod Kalawi Municipal Vice Mayor Jafar Dipatuan.

The end to the violent family feud was concluded when the two (2) heads of the families swore on the Holy Qur’an to settle their “Rido.” The families surrendered twenty-four (24) high-powered firearms to symbolize their resolve to conclude the long-time violent family feud. The weapons surrendered included two (2) caliber .50 sniper “Barret” rifles; six (6) 7.62 millimeter M14 rifles; seven (7) 5.56 millimeter M16 rifles; four (4) 40 millimeter M203 Grenade Launchers; three (3) 40 millimeter M79 Grenade Launchers; one (1) caliber .30 Machine Gun and one (1) caliber .30 Browning Automatic Rifle.

Major General Roseller G Murillo AFP, 1ST Infantry “Tabak” Division and concurrent Joint Task Force “Ranao” Commander congratulated all the parties involved in the peaceful settlement of the decades old violent family feud.

“I commend the 103RD Infantry Brigade for the successful mediation that led to this peaceful settlement of a violent family feud that has cost the deaths of many from both sides and affected the the peace in the area for so many years”, he added.

The just settled bloody feud was reportedly decades old with two (2) of the more recent incidents being the shooting of one of the scions of the Dipatuan Clan in a busy commercial area of Iligan City last November 13, 2017 and the wounding of four (4) and the displacement of more than 200 families when a hour-long gun-battle between the clans erupted in Bacolod Kalawi town last January 5, 2018.

The settlement was achieved with the active participation of Provincial Vice-Governor Mamintal “Bombit” Adiong Jr of Lanao del Sur, the provincial Philippine National Police (PNP) units, Local Religious Leaders, and other members of civil society and the local government at Headquarters, 103rd Infantry Brigade, Kampo Ranao, Marawi City. **JTF RANA0 / 1ID / MCAG**

SECURITY OPERATIONS | 1ID Troops encounter lawless elements, recover war items

Atvin Santiago

KUTA MAJOR CESAR L SANG-AN, Pulacan Labangan, Zamboanga del Sur (DWDD) – Troops of Joint Task Force “ZAMPELAN” encountered members of “lawless elements” at Sitio Balas, Brgy Poblacion, Kalawit, Zamboanga del Norte, at 7:00 o'clock in the morning, January 19, 2017.

The operating troops under 42IB composed of five (5) enlisted personnel and twenty (20) CAFGU Active Auxilliary (CAA) led by Cpl Rowen A Soler (SC) PA were conducting combat patrol at the vicinity of the said area when they encountered the “Suminggal” lawless group.



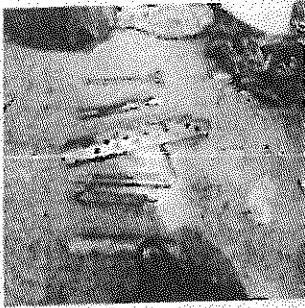
Suminggal Group is allegedly headed by Monib Aquilan roaming around in the southern part of Zamboanga del Norte conducting extortions and land grabbing activities in the local populace.

The firefight which lasted for about thirty (30) minutes compelled the enemy to withdrew heading towards the direction of Brgy Palalian, Kalawit, ZDN.



After the firefight, the troops recovered one (1) handguard of M203 grenade launcher; one (1) bolt chamber of M16 rifle; one (1) hammock; 293 ammo of M16 rifle; 254 ammo of M14 rifle; one (1) pair of combat boots and an Arabic booklet.

The 42IB under the stewardship of Lt Col Danilo G Ambe is conducting pursuit operation to track down and eventually defeat the said lawless group that disturbs and brings horror to the normal life of the affected civilian community.



"Our soldiers stand ready to respond and address any attempt by the armed threat groups threatening the safety and well-being of the people", said Maj Gen Roseller G Murillo AFP, Commander, 11D, as he lauded the operating troops for the successful encounter.

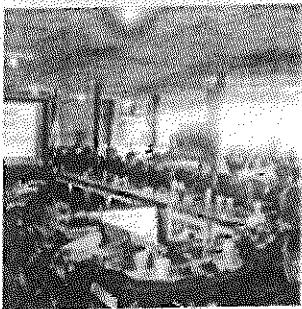
"Our active support to Law Enforcement Operations has been vital and momentous for the government. Let us continue to actively support Law Enforcement Support Operations", he added. **11D / MCAG**

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COMMITMENT TO THE NATION | 1ID holds its 1st Command Conference for the year 2018

Posted by Alvin Santiago

KUTA MAJOR CESAR L SANG-AN, Pulacan Labangan, Zamboanga del Sur (DWDD) – The 1st Infantry (Tabak) Division, Philippine Army reaffirms its commitment for the nation's pursuit for a secure, stable and peaceful country conducive to sustainable development for all Filipinos as it conducted the first Command Conference for the year 2018 at the Tabak Fatima Shrine on Monday, January 15, 2018.



The Command Conference, presided by Major General Roseller G Murillo AFP, Commander, 1ID, was attended by the Brigade Commanders, General/Personal/Special and Technical Staffs, other Commanding Officers of units under 1ID. In attendance also were the eight (8) newly assigned field grade Officers projected to command infantry battalions and occupy General/Special Staff vacancies of this Command.

Prior the said conference, Tabak Division rendered arrival honor to Maj Gen Murillo, Brig Gen Juvymax R Uy AFP, Commander, 104th Infantry Brigade and Brig Gen Divino Rey C Pabayo Jr AFP, Commander, 101st Infantry Brigade, for their well-deserved promotions.

During the conference, Maj Gen Murillo gave his Commander's Guidance for CY 2018. "As Commander, it is my utmost intent to empower leadership, initiative and improvisation to my men. Our goal is to totally destroy all threat groups within Joint Task Force "ZAMPELAN" the soonest possible time", was the first guidance given.

Maj Gen Murillo encouraged the unit commanders to continue engaging the communities to develop a culture of peace and ensure that army units are part of the community.

Commanders were then reminded to seek the active intervention of all stakeholders in attaining peace in Western Mindanao and to facilitate community-initiated peace efforts in coordination with Local Government Units (LGUs) and Local Government Agencies (LGAs).

"To all Tabak Troopers, always remember that you are not alone. I will be with you in every endeavour you shall take. Hence, I am seeking for the full support of all the men and women of Tabak Division to be with me in this fight and together we will all succeed", he added. **1ID / MCAg**