

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

27 January 2018

Saturday

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

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THE PHILIPPINE STAR
TRUTH SHALL PREVAIL

7:30 PM NEWS
MONDAY - FRIDAY
11 AM & 5 PM

PILIPINAS HD
WEEKDAYS
4 AM, 4:30 PM & 9 PM
WEEKENDS
4 AM

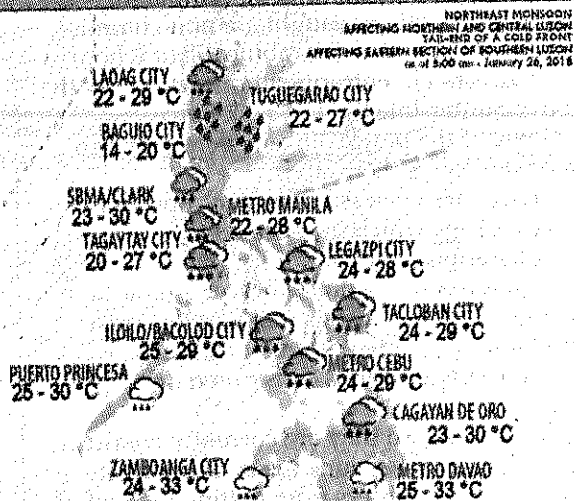
AIR 21
SPORTS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Panahon.TV

SUNRISE	SUNSET	MOONRISE	MOONSET
6:25 AM	6:59 PM	1:38 PM	1:44 AM
9:20 AM JAN 29	9:27 PM JAN 31	1:38 AM 0.11 Meter	6:08 PM 0.84 Meter

MANILA SOUTH HARBOR
LOW TIDE: 1:38 AM, 0.11 Meter
HIGH TIDE: 6:08 PM, 0.84 Meter

TODAY'S WEATHER FORECAST JANUARY 27, 2018 | SATURDAY



EXTENDED WEATHER FORECAST	JAN 28 SUN	JAN 29 MON	JAN 30 TUE	EXTENDED WEATHER FORECAST	JAN 28 SUN	JAN 29 MON	JAN 30 TUE
METRO MANILA	22 °C 29 °C	22 °C 29 °C	22 °C 30 °C	PUERTO PRINCESA	25 °C 30 °C	25 °C 31 °C	25 °C 32 °C
TUGUEGARAO	22 °C 28 °C	23 °C 29 °C	23 °C 28 °C	ILOILO/BACOLOD	24 °C 29 °C	25 °C 30 °C	25 °C 30 °C
LAOAG	22 °C 31 °C	23 °C 30 °C	23 °C 30 °C	METRO CEBU	24 °C 29 °C	24 °C 30 °C	25 °C 30 °C
BAGUIO	14 °C 21 °C	15 °C 22 °C	15 °C 21 °C	TACLOBAN	24 °C 30 °C	25 °C 31 °C	25 °C 31 °C
SBMA/CLARK	23 °C 31 °C	23 °C 31 °C	23 °C 31 °C	CAGAYAN DE ORO	23 °C 30 °C	23 °C 31 °C	23 °C 31 °C
TAGAYTAY	19 °C 27 °C	19 °C 28 °C	20 °C 28 °C	METRO DAVAO	25 °C 32 °C	25 °C 33 °C	25 °C 33 °C
LEGAZPI	24 °C 30 °C	25 °C 31 °C	25 °C 31 °C	ZAMBOANGA	25 °C 32 °C	25 °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

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27 January 2018

MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

Page: 1

Forced evacuation looms

Mayon continues to rumble; big bang still possible

CRISTO A. CHAVEZ, AFP, AARON B. FRECUENCO

LEGAZPICIty— Officials are out to force the evacuation of residents still holding out around Mayon Volcano as well as their work animals after declaring the area a no-go zone.

There have been no deaths in the 10 days since Mayon Volcano began belch-

ing flaming lava, superheated rocks and ash, causing 75,450 residents to flee surrounding farms and communities, civil defense officials said.

But they said people have been leaving the shelters in daytime to tend to their farms and livestock inside the danger zone that now ►8

Forced evacuation looms... ◀1

extends to nine kilometers from the crater

Maria Evelyn Grollo, who runs a grade school-turned shelter for more than 4,000 people on the outskirts of Legazpi, said some are defying the city mayor's order to stay away from their farms on Mayon's lower slopes.

"In the mornings they go home, especially the men. But in the evenings they are here," she said, adding they easily cross into the danger zone on their motorbikes.

"They just rush back to check their houses and their property," Grollo told AFP.

Akim Berces, operations officer of the Office of Civil Defense regional office in Legazpi City, told AFP the local authorities have sent police patrols to guard the abandoned farms and homes, so people should not go back.

There have been no reports of looting to justify the evacuees' actions, he added.

A number of residents with homes just inside the declared danger zone were also refusing to leave, Berces said.

"There are some people who don't want to leave but the local governments are forcing evacuations," he said.

"The security (officials) are already talking about it, how they will ensure that it should be a no-man's land."

Berces said the authorities wanted residents in the vacated high-risk areas to move their cattle, pigs, goats, and chickens to a separate evacuation center for livestock.

"There is a place to put them," he added.

15 volcanic quakes, 19 tremors

The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) reported Friday that Mayon Volcano emitted seven series of intense but intermittent fountaining from its crater beginning Thursday morning up to Friday morning.

During the period, 15 volcanic earthquakes and 19 tremor activities were recorded from 6:11 a.m. Thursday to 2:31 a.m. Friday, as the volcano remains under Alert Level 4.

So far, Mayon has already ejected more than 25 million cubic meters of pyroclastic materials since its rumbling started two weeks ago.

But Phivolcs said there will be more since the figure represents only 30 percent of what they expect to come out based on their calculations.

To give a clear picture of how big

the volcanic materials that had already been puffed out, Phivolcs director Renato Solidum said that one cubic meter is equivalent to a size of a big balikbayan box.

"Imagine there are 25 million of them. Those already came out of the volcano as of today," said Solidum in an interview here.

Phivolcs has its formula on how to compute the total amount of volcanic materials that are coming out of the volcano.

"Given that information, we have an idea of how much and that's 30 just 30 percent. Meaning, we have significant amount that's still inside and the volcano is still inflated," said Solidum.

During its 2006 eruption, Phivolcs data stated that Mayon had spewed some 70 million of volcanic materials.

This is the reason, Solidum, said Alert Level 4 remains over Mayon as the scenario of a big eruption is still possible.

Respiratory diseases

Meanwhile, congestion in various evacuation centers here in Albay has been causing the quick spread of respiratory diseases, especially to children.

Dr. Antonio Ludovice Jr., head of the Albay Provincial Health Office (PHO), said acute respiratory diseases like coughs and colds are the leading reasons of consultations during the con-

duct of health monitoring in 73 evacuations in three cities and six towns of the province.

But he was quick to emphasize that the cause of the respiratory diseases is the ashes that are being ejected out of the Mayon Volcano since Monday.

“It is more of congestion and their condition in the evacuation centers,” said Ludovice.

This is the reason, according to him, mats and other beddings are being distributed to the evacuation centers in order for the evacuees not to directly lie on the concrete floor.

He said they have been also distributing multi-vitamins everyday to the evacuation centers to help strengthen the immune system of the evacuees.

Based on the latest data of the PHO, a total of 1,222 evacuees are suffering

from coughs and colds while there are four cases of chickenpox.

Since coughs and colds virus can easily spread in the evacuation centers, he said they would immediately treat and advise them the dos and donts to prevent the spread of the diseases.

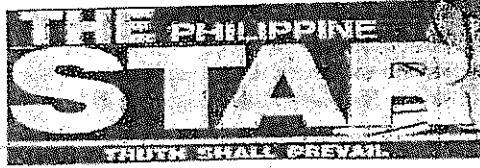
For cases of chickenpox, he said, the patients are usually being isolated or being taken to the nearby hospital.

“All the medications and even hospital expenses are being shouldered by the government,” said Ludovice.

The official, however, said that they are currently tracing the causes of diarrhea in some evacuation centers in Sto. Domingo and Camalig.

He said that this could not be attributed to drinking water since all evacuation centers are being supplied with mineral water.

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'Congress has final say on Charter change'

By JESS DIAZ
and PAOLO ROMERO

Congress From Page 1

It is Congress that has the final say on Charter change (Cha-cha), not President Duterte's 19-member consultative committee formed to review the Constitution, leaders of the House of Representatives and the Senate said yesterday.

"The matter or manner of proposing amendments to or revision of the Constitution is a power exclusively retained by the sovereign Filipino directly or through their duly elected representatives, that is, the Congress," Majority Leader Rodolfo Fariñas said.

"As the name connotes, it is a consultative, or advisory, commission of the President. It cannot, and will not work in tandem with Congress. Of course, Congress may consider the commission's recommendations, as well as those of any citizen, and may adopt or not adopt them at all," he said.

Senate President Aquilino

Turn to Page 6

Pimentel III called Duterte's formation of the consultative committee a "welcome development" but made it clear "the legislature will have its own mechanisms" to review and amend the Constitution.

The Senate committee on constitutional amendments, chaired by Sen. Francis Pangilinan, has been conducting hearings on various proposals to amend the Charter.

Eastern Samar Rep. Ben Evardone also said the creation of the President's advisory panel was "a welcome development."

"However, we as elected representatives of the people and the one vested by the Constitution to propose amendments, will continue to exercise our independent and inherent sovereign duty to propose Charter changes," he pointed out.

He said lawmakers would "definitely welcome the inputs of the commission but we are not duty-bound to accept all their proposals."

Leyte Rep. Roger Mercado,

who chairs the committee on constitutional amendments, said the consultative panel's output "will definitely provide our Congress with more inputs in the historic drafting of our new Constitution."

Rep. Eugene de Vera of party-list group Arts, Business and Sciences, who has authored a federal Charter with Pampanga Rep. Aurelio Gonzales Jr., said the results of the review of Duterte's consultants on Cha-cha would have a "persuasive effect" on lawmakers.

"However, at the end of the day, it is Congress and the people who will decide on proposed constitutional amendments," he said.

Buhay Rep. Lito Atienza welcomed Duterte's decision to appoint a consultative panel chaired by former chief justice Reynato Puno.

"We find this very reassuring because it means the difficult and delicate task of drafting a new Charter will not just be left to the House and the Senate. Most of the consul-

tative committee's members are men and women of impeccable character and track record," he said.

For opposition Rep. Edcel Lagman, the outcome of the parallel Cha-cha work of Congress and the Puno committee would not be different.

"Despite two bodies consisting of the Congress and the consultative committee discharging duplicating roles of reviewing the 1987 Constitution, any fear that 'too many cooks will spoil the broth' is foreclosed because the principal chef in Malacañang controls the recipe," he said.

He said lawmakers and the 19 Duterte consultants are expected to endorse the President's advocacy for a shift to the federal system.

"The congressional leaders and the supermajority in both houses of Congress are unanimous in backing the shift from a unitary to a federal government, while not a few of the appointed members of the consultative committee are known to favor federalism," he said.

He added that the creation of the Puno panel has tempo-

rarily set aside the impasse between the House and the Senate on the manner of voting on Cha-cha.

Inputs useful

Senate Majority Leader Vicente Sotto said the output of the consultative committee "can be useful to us," adding that Duterte informed them of his plan to assemble the panel last year.

Senate President Pro Tempore Ralph Recto cited the committee's being composed of eminent individuals like Puno, former senate president Aquilino Pimentel Jr. and Fr. Ranzilio Aquino, dean of the San Beda Graduate School of Law.

He described the panel as a "league of extraordinary gentlemen that should be able to meet the people's expectation of an output that is far from ordinary."

He however reminded members of the body that while they are competent to speak on Charter change, their mandate is to listen to the diverse opinions on how to improve the basic law.

"On this, they are expected to crowd-source the wisdom

of the people and digest them into a compact piece of recommendations for the sovereign, and their officials, to act on," Recto said.

He maintained the consultations "will further enrich healthy discussions on the nation's most important document, including the ones to be conducted by the Senate, which, I understand, will not cease on account of the presidential initiative."

Senate Minority Leader Franklin Drilon said the panel would complement the work of Pangilinan's committee, which will also conduct hearings in Mindanao, Cebu and Baguio. He stressed amending the Charter is basically a function of Congress.

The Senate committee on constitutional amendments, Drilon said, is still discussing whether there is need for Charter change – or if there's one, which mode to use toward that end.

Drilon revealed senators have not yet reached a consensus on many issues around Charter change.

"The work of the Puno Commission will be a valuable input to the Senate. It is best

that we await the committee, and Senate itself, to decide on these issues," Drilon said.

Meanwhile, the issue of Charter change will be discussed today in the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) 116th Plenary Assembly in Cebu.

The conference runs until Monday. "There will be a discussion on that but I am not sure what their stand would be," said CBCP Public Affairs Committee (PAC) executive secretary Fr. Jerome Secillano.

The "CBCP is a collegial body. Whatever stand on issues they have is always the fruit of their collective efforts," he said.

He admitted it remains uncertain if the bishops would be issuing a statement on the matter.

"I hope they will. As I said, they will deliberate on it. If they are unanimous in deciding for it, they will definitely write one about it," the CBCP official said.

Expected to attend the assembly are 81 active bishops, 43 retired bishops and five diocese administrators.

– With Evelyn Macairan

27 January 2018



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PH LOOKS TO INDIA FOR CHEAPER MEDICINES

STORY BY DJ YAP

Talks set in March after President Duterte, PM Modi agree in New Delhi to explore ways to make drugs for hypertension, high cholesterol and cancer more affordable for Filipinos.

A4

PH looks to India pharma sector for cheaper meds

FROM A1

By DJ Yap
@deejayapINQ

NEW DELHI—Philippine and Indian officials will meet in March to discuss cooperation in the pharmaceutical sector in hopes of giving Filipinos better access to affordable medicines and pave the way for the establishment of Indian drug factories in the Philippines.

President Duterte made a pitch to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi for expanded Indian investments in the Philippines when the two leaders met on Thursday ahead of the Asean-India Commemorative Summit, according to Preeti Saran, secretary of India's Ministry of External Affairs.

Joint working group

Asean is the Association of Southeast Asian Nations whose members are Vietnam, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Brunei, Malaysia, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia and Indonesia.

"President Duterte expressed an interest and his de-

sire for greater cooperation with India in the pharmaceutical sector and agreed that a joint working group meeting could be set up in March to finalize the details," Saran said in a media briefing on Thursday.

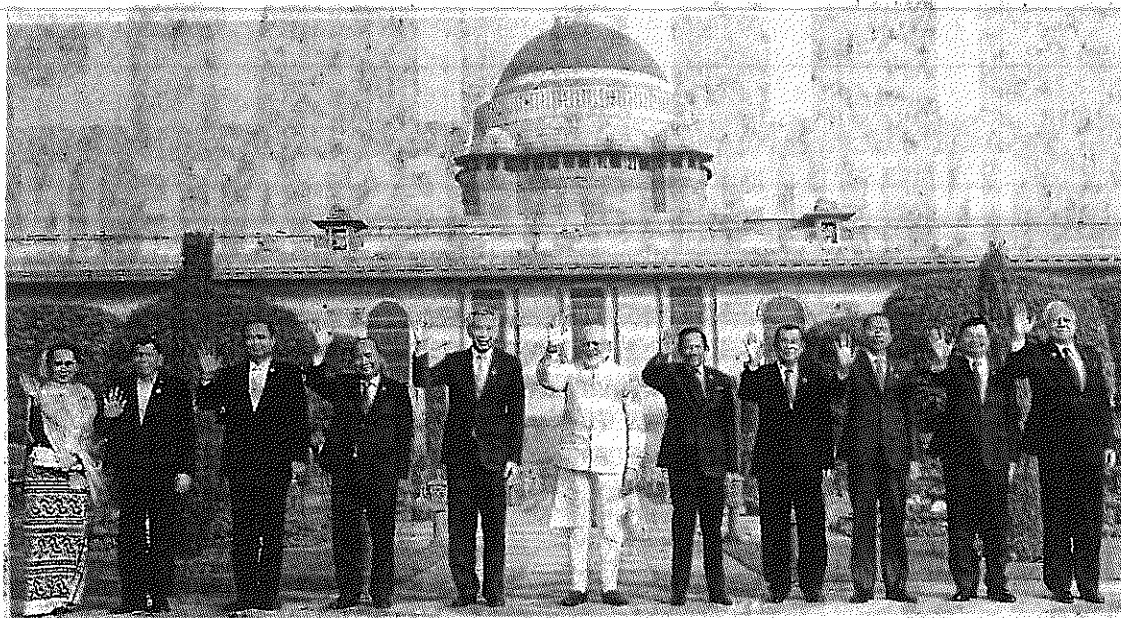
In a separate briefing, Trade Secretary Ramon Lopez said the joint Indian-Filipino working group would pursue development of trade and investments in pharmaceuticals.

"That technical working group was given about two months to give a report on how we can really strengthen the partnership, the relationship between Philippines and India on pharmaceuticals," he said.

'Avoid Mindanao'

Lopez said he had met with the Indian Pharmaceutical Export Council to talk about a possible collaboration prior to the President's arrival in New Delhi on Wednesday night. "We basically wanted them to focus also on key medicines that will be needed especially by the poor," he added.

These include medicines for hypertension, high cholesterol, bacterial growth and cancer, he said.



President Duterte (second from left) joins heads of state and heads of government at the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean)-India Commemorative Summit at the Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi on Jan. 25. With Mr. Duterte are (from left) Myanmar State Counselor Aung San Suu Kyi, Thailand Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha, Vietnam Prime Minister Nguyen Phuc, Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, India Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Sultan of Brunei Hassanal Bolkiah, Cambodia Prime Minister Hun Sen, Indonesia President Joko Widodo, Lao People's Democratic Republic Prime Minister Thongloun Sisoulith and Malaysia Prime Minister Najib Razak.

Mr. Duterte had expressed a number of times his wish for India's giant pharmaceutical industry to begin or expand cooperation in the Philippines.

Before flying back to the Philippines on Friday, Mr. Duterte told Indian business leaders during a brief meeting to "avoid Mindanao" where he had

imposed martial law. "It's a martial law that's not really a martial law. It is a martial law for the enemies of the state," he said. "But if you are

just an ordinary guy there with a business, you can hardly even notice. There are no soldiers around, only policemen."

Martial law was "something there in the south that is quite virulent" for "enemies of the state" like the Islamic State (IS) group and the Abu Sayyaf "who are fond of decapitating foreigners" and kidnapping, Mr. Duterte said.

'Relatively safe'

He said his hometown of Davao City was "relatively safe."

India had invited all Asean leaders to the 25th anniversary of Asean-India ties and to its Republic Day celebrations on Friday to mark the Jan. 26, 1950 anniversary of its national constitution taking effect.

The Asean leaders watched marching bands, floats, military hardware, camels and stunt performers on motorbikes from the president's palace through the tree-lined roads of central Delhi.

Flags of the 10 countries comprising Asean fluttered at the 90-minute parade. The celebrations also included aerial displays and floats from Indian states. —WITHA REPORT FROM AP INQ

27 January 2018



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SOLDIER KILLED IN DAVAO CLASH

MORE TROOPS ON WAY TO MINDANAO TO FIGHT NPA REBELS

By Frinston Lim
@flimINQ

DAVAO CITY—A junior Army officer was killed while two others were wounded in a clash with communist rebels in this city, President Duterte's hometown, on Thursday, only three days after the President ordered the military to crush the New People's Army (NPA).

The clash happened at Paquibato district here as the military awaited the arrival of troops from Luzon to finish off the NPA threat in Mindanao within a year.

Maj. Ezra Balagtey, spokesperson for the military's Eastern Mindanao Command, identified the slain officer as First Lt. Jarrén Relota of the 16th Infantry Battalion.

Balagtey said soldiers were checking reports of NPA presence at Sitio Quimbao in Barangay Mapula at 4 p.m. on Thursday when the clash ensued.

Reinforcement

Col. Ernesto Torres, commander of the Army's 1003rd Infantry Brigade based in Davao del Norte, said the military was keen on wiping out communist rebels in a year by



New People's Army rebels operating in Mindanao say they are ready to fight the military. —CHRIS V. PANGANIBAN

deploying more troops from Luzon in Mindanao.

Torres said soldiers from the 56th Infantry Battalion from Aurora province would be arriving in Davao del Norte soon to augment troops in the province.

"With the addition of one battalion, we would be in a better position to defeat the NPA threats in Metro Davao," said Torres, whose jurisdiction also covers parts of Davao City.

On top of this, the Philippine Army will also bring soldiers from its 901st Infantry Brigade based in Camarines Sur province to North Cotabato province, where the NPA in-

surgency has been raging.

'Lumad' soldiers

Torres, also the martial law spokesperson in Mindanao, said his brigade had also been given supervision and command of 80 "lumad" (indigenous peoples) soldiers and two companies, or 240 men, of Special Civilian Armed Auxiliaries (SCAA).

The SCAA militiamen have been sent to Davao City under the antiterror Task Force Davao.

In Cagayan de Oro City, 500 soldiers of the 65th Infantry Battalion of the 9th Infantry Division (ID) who were

previously assigned in Lanao del Sur province were sent to Northern Mindanao and Caraga regions to fight the NPA.

Capt. Joe Patrick Martinez, 4th ID spokesperson, said their combat experience from the battle with terrorists in Marawi City would help them fight communist rebels in the area.

"These are battle-hardened soldiers," Martinez said, adding that majority of the NPA forces in Mindanao were concentrated in Caraga, Northern Mindanao and Compostela Valley province in Davao region where half of the communist forces nationwide were based.

Communist rebels, however, remained unperturbed by the military deployment.

"The NPA is ever ready to wage war to protect the rights and welfare of the oppressed and exploited people," said Ka Dencio Madrigal, spokesperson for the NPA's Valentin Palamine Command in North Cotabato.

President Duterte reiterated his order to the military to crush the communist insurgency during a command conference in Compostela Valley on Monday. —WITH REPORTS FROM ELDIE AGUIRRE AND JIGGER JERUSALEM INQ

27 January 2018

The Manila Times

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Army officer killed, 2 soldiers wounded in Davao City attack

ZAMBOANGA CITY: Communist insurgents killed an Army officer and wounded two soldiers in a firefight in Davao City.

Major Ezra Balagtey, Philippine Army spokesman, said First Lieutenant Jarren Jay Relota, 27, was killed in Barangay Mapula of Paquibato district, a stronghold of the New People's Army (NPA).

He said Relota's group from the 16th Infantry Battalion was sent to the village after civilians reported the presence of rebels but were fired upon by the rebels.

"During the exchange of fire and maneuver, the terrorists detonated an improvised landmine wounding two soldiers while killing Lt

Relota," Balagtey said.

Major General Noel Clement, regional Army commander, expressed grief over the killing of Relota and vowed to "continue to pursue the peace in the area, and prevent such incident that will add misery to the communities."

Earlier, the NPA said it will not be cowed by President Duterte's all-out war against the communist group, saying rebel forces are ready to strike at any opportune time anywhere in the country.

The rebel group also claimed responsibility for its daring attack on a military post in North Cotabato's Makilala town that resulted in the seizure of weapons and grenades.

But it said three of its fighters were killed in the recent clash in Barangay Luayon.

In a statement sent to the media, the NPA's Valentin Palamine Regional Operations Command boasted its "audacious attack" against the 39th Infantry Battalion (IB) and its militias.

Dencio Madrigal, rebel spokesman, said the "NPA confiscated M14 rifle and M16 rifle, five rifle grenades, assorted ammunition, vests and military equipment. The action is a decisive riposte against the US-Duterte regime's impudent terrorism and perfidious imposition of martial law in Mindanao. The NPA is ever ready to wage

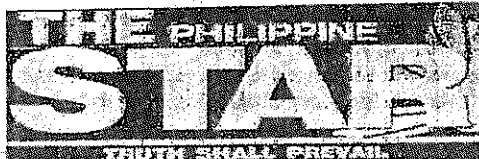
war against terrorist suppression in order to protect the rights and welfare of the oppressed and exploited people."

It added that the raid also serves as punitive action against the 39IB and the citizens' auxiliary brigade "for their numerous atrocities towards the civilians," including the "killings of activists and *lumad* and the incessant harassment of innocent civilians in North Cotabato and Davao del Sur."

Madrigal identified their members killed in the fighting as Raymart Rusiana, Roger Labajo Jr. and a certain Ka Tomas.

AL JACINTO

27 January 2018



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Army officer killed in clash with Reds

DAVAO CITY – An Army officer was killed in an encounter with New People's Army (NPA) rebels in Paquibato district in this city on Thursday.

First Lt. Jarren Relota, 27, platoon leader of the Bravo Company of the 16th Infantry Battalion, and his men were checking the reported presence of NPA guerrillas in Sitio Quimbao, Barangay Mapula when they were fired at.

The Eastern Mindanao Command said Relota died when the communists detonated a landmine. The attack also left two other soldiers wounded.

"We grieve for the death of Lt. Relota. However, we

salute his display of the finest tradition of soldiery and gallantry in pursuing peace and protecting the people of Paquibato. We hope that by his sacrifice, we will bring peace in the area," Maj. Gen. Noel Clement, Joint Task Force Haribon chief, said.

The Pulang Bagani Command, one of the major NPA forces in Mindanao, is based in Paquibato.

Relota, a native of Antique, was the commanding officer of the Bravo Company since June.

He was commissioned into the regular force after finishing the officer candidate course in May 2013.

– Edith Regalado, Jaime Laude

28 January 2018



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Soldier killed, 2 others hurt in NPA ambush in Davao City

By Mario J. Mallari

An Army junior officer was killed while two other soldiers were wounded after communist New People's Army (NPA) rebels detonated a bomb against the troops responding to report of presence of armed men in Paquibato District, Davao City on Thursday.

Maj. Ezra Balagtey, spokesman of Joint Task Force Haribon, said that elements of the Army's 16th Infantry Battalion (IB), led by Lt. Jarren Relota, were initially ambushed along Sitio Quimbao at around 4 p.m.

"Accordingly, a Platoon of Bravo company led by 1 Lt. Jarren Relota while responding to an information on the presence of NPA in the aforementioned area was fired upon by an undetermined number of NPA Terrorists," Balagtey said.

"During the exchange of fire and maneuver, the terrorists detonated an improvised landmine wounding two soldiers while killing Lt. Relota," he added.

Relota is a 27-year-old native of

San Jose, Antique. He was the commanding officer of Bravo Company, 16IB, 2ID, PA since June 1, 2017.

He was commissioned into the regular force after finishing the Officer Candidate Course of the Officer Candidate School in May 2013.

The only son of Joel and Celine Relota, the brave officer graduated of Bachelor of Science in Criminology at the University of Antique on April 1, 2011, and subsequently acquired his license as criminologist.

MGen. Noel Clement, commander of Joint Task Force Haribon, expressed his grief at the death of the officer and vowed to continue to pursue the peace in the area, and prevent such incident that will add misery to the communities.

"We grieve for the death of Lt. Relota. However, we salute his display of the finest tradition of soldiery and gallantry in pursuing peace and protecting the people of Paquibato," Clement said.

"We hope that the... he added.

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Pahina. 3

NPA landmine attack: Sundalo todas, 2 sugatan

Patay ang isang Army junior officer habang dalawa pang sundalo ang nasugatan makaraang sumabog ang patibong na landmine ng mga teroristang New People's Army (NPA) sa nagrespondeng tropa ng pamahalaan sa Paquibato District, Davao City nitong Huwebes.

Ayon kay Major Ezra Balagtey, spokesman ng Joint Task Force (JTF) Haribon, dakong alas-4 ng hapon nang magresponde ang mga elemento ng Army's 16th Infantry Battalion (IB) sa pamumuno ni Lt. Jarren Relota sa napaulat na presensya ng mga armadong terorista nang pasabugan sila ng landmine .

"Accordingly, a platoon of Bravo company led by 1Lt. Jarren Relota while responding to an information on the presence of NPA in the aforementioned area was fired upon by an undetermined number of NPA Terrorists," pahayag ni Balagtey.

Si Relota, 27, ay tubong San Jose, Antique at Commanding Officer ng Bravo Company ng Army's 16th IB, 2nd ID simula pa noong Hunyo 1, 2017.

Ikinalungkot ni Major Gen. Noel Clement, commander ng Joint Task Force Haribon ang pagkamatay ng bayaning opisyal. **Joy Cantos**

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NPA claims responsibility for attack on military post

By **MALU CADELINA MANAR**
and **MIKE U. CRISMUNDO**

KIDAPAWAN CITY – The New People's Army (NPA) operating in Southwest Mindanao has admitted that three of its fighters were killed, as it claimed responsibility for an attack at a government militia post in Makilala, North Cotabato last Monday.

In a statement, Ka Dencio Madrigal, spokesperson for the NPA's Valentine Palamine Regional Operations Command (NPA-VPROC), identified those killed Raymart Rusiana whom they called as, "Ka Rocky", Roger Labajo or

"Ka Reden"; and Armand Mendoza or "Ka Tomas." They all belonged to the Mount Alip Sub-Regional Operations Command of the NPA Far South Mindanao Region.

"Though saddened by their deaths, the revolutionary forces and masses they have served were inspired by their determination and sacrifices in pursuing the people's revolutionary aspirations," said Madrigal in a press statement they issued on January 25.

Madrigal said they were able to seize M14 rifle, M16 rifle, five rifle grenades, assorted ammunitions, several vests, and other military equipment in the attack.

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The Manila Times

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2 NPA REBELS KILLED, 1 ARRESTED IN TARLAC

CAMP MACABULOS, Tarlac City: Two communist New People's Army (NPA) rebels were killed while a resident of Barangay San Miguel in San Manuel, Tarlac was arrested during a joint operation of Tarlac Police Provincial Office (TPPO) and the Army Intelligence Regiment on Wednesday. Senior Supt. Ritchie Medardo Posadas, TPPO director, identified the slain rebels as Victorio Tesoro, NPA's Komite Rehiyon–Hilagang Silangang Luzon first deputy secretary and Lolito Raza of Danilo Ben West Command–Northern Front. Arrested was Jose Dalente Caroy, owner of the house where the rebels were killed. Policemen and soldiers were supposed to serve a warrant of arrest against the two for charges of multiple murder and rebellion. Tesoro and Raza reportedly resisted arrest that resulted in a firefight with authorities. Recovered in the area were two caliber 45 pistols, magazines and ammunition, two hand grenades, explosive devices, detonating cord, blasting caps and subversive documents.

JERRY M. HERNANDEZ

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NPA member arrested

CAMP BANCASI, Butuan City – A New People's Army (NPA) guerilla was arrested while allegedly extorting money from residents of Quarry Mangilit in Purok Mangga, Barangay Magangit, Maco, Compostela Valley. Capt. Jerry S. Lamosao, Public Affairs Office (PAO) chief of the Army's 10th Infantry (Agila) Division (10th ID), said the rebel, identified as Jorimar M. Japitan, alias "Ka Jori," 20, a member of the NPA's Milisya ng Bayan, didn't resist arrest. He admitted he was extorting money from residents of the area along with his parents, Jerry and Lenny Japitan, who were able to escape. Jerry is the alleged commanding officer of Milisya ng Bayan Cluster 4 SPARU-Guerilla Front Committee 2SRC 2 of the CPP-NPA SMRC, while Lenny is the alleged sub-section collector of the same unit. Jorimar has since been brought to the 71st IB headquarters in Purok 8, Barangay Nueva Visayas, Mawab, Compostela Valley province. **(Mike U. Crismundo)**

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Pahina. 2

Dahil sa love triangle
Sundalo itinumba sa police station

NORTH COTABATO - Isabela City. Siya ay idineklarang dead-on-arrival sa Basilan Community Hospital dahil sa tama ng bala sa ulo. Si Lauriaga ay nakades-tino sa Jolo, Sulu at umuwi lamang sa kanilang lugar. Pasado alas-10:00 ng umaga habang nakasakay sa kanyang motorsiklo ang biktma kung saan nakaang-kas ang kanyang nobya nang barilin ng salarin sa ulo malapit mismo sa tapat ng Maritime Police Station sa lugar. **Rhoderick Beñez**

Pinaniniwalaang love triangle ang isa sa mga dahilan kung bakit pinaslang ang isang sundalo ng 'di pa nakilalang riding-in-tandem criminals sa tapat mismo ng himpilan ng pulisya sa daungan sa Isabela City, Basilan kamakalawa.

Kinilala ni Supt. Restituto Pangusban, hepe ng Isabela City Police Station, ang biktimang si Corporal Jhunrey Lauriaga, residente ng Barangay Binuangan,

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2 farmers die in bomb blast

MAGUINDANAO – Two farmers were killed while another was wounded in a bomb explosion in Datu Piang town at past 3 p.m. on Thursday

Abusama Guamin, 26, and Abdullah Mamatanto, 21, were in a rice field in Barangay Dasawao when the bomb went off. Their companion Katib Mamatan-to remained confined in a hospital in Pikit, North Cotabato.

Probers still have no leads on the motive for the explosion and the perpetrators of the attack.

Community leaders said there is a presence of members of the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) in the barangay

Members of the municipal peace and order councils in Datu Piang, Datu Saudi, Salibo and Saidona towns said they received reports that the explosives that killed the two farmers were among those planted by BIFF men.

– John Unson

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Duterte mocks IS: I want 'virgins' here

President Duterte told Indian businessmen the Islamic State (IS) group espouses a bankrupt, empty ideology that misled its followers with the promise of eternal life in the company of virgins if they die as martyrs. He joked that he, too, was promising "virgins" to attract foreign visitors and that he'd rather "have virgins here" than in heaven. —STORY BY DJ YAP **A4**

DUTERTE MOCKS IS, SAYS HE'D RATHER HAVE 'VIRGINS' HERE, NOT IN HEAVEN

By DJ Yap
@deejayapINQ

NEW DELHI—President Duterte on Friday denounced the Islamic State (IS) group's "bankrupt" ideology and mocked Muslim extremists' belief of eternal life in paradise, saying he would rather "have the virgins here" than in heaven.

Speaking before Indian businessmen before flying back to the Philippines, Mr. Duterte joked that he would also make virgins a "come-on" to foreign investors and visitors to his country.

The IS ideology "is totally bankrupt, totally empty and the only objectives there are to kill and destroy for nothing, for no reason at all," he said.

"And the come-on is that if you die a martyr, you go to

heaven with 42 virgins waiting for you," he said to laughter from the Indian businessmen.

"Well, if I could just make it a come-on also for those who would like to go to my country," he added, eliciting more laughter from the mostly male audience.

'Half Muslim'

He said he was "half Muslim"—his grandmother being a Maranao Muslim—so he could talk about the subject and the extremists "do not have the monopoly of discourse in this field."

He said the extremists promised Muslim men they would be rewarded with "virgins" if they die as martyrs.

Responding to that, Mr. Duterte said: "I'd like to have the virgins here, not in heaven.

God may not allow it."

Some Muslims believe that those who die as martyrs would spend eternity in the company of 72 virgins, not 42 as mentioned by Mr. Duterte.

Investigators of the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks in the United States found a document from belongings of the airplane hijackers that showed they were motivated by the "promise of paradise" where they would be rewarded with virgins.

The meeting with the Indian business leaders was the President's last stop in his three-day visit to India, his first foreign trip this year.

In the meeting, the President talked about, among other things, his war on drugs, his disdain for human rights groups, American imperialism and how

Indian investments were welcome in his country.

He made no reference to a report on Thursday by a New Delhi-based digital news outfit that he might be targeted by Islamic extremists during India's Republic Day celebration on Friday.

Sleeper cells

ThePrint quoted security sources as saying that Mr. Duterte was "on the radar" of the Islamic State (IS) following his government's effort to wipe out terrorist cells in Marawi City.

IS-inspired fighters laid siege to Marawi for five months last year, prompting the President to impose martial law in the entire Mindanao.

"According to sources, Duterte's agenda to militarily

wipe out Islamist extremism from the state of Mindanao—along with killing Isnilon Hapilon, leader of Abu Sayyaf and 'emir of the IS' in Southeast Asia in the city of Marawi—has provoked the group to mobilize sleeper cells based in Indonesia, which are now planning a strike," the news website said in a report on Thursday.

Presidential spokesperson Harry Roque said Mr. Duterte was not alarmed, but the Presidential Security Group and Indian authorities took precautions to ensure his safety.

"[Mr. Duterte] will not cower to threats from (IS) nor any other terrorist groups. He has pledged to serve the Filipino people and has left the issue of his mortality to the creator," Roque said. "He is unmoved by

this latest threat and will be unrelenting in his fight against violent extremism."

Rody's baggage

ThePrint quoted an unidentified security agency source as saying: "Duterte is coming with baggage, as he has been very vocal about wiping out IS. The Indonesian President too will be present, and could also be a target. We have intelligence inputs that the IS has mobilized its people and is planning to strike."

Earlier on Friday, Mr. Duterte joined nine other leaders from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations to watch the Republic Day celebration to mark the day when India's constitution took effect on Jan. 26, 1950. INQ

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Duterte unfazed by latest ISIS threat

BY ARCYLL CYRUS E. GEDUCOS
AND REUTERS

NEW DELHI, India - President Duterte remains unfazed amid recent threats to his life made by the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) during his

visit to India.

Presidential spokesman Harry Roque said the Indian news agency - The Print, citing an unnamed source, reported that Duterte is on the ISIS radar prompting the Presidential Security Group (PSG) and security forces

of India to tighten security for visiting Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) heads of state.

"PRRD will not cower to threats from ISIS nor any other terrorist groups. He has pledged to serve the Filipino people and has ▶8

Duterte unfazed by...

left the issue of his mortality to the Creator," Roque said Friday morning.

"He is unmoved by this latest threat and will be unrelenting in his fight against violent extremism. All precautions though are being undertaken by the PSG and Indian authorities," he added.

Duterte and other ASEAN leaders are in India for the 2018 India-ASEAN Commemorative Summit which marks the 25th anniversary of the ASEAN-India relations.

This is the first time that India is having more than one guest of honor for its Republic Day. The Print report said this will make the parade more vulnerable to sabotage.

"The space for the enclosures remains the same, while the turnout of dignitaries and people is higher. Therefore, the chances of infiltration are higher," The Print quoted the source.

According to The Print, Duterte's call for a regional military cooperation to wipe out terrorism, particularly Islamist extremism in the ASEAN has provoked the ISIS to mobilize sleeper cells based in Indonesia which are now reportedly planning a strike.

ISIS, through the ASG/Mautegroup was planning to establish a caliphate in Mindanao starting with the Marawi siege prompting Duterte to declare martial law in Mindanao which is still in effect.

"Duterte is coming with baggage, as he has been very vocal about wiping out IS. The Indonesian President, too will be present, and could also be a target," a security agency source told The Print.

"We have intelligence inputs that the IS has mobilized its people and is plan-

ning to strike," the report added.

'Our Eyes'

On Thursday, six ASEAN nations launched an intelligence pact aimed at combating Islamist militants and improving co-operation on security threats, overcoming what analysts described as a high level of distrust.

Under the "Our Eyes" initiative, senior defense officials will meet every two weeks to swap information on militant groups and develop a common database of violent extremists.

The intelligence sharing arrangement was prompted by the Marawi siege.

Dozens of foreigners - most notably Indonesians and Malaysians - were among hundreds of militants who seized large parts of Marawi and engaged in a ferocious battle with Philippine forces that left much of the city in ruins and more than 1,100 people dead, according to government figures.

Some of the foreign fighters are believed to have traveled to Marawi via the porous maritime borders of the Sulu Sea.

"This is something that seems so simple, but the effect is extraordinary," said Indonesian Defense Minister Ryamizard Ryacudu at the "soft launch" in Bali.

During the plenary session of the India-ASEAN Commemorative Summit, Pres. Duterte pushed for regional and multilateral cooperation to address terrorist financing to prevent violent extremism and the importance of timely intelligence gathering and analysis.

Ryacudu said intelligence sharing would help ensure another incident like

Marawi from occurring and prevent the region from "becoming like the Middle East".

He added that the intelligence sharing was "specifically for (combating) terrorism and radicalism."

While led by military forces, the intelligence sharing would "involve all parties," including police.

Distrust

Along with Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Brunei - all members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations - have signed up to the pact.

"It's a significant development," said John Blaxland, an intelligence analyst from the Australian National University.

"ASEAN has long struggled with getting beyond superficiality when it comes to collaboration on security matters."

Blaxland said relations among ASEAN states had been bedeviled by a "high level of distrust" around intelligence cooperations.

"Operational imperatives are overcoming that and you are seeing that come to fruition with this mechanism."

Another security analyst, who declined to be named, said a "pact was better than not having a pact" but added that entrenched mistrust between nations, and between different counter-terrorism agencies within nations, had to be overcome for it to be effective.

Ryacudu said other nations could be invited to join the "Our Eyes" intelligence network, whose name is inspired by the Five Eyes long-standing intelligence pact between the United States, Britain, Australia, New Zealand and Canada.

Ryacudu said US, Australia and Japan could be future members.

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3 Daesh-inspired terrorists nabbed in Lanao del Sur

By NONOY E. LACSON

ZAMBOANGA CITY – Police and military authorities arrested three terrorists believed to be remnants of the Daesh-inspired Maute terror group in Barangay Gacap, Piagapo in Lanao del Sur last Tuesday.

Armed Forces of the Philippines, Western Mindanao Command (AFP-WestMinCom) Commander Lt. Gen. Carlito G. Galvez Jr., said that a joint law enforcement operation was conducted, Tuesday morning by the Joint Task Group Haribon and the Lanao del Sur Provincial Police Office, Philippine National Police (PNP) Special Action Force (SAF) and the Regional Police Special Battalion resulted in the arrest of the three suspects.

Galvez identified the suspects as Apao Macod Dimacaling; Brad Alexander; and Kalal Ramal Berongan alias Mayor.

Joint Task Force Zampelan Commander Maj. Gen. Roselle Murillo, in his report to Galvez, said the suspects were believed to be Maute members involved in the killing of three Christian civilians last December 6, 2017 in the same municipality.

Two caliber-.45 pistols were also recovered from the suspects.

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ASG member nabbed in Zamboanga City

By **Mario J. Mallari**

A wanted Abu Sayyaf member, who served under slain ASG Commander Isnlon Hapilon, was captured by government security forces in Zamboanga City yesterday. Rabulat Balito, who was tagged in the June 2001 kidnapping of 15 workers of Golden Harvest plantation in Lantawan, Basilan, was captured at around 7:50 a.m. along Barangay Recodo, Zamboanga City.

Balito is wanted for kidnapping and serious illegal detention. Police report showed that Balito's presence in the area was reported to the authorities by concerned residents.

While there were no documents recovered from him to establish his identity, victim Faisal Benasing expressed willingness to issue affidavit of identification against Balito.

He was arrested based on recognition/positive identification

of victim/witness under the Witness Protection and Security Benefit Program (WPSBP) of the Department of Justice," report said of Balito.

"There was no recovered identification card that will confirm his identity in relation to the warrant of arrest. However, the victim (is willing to execute an affidavit of identification which was already coordinated with the Regional Prosecutor Peter Medalle who gave his go signal/consent to subscribe the victim's affidavit," it added.

The suspect was subsequently placed under police custody pending court's commitment order.

Police said that Balito served under Hapilon, the designated emir or leader of the Islamic State-inspired terrorists who laid the five-month siege on Marawi City last year.

Hapilon was killed, along with more than 900 other terrorists from the Abu Sayyaf and the Maute Group during Marawi siege.

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SAYYAF BANDIT KILLED IN BASILAN CLASH

ZAMBOANGA CITY: Pro-government militias killed an Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) bandit in a gunfight in Basilan on Wednesday. Officials said militias responded to a report by civilians that the militant was spotted in Barangay Sungkayut, Ungkaya Pukan town. But the ASG gunmen, identified as Murur Kahum, opened fire at the approaching militias triggering a firefight. Kahum is said to be a follower of Sayyaf leader Puruji Indama. Security has been tightened in the town for fear that the Abu Sayyaf may retaliate for the death of Kahum, whose group has been blamed for the spate of killings and terrorism and ransom kidnappings in Basilan. Also this week, the military captured four alleged supporters of the Islamic State and one of them was a Spaniard who was seized by soldiers in Basilan. Officials said Abdelhakim Labidi Adib, 20, was arrested January 22 at a checkpoint carrying grenades and explosives. His companion, believed to be an ASG member, escaped

AL JACINTO

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LONE GUNMAN KILLS MARINE IN ISABELA

ZAMBOANGA CITY: A Philippine Marine was killed in a daring attack at the port area in Isabela City in Basilan on Thursday. Police said Corporal Jhun Rey Lauriaga, 25, assigned with the 49th Marine Battalion Landing Team in Tawi-Tawi, was with his wife when the assailant shot him in the head and escaped after Lauriaga, who was on a break from duty, died on the spot while the woman was unhurt. Initial police report has linked the former lover of Lauriaga's wife as behind the killing. Police have launched a manhunt against the gunman.

AL JACINTO

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Pahina. 1

Basilan, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi gagawing tourist spots

SISIKAPIN ng militar na gawing tourist spots ang mga lugar ng Basilan, Sulu at Tawi-Tawi sa Mindanao.

Ayon kay Western Mindanao Command (WesMinCom) commander Lt. Gen. Carlito Galvez, plano nilang gawing tourist spots ang mga nabanggit na lugar sakaling maubos na ang mga teroristang Abu Sayyaf Group na nagkukuta dito.

Sa talaan ng militar, umaabot na sa 148 kasapi ng Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) ang sumuko sa pamahalaan mula Enero 1 hanggang Disyembre 31, 2017.

Pito sa mga sumukong bandido ay mula sa Basilan, 53 sa Sulu at 21 sa Tawi-Tawi.

Nitong Enero 2018 ay tatlong miyembro ng ASG pa ang sumuko sa Sulu habang isa sa Basilan.

Dahil dito, kumpiyansa ang militar na madaragdagan pa ang mga susuko at maubos din ang mga terorista na magiging daan para mahikayat ang mga terorista na bumisita sa mga ipinagmamalaking pasyalan sa Basilan, Sulu at Tawi-Tawi. **(Betchai Julian)**

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Pahina. 1

Latak ng ISIS nagre-recruit sa Lanao

Nakalabas na ng Marawi City ang mga latak ng ISIS subalit nagri-recruit ngayon sa iba't ibang munisipalidad ng Lanao del Sur.

Nakakalat ngayon sa Lanao del Sur ang mga latak o tira-tirang miyembro ng ISIS-Daesh group. Ito ang kinumpirma ni Task Force Bangon Marawi chairperson at HUDCC chief Eduardo del Rosario sa briefing sa Malacanang.

Sinabi ni del Rosario na ang mga naiwang mga kasapi ng ISIS ay nagkawatak-watak subalit muling nagpapalakas at bumubuo ng isang grupo sa pamamagitan ng pagri-recruit.

Sa kabila nito, tiniyak ni del Rosario na tinutukan na ito ng AFP at PNP at maging ng local government units.

Sa katunayan, maganda aniya ang pagtanggap

ng mga residente dahil sa kanila mismo nanggagaling ang mga impormasyon na nagbibigay ideya sa mga otoridad kung saan matatagpuan ang mga latak ng ISIS upang sila ay masukol.

Nilinaw naman ni del Rosario na wala nang ISIS sa Marawi City, kundi nakalabas na ng siyudad at paikot-ikot ngayon sa ilang munisipalidad sa Lanao del Sur. (Rudy Andal)

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Pahina. 4

Sayyaf na tauhan ni Hapilon timbog

Bumagsak sa tropa ng pamahalaan ang isang miyembro ng Abu Sayyaf Group na wanted sa batas at nagsilbi sa ilalim ng pamumuno ni Commander Isnilon Hapilon, ang napaslang na Emir ng ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) sa operasyon sa Zamboanga City kamakalawa.

Kinilala ang nasakoteng suspek na si Rabulat Balito, wanted sa kidnapping at serious illegal detention ng mahigit 10 mang-gagawa sa Golden Harvest Plantation sa Lantawan, Basilan noong Hunyo 2001.

Bandang alas-7:50 ng umaga nitong Lunes ng masakote ang suspek sa kahabaan ng Brgy. Recodo, Zamboanga City.

Sa ulat ng Police Regional Office (PRO) 9, ang presensya ng suspek sa lugar ay inireport ng concerned citizen.

Inaresto ang suspek matapos na positibong makilala ng isang biktima at testigo na nasa ilalim ng Witness Protection and Security Benefit Program (WPSBP) ng Department of Justice.

Magugunita na si Hapilon, namuno sa limang buwang Marawi City siege na nag-umpisa noong Mayo 23, 2017 ay napaslang kasama ang mahigit 900 pang Maute-ISIS terrorists. *Joy Cantos*

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MILF warns of heightened extremism if BBL passage is stalled anew

BY VANNE ELAINE P. TERRAZOLA

SULTAN KUDARAT, Maguindanao – The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) warned on Friday of a resurgence in extremism in the Autonomous

Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) if the passage of the proposed Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL) is stalled in Congress.

“The more failure we face with the peace process, then ▶8

MILF warns of heightened... ◀1

expect that there will be more extremist groups,” said MILF Chairman Al Haj Murad Ebrahim in a press briefing with senators at their headquarters in Camp Darapanan, this municipality, Thursday.

He cited that the failure of the government in forging peace agreements with rebel groups was the reason why terrorist groups such as the Abu Sayyaf (ASG) and Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) were formed.

He also attributed the attack of the Islamic State (IS)-affiliated Maute Group in Marawi City last year to the failure of the BBL during the previous administration.

“These groups exist and survive because they're gaining support from the people because the people see that their grievances are not being addressed,” Ebrahim said.

Ebrahim urged Congress, particularly the Senate, to approve a BBL that is accepted by people in poverty-stricken ARMM.

The MILF leader also said that it is high-time for the government to pass the BBL, especially now that the IS is reportedly losing ground in the Middle East.

With Mindanao's proximity to other Muslim countries in Asia, Ebrahim said it is not impossible for the Islamist insurgents to rebuild their troops here.

“The only solution for this is to get the support of a large majority of the people and to have a political solution in place that is accepted and supported by the people. If it is accepted by the people, these groups will not exist anymore. If they run out of support, they cannot survive,” he said.

The MILF, Ebrahim said, is optimistic

this time as officials under the Duterte administration, including the President, have aired their support for the measure.

Senators Juan Miguel Zubiri, Sonny Angara, JV Ejercito and Riza Hontiveros on Thursday visited the MILF headquarters in Camp Darapanan before the Senate subcommittee's public hearing on BBL in Cotabato City.

Residents of Cotabato City and Sultan Kudarat lined the streets with flaglets and placards showing their support for the approval of the BBL that was based on the draft presented by the Bangsamoro Transition Commission (BTC), a version crafted by the region's representatives in coordination with the MILF.

Senators for BBL

Amid debates on Charter change and federalism, senators maintained it is the immediate passage of the Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL) that will solve the problem of violent extremism in Mindanao.

Senators Juan Miguel Zubiri, Sonny Angara, Bam Aquino, JV Ejercito, Riza Hontiveros, and Cynthia Villar visited the remnants of Marawi “Ground Zero” to personally see the effect of the attack of Muslim extremists to the city. The lawmakers, except for Angara, visited the war-torn city for the first time.

Seeing the extent of destruction, the six senators asserted the need for the approval of the BBL, which, they said, would be the solution to prevent the resurgence of extremism.

Zubiri, chair of the Senate subcommittee on BBL, said the measure will provide the Moro people with “self-autonomy” to help them develop a region “where they can actually nurture their

Aquino, for his part, said that the government should take advantage of the huge support that the BBL is getting both from the administration's allies as well as from the opposition.

“I think in this case that we have a commonality, that we have something to all agree about. I know this is a priority also of Congress and even of the Executive, President Duterte had mentioned this, so it's one of those times. This is rare, so let's take this opportunity to come up with a BBL,” he told reporters.

Ejercito, meanwhile, said the BBL would “very much” help in reducing extremism by addressing the issues that the groups use to encourage residents to take arms against the government.

Villar echoed Ejercito's belief as she said the Marawi siege should serve as a lesson “on what will happen if the government is not responsive to the needs of the people.”

Senators said the proposed BBL, if enacted into law, would also contribute to the recovery of Marawi City as the proposed Bangsamoro Autonomous Region will have the authority over its finances through the block grant by the government.

Members of the Upper Chamber were in Mindanao for the Senate hearing on the proposed BBL.

During the public hearing held at the Mindanao State University here, senators promised residents that they would prioritize the approval of the measure that was based on proposals by the Bangsamoro Transition Commission (BTC).

The proposed BBL would repeal the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao whose regions will be joined by some municipalities in North Cotabato and Lanao del Norte provinces, as well Cotabato City and Isabela City in the

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Lagman: Martial law mandate has expired

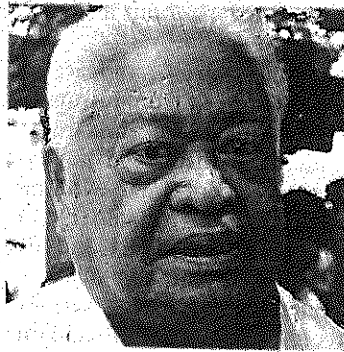
By Vince F. Nonato
@VinceNonatoINQ

President Duterte's proclamation placing Mindanao under martial law cannot be extended anymore because its mandate to suppress the Marawi siege had already expired, opposition lawmaker Rep. Edcel Lagman argued before the Supreme Court.

In a 32-page memorandum, antimartial law petitioners from the "Magnificent Seven" bloc in the House of Representatives said Mr. Duterte's declaration that Marawi City was liberated from Islamic State-inspired terrorists on Oct. 27, 2017, as well as the cessation of military combat operations, rendered Proclamation No. 216 *functus officio*.

Functus officio

Functus officio means the proclamation's mandate had



Rep. Edcel Lagman

expired because its purpose of addressing the "violent acts committed by the Maute terrorist group" was already accomplished.

Maute remnants

"There is no more proclamation to be further extended," read the memorandum.

Lagman argued that the remnants of the Maute fighters

and their Abu Sayyaf allies "have no capacity to continue or resuscitate a crushed rebellion or launch a new one."

No existing rebellion

Antimartial law petitioners contended that no actual rebellion existed in Mindanao to justify a second extension of martial law until Dec. 31, 2018.

Martial law, which was first declared on May 23, 2017 for an initial 60-day period, was extended in July until Dec. 31, 2017 because of continued violence at the time.

But, Mr. Duterte justified the second extension by claiming the remnants of the defeated terror groups were trying to regroup by actively recruiting Moro youths for another possible attack in Mindanao.

He also invoked the bogey of the country's 48-year-old communist insurgency for the first time. INQ

27 January 2018



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Phl prepares for 3-month-long Mayon emergency

The country is bracing for a possible three-month-long emergency in areas around Mayon Volcano, which has already displaced more than 81,000 and caused overcrowding at temporary shelters, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) said yesterday.

Mayon remained at alert level 4, a notch below the highest level, as it continued to spew out lava, ash and other superheated material, volcanologists said.

"We're gearing up for three months" of emergency, said Romina Marasigan, spokesperson for NDRRMC, citing similar situations during previous eruptions of the 8,077-foot volcano.

Displaced families may need to

stay in evacuation centers for that long, she said.

Respiratory illnesses are possible because of the series of ash falls, Marasigan said.

"We remain on red alert," Marasigan told a media briefing, adding that 69,672 evacuees were housed in schools while nearly 12,000 took shelter in tents or went to relatives in more secure locations.

The Albay Public Safety and Emergency Management Office (APSEMO) is adopting the so-called inter-municipality evacuation in order to decongest cramped evacuation centers if an affected town or city could no longer accommodate their evacuees.

APSEMO said they would conduct inventories of occupants to determine which evacuation camps would be decongested first.

Food and other supplies remain adequate but concerns are growing over health and hygiene conditions at all the 69 temporary shelters away from the danger zone.

Health Secretary Francisco Duque III said fast

lanes have been activated in department hospitals, particularly in Bicol Regional Training and Teaching Hospital and Bicol Medical Center, to serve those displaced by the eruption.

Health workers are giving free checkups and medicine to elderly women and children in evacuation centers, but there are not enough toilets.

Albay provincial health officer physician Antonio Ludovice said P2 million from the DOH was earmarked for the construction of latrines and repair of toilets at evacuation sites.

"The province is doing everything to close the gaps for these toilet facilities," said Nestor Santiago, assistant secretary at the DOH.

Department of Social Welfare and Development officer-in-charge undersecretary Emmanuel Leyco said the DSWD is preparing to provide psychosocial intervention measures for evacuees who have been traumatized by the series of eruptions of Mayon.

Between 6:11 a.m. last Thursday to 2:31 a.m. yesterday, seven episodes of intense but sporadic lava fountaining from the summit crater

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lasting 26 to 57 minutes occurred.

The lava fountains reached 150 to 500 meters high and generated ash plumes that reached 500 meters to three kilometers above the crater.

A total of 15 volcanic earthquakes, 19 tremor events, seven of which corresponded to the lava fountaining events, one episode of pyroclastic density currents generation from lava collapse, and numerous rockfall events were recorded by Mayon's seismic monitoring network.

Rockfall events were generated by the collapsing lava front and margins of the advancing lava flow on the Miisi and Bonga gullies. Currently, the Miisi and Buyuan lava flows have maintained their advance to three kilometers and one kilometer, respectively, from the summit crater.

Sulfur dioxide gas emission was measured at an average of 1,916 tons per day last Jan. 25.

Electronic tilt and continuous global positioning system measurements indicate a sustained swelling or inflation of the edifice since November and October last year, consistent with pressurization by magmatic intrusion.

For its part, the Philippine Coast Guard was set to transport 8,000 food packs to Albay residents displaced by the eruption and temporarily taking shelter in evacuation centers.

The number of cancelled flights has risen to 97, the disaster agency said.

The Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines (CAAP) yesterday said the high volume of ash Mayon spews toward the sky poses a risk to international flights passing Albay.

Erick Apolonio, CAAP spokesperson at Legazpi airport, said flights to Legazpi and Naga airports were cancelled up to Jan. 31.

"We know that volcanic ash sucked by plane engines and air-conditioning poses high risk to the aircraft while silica poses health risk to passengers," said Apolonio.

Flights from Japan, Singapore, Papua New Guinea pass Albay before landing at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport so CAAP "urged them to consider precautionary measures, prompting other airlines to cancel their flights due to high column of volcanic ash," Apolonio said.

Legazpi Airport resumed operations yesterday after it closed down for several days.

The Australian government donated 6,000 pieces of non-food items to the Philippine Red Cross (PRC) for the affected families.

Sen. Richard Gordon, chairman of PRC, thanked Australian Ambassador Amanda Gorely for her government's assistance.

Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop last Wednesday said her government pledged P31.6 million (AU\$775,000) worth of humanitarian support to individuals affected by the eruption.

The aid will include the provision of tarpaulins, sleeping mats, blankets, mosquito nets, jerry cans and hygiene supplies to 30,000 individuals.

"We have provided as we always do because we are a good friend of the Philippines. Unfortunately, there has been a

spike of natural disasters in the last few months in which we provided humanitarian assistance to help the families evacuated and affected by flood and most recently with the Mayon eruption. That is continuous," Gorely earlier said.

– With Celso Amo, Sheila Crisostomo, Cet Dematera, Evelyn Macairan, Paolo Romero, Elizabeth Marcelo, Rainier Allan Ronda, Jaime Laude, Rudy Santos, Louella Desiderio, Reuters

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Senators vow passage of BBL

By JOHN UNSON

COTABATO CITY – The four senators who presided over the public hearing on the draft Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL) here Thursday gave assurance that they would see through its enactment within the year.

Leaders of Moro, *lumad* and Christian sectors took turns telling Senators Miguel Zubiri, JV Ejercito, Rissa Hontiveros and Sonny Angara during the event of their wish for the unimpeded passage of the proposed law.

Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) Gov. Mujiv Hataman said the passage of the BBL will prevent conflicts like what had happened in Marawi City.

"Let us not give the terrorists an opportunity to create a narrative that we are not true to our promises," Hataman said.

Maguindanao Gov. Esmael Mangudadatu expressed his full support to the bill for the future generation and for the unity of Muslims, Christians and *lumads*.

"If we (politicians) are a hindrance to the passage of the bill, then I'm willing to step down," he said.

The draft BBL, crafted jointly by representatives of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the national government, is premised on two compacts reached by both sides after 17 years of talks – the 2013 Framework Agreement on Bangsamoro and, subsequently, the 2014 Comprehensive Agreement on Bangsamoro.

The MILF's figurehead, Hadji Murad Ebrahim, told the senators he is worried that public frustration over non-passage of the BBL before 2019 will boost the expansion of Islamic State-inspired armed groups in the south.

He said militants could capitalize on sentiments of frustrated Mindanao residents supporting the BBL to foment animosity to the government and lure recruits into their ranks.

Zubiri said he recognizes the aspiration of the Moro people for peace and development through self-governance.

He said he is optimistic on the approval of the draft BBL without hitches.

"We need a long term political solution achievable only with a new political landscape," Zubiri said.

– With Jose Rodel Clapano

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Stop passing buck on Navy frigate contract – De Lima

By **MARVIN SY**

Sen. Leila de Lima called on the Duterte administration to stop using its predecessor as a scapegoat whenever anomalies come up, including the controversial P16-billion frigate contract for the Philippine Navy.

De Lima, who served as justice secretary during the Aquino administration, pointed out that it was the current administration that awarded and signed the contract for the acquisition of the frigates and not its predecessor.

“As I have said before, every time the Duterte government gets involved in dubious deals, the President and his cohorts always divert the issue instead of addressing it head-on – either Duterte and his lackeys will blame the past administration or they will invent another outrageous lie to change the headlines,” De Lima said in a statement yesterday.

De Lima noted the notice of award for

the contract was done in August 2016 and the contract signed in October 2016, so clearly the deal was consummated under the current administration.

The frigate deal has led to the firing of then Navy flag officer-in-command Vice Admiral Joseph Mercado and the implication of Special Assistant to the President Christopher Go as an alleged middleman.

Go has denied his alleged intervention in the selection of the weapons system supplier.

De Lima recalled how presidential spokesperson Harry Roque Jr. came to Go’s defense, claiming that the South Korean bidder for the Navy’s acquisition of two frigates was selected during the Aquino administration.

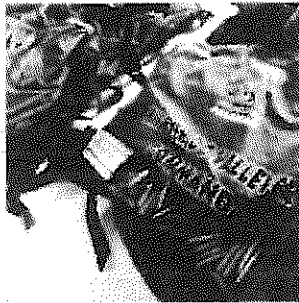
Roque likewise claimed the present administration’s role in the procurement was merely ministerial, making it impossible for Go to interfere in the acquisition.

ONLINE NEWS

27 JANUARY 2018

SUSTAINED OPERATIONS | WESCOM's JTG South scores again Vs NPAs in Brooke's Point

Posted by [Alvin Santiago](#) on January 26, 2018 at 1:06 PM



PUERTO PRINSESA, Palawan (DWDD) – As the Joint Task Group South (JTGS), composed of MBLT4 and 18SFC, clears remaining Communist Terrorists Mass Base areas in Southern Palawan, its operating elements recovered 1 Shotgun, 1 M16 magazine with live ammo, back packs and Bienvenido Vallever Command uniforms in Sitio Gara, Brgy Amas, Brooke's Point last January 18, 2018.

The seizure of said items was based on information from concerned residents of said area. This was a result of an enhanced-information sharing protocol established by the Local Government Unit of Brooke's Point as a result of series of MPOC meetings, security forums, and most importantly the commitment vowed by local leaders and constituents.

WESCOM shall continue with its focused military operations in Palawan in order to dismantle all NPA. Likewise WESCOM urges NPA members to surface, return to fold of the law and be reintegrated in the mainstream society. **WESCOM MCAG**

EXPOSITORY TOUR | ASG Returnees Rehabilitation Program

By Alvin Santiago

BASILAN (DWDD) – This January 2018, the Western Mindanao Command through its JTF Basilan, in collaboration with Balay Mindanaw, ARMM, Eisenhower Fellowship Association US Embassy and Nagdilaab Foundation Inc conducted an “Expository Tour” under the ASG Returnees Rehabilitation Program (ARRP) for 40 Basilan ASG returnees.

The activity intends to provide the returnees an avenue for personal, spiritual, values formation and the opportunity to gain new experiences. The tour also seeks to provide exposure to the returnees progressive communities outside Basilan Province; create positive disposition among the returnees through leisure and other activities; foster cohesion and team spirit; and reinforce positive and moderate view of Islam.

“This program will set as a pioneering model similar to the NPA returnees Comprehensive Local Integration Program (CLIP),” said LtGen Galvez.

“All returnees will also undergo the same program to ensure that they will be fully integrated and mainstreamed as productive members of their community.”

“With all our partners, we will transform our ASG affected areas from “terrorism to tourism haven,” WestMinCom chief concluded.

More than a hundred members of the Abu Sayyaf Group have laid down their arms since operations were sustained by the Western Mindanao Command last year. From January 1 to December 31, 2017, a hundred and forty-four Abu Sayyaf bandits capitulated as military troops employ more pressure and pound on the terrorist group in Zamboanga, Basilan, Sulu, and Tawi-Tawi.

“This massive surrender is ascribed to the relentless operations of our troops on the ground and the robust support of the people of Mindanao, especially our local chief executives that are now involved in our fight against decades-long internal aggression on the islands,” said Lieutenant General Carlito G. Galvez, Jr., commander of the Western Mindanao Command.

Last year, seventy Abu Sayyaf bandits yielded to the troops in Basilan, 53 in Sulu, and 21 in Tawi-Tawi. This month (January 2018), four Abu Sayyaf members (three in Sulu and one in Basilan) already surrendered to the Joint Task Forces under the WestMinCom. Three high-powered firearms of the Abu Sayyaf were also recovered from January 1-23, 2018. On January 21, 2018, Reymal Abe Majan, 23, Tarun Uhad Ismael, 63, and Makdar Jikiri, 25, yielded to Captain John Armand Guevarra of the 2nd Special Forces Battalion, Special Forces Regiment (Airborne) in Barangay Kanaway, Parang, Sulu.

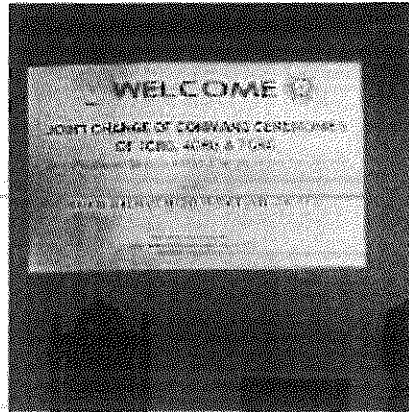
Ismael and Jikiri are followers of Abu Sayyaf sub-leader Idang Susukan, while Majan is a follower of Abu Sayyaf sub-leader Maradjan Hadjiri. They also surrendered two M1 Garand rifles and an M16 rifle.

“We encourage other Abu Sayyaf members to return to the fold of the law and join the government troops in working for internal security through peaceful means,” added Lieutenant General Galvez, Jr.

“The government in coordination with the Ulama has prepared rehabilitation programs to those who have surrendered to ensure that they do not go back to their ill beliefs.” **MCAG**

CRSAFP | CRGs Joint Change of Command Ceremonies

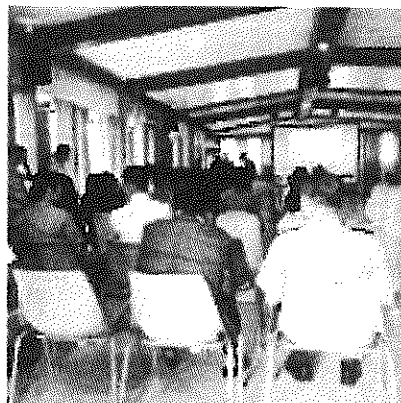
by [Alvin Santiago](#)



CAMP GEN EMILIO AGUINALDO, Quezon City (DWDD) –The Civil Relations Service, Armed Forces of the Philippines (CRSAFP) is currently holding a Joint Change of Command Ceremony for the 1st Civil Relations Group, 4th Civil Relations Group and 7th Civil Relations Group at the CRSAFP Multi-Purpose Hall, Camp Gen Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City.



BGen Bienvenido R Datuin, Commander CRSAFP leads the activity and he is assisted by Col Antonio Z Francisco, Deputy Commander, CRSAFP. Awards were also presented to the Outgoing Group Commanders.



The outgoing Group Commander of the 1stCRG, LTC Leopoldo Acerden will now head the 7th CRG, he was replaced by Maj Ericson Bulosan, the current CRSAFP Inspector General. LTC Emmanuel Garcia, outgoing Group Commander of the 4th CRG is now the Public Affairs Officer, AFP, he was replaced by Col Jose Victor Vargas, outgoing head of the 7CRG. **AES**

More Army troops deployed to IP areas in Davao region

From the often pro-Communist Party of the Philippines online publication the Davao Today (Jan 25):

In response to the pronouncement of President Rodrigo Duterte to “destroy the enemy,” the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) announced it will augment its brigade covering indigenous peoples communities in Southern Mindanao region.

“The message of the President is clear to us. It is now our primary task. The additional troops coming from Luzon will be a great help in accomplishing our mission as we eliminate the enemies of the state particularly, now that we are calling them, the CPP-NPA terrorists (CNTs),” said Colonel Ernesto Torres, the Philippine Army Commander of the 1003rd Brigade in an AFP-PNP press conference on Wednesday morning here at Mandaya Hotel.

The 1003 rd Brigade currently comprises the 3rd Infantry Battalion, 16th IB and the 89th IB and are operating in Paquibato, Marilog, Calinan, Baguio, and Toril districts in Davao City, Davao del Norte towns: Sto. Tomas, Carmen, Panabo and Island Garden City of Samal.

The 56th IB from Luzon is expected to report by the first week of February and will cover Talaingod town in Davao del Norte.

Leaders of IP groups in a protest against martial law extension in Mindanao at Freedom Park on Wednesday afternoon slammed the additional troops deployed.

In an interview with Davao Today, Datu Kaylo Bontulan, a leader of a local Lumad group Salugpungan Ta' Tanu Igkanugon (Salugpungan) in Talaingod expressed dismay over the President's remark especially with martial law being extended in Mindanao and feared that their lives are at stake under the hands of the armed security forces.

“Wala pa nag-deploy, pirmi na ang pagpamatay sa mga Lumad sama ni Obello Bay-ao (Lumad killings continue even before the additional deployment of troops, like in the case of Obello Bay-ao),” said Bontulan.

He pointed that once the additional troops arrive in Talaingod, IPs will have no choice but to flee, leaving their farms and homes.

The Lumad leader slammed the food blockade and the red tagging that have further impoverished their communities.

He also questioned that if the military is actually targeting communist rebels, they should have deployed the soldiers evenly in Luzon and Visayas as NPAs are also operating in other parts of the country.

He believed that the rapid military deployment and expansion of its operations in Mindanao are meant to protect the mining companies that are exploiting and poised to exploit more on IP's ancestral domain.

There are about 52 applications for mining concessions in Talaingod, Bontulan said.

“Ang akong panawagan kay Duterte, nga kung ang NPA iyang target, dili martial law ang tubag. Kundili, pagpanubag sa panginahanglan sa katawhan ug pagrespeto sa panagiya sa mga lumad sa

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

ilang yutang kabilin (I am asking the President that martial law will not resolve the issue on the NPAs. But rather, addressing the basic needs of the masses and respect for IPs in their ancestral domain)," said Bontulan.

Aside from incoming new battalion, a total of over 300 soldiers are joining the 1003rd Brigade, 80 of whom are indigenous people (IP). Another two special Civilian Armed Forces Geographical Units (CAFGU) companies with 120 private soldiers each also form part of the brigade forces.

Col. Torres is confident that there will be more successful counter-insurgency operations with the increased number of forces in under his command together with the intelligence, artillery and other complimentary units needed in his brigade, as it puts them in "better position to defeat the threats of CNTs especially in Metro Davao."

The 901st Brigade from Luzon is said to be joining the 4th Infantry Division which will act as controlling headquarters to be stationed along the boundaries of Bukidnon and Cotabato provinces. President Duterte has ordered the military to "destroy the NPAs (New People's Army), destroy the organization" in his speech during the AFP and Philippine National Police (PNP) joint command conference at the 10th Infantry Division Headquarters in Mawab, Compostela Valley on Monday.

<http://davaotoday.com>

Stop attacks around Mayon, AFP asks rebs

From the Philippine Daily Inquirer (Jan 25):

The military has appealed to communist rebels to stop launching attacks and allow the unhampered movement of representatives of government agencies helping evacuees fleeing the wrath of Mayon volcano in Albay province.

“Our fellow Filipinos are currently facing a critical situation. They need all immediate help that we can give. Let us temporarily put aside the fighting to provide them with unhampered quick assistance,” said Col. Teody Toribio, spokesperson for the military’s Southern Luzon Command.

“The situation around Mayon is critical. The NPA (New People’s Army) should not make it hard and worse for the civilians,” he said.

He made the call after a team of Army soldiers, who were on their way to assist evacuees, was attacked by a band of suspected rebels in the village of Malabago in Guinobatan town early on Monday.

Toribio said a soldier was wounded in the five-minute firefight.

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net>

NPA mass surrenders due to internal corruption: AFP

From the Philippine Canadian Inquirer (Jan 25):



President Rodrigo Roa Duterte engages in a discussion with some members of his cabinet after two rebel returnees from the New People's Army were presented to the President at the Matina Enclaves in Davao City on January 20, 2018. Also in the photo are Interior and Local Government Undersecretary Eduardo Año, Education Secretary Leonor Briones, Agrarian Reform Acting Secretary John Castriciones, and Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process Jesus Dureza. (Photo by Ace Morandante/Presidential Photo)

The recent spate of New People's Army (NPA) rebels returning to the fold of the law reflects the demoralization being experienced in their ranks due to internal corruption, the Armed Forces of the Philippines said Thursday.

AFP public affairs office chief Lt. Col. Emmanuel Garcia made this statement after 188 NPA members surrendered in the first three weeks of January alone.

"The AFP is expecting more NPAs to yield since there is demoralization in the NPA's ranks as some leaders have already returned to the folds of law brought by internal corruption," Garcia stressed.

He also stressed that the series of mass surrender is reflective of the combined efforts of the local government units, communities, Philippine National Police and the AFP thru-community based dialogues.

<http://www.canadianinquirer.net>

Insurgents attack government troops evacuating people from Mayon

From the Gulf News (Jan 24):

A soldier was injured while several guerrillas were wounded by soldiers repelling the attack

A government soldier was wounded in an attack on an army truck taking part in evacuation efforts in Albay as Mayon volcano continued to exhibit heightened activity.

According to the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Civil Relations Service (CRS), a truck dispatched by the government to evacuate residents in the town of Guinobatan last Monday was ambushed by New Peoples Army (NPA) guerrillas. A soldier from the 83rd Infantry Battalion, identified as Gilno Manuel, was injured while a number of insurgents were wounded by soldiers repelling the attack.

“This act by the NPA’s is a clear disrespect of the rights of evacuees to receive assistance from our government. This shows that they are insensitive to the plight of the Mayon evacuees,” Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla AFP-CRS chief said.

The Army 9th Infantry Division based in the Bicol Region is taking part in efforts to evacuate residents inside the eight kilometre danger zone around Mayon, to evacuation areas around the province of Albay.

Reacting to reports of the rebel attacks, Cedric Daep of the Albay Provincial Security and Emergency Management Office appealed to the insurgents that instead of attacking government forces engaged in humanitarian evacuations, it would be better for the NPA to “help the government bring the evacuees to a safe area.”

Bicol has traditionally been an area infested with communist insurgents. During times of disasters, combatants are expected to avoid conducting attacks as a humanitarian gesture.

Fortunately at the time of the attack, the military was just on its way to pick up evacuees in the village of Dona Mercedes in Guinobatan.

<http://gulfnews.com>

2 NPA officers slain in Tarlac clash

From the Philippine Daily Inquirer (Jan 26):

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Two suspected high-ranking officers of the New People's Army (NPA) in northeastern Luzon were killed on Wednesday in a firefight with government soldiers and policemen at San Manuel town in Tarlac province, a report from the Central Luzon regional police camp here confirmed on Thursday.

The report said Victorio Tesorio and Lolito Raza fired at soldiers and policemen who were serving them arrest warrants in the house of Jose Dallente Caroy at Barangay San Miguel.

Tesorio was reportedly the head of the NPA northeastern Luzon regional command, while Raza was the head of the Danilo Ben command of the NPA's northern front.

Murder, rebellion

The warrants stemmed from cases of murder, frustrated murder, multiple murder and rebellion filed against Tesorio and Raza.

Police reported recovering two guns, two hand grenades, a laptop and antigovernment documents from the two men.

Police said Caroy faced charges for harboring criminals.

Chief Supt. Amador Corpus, Central Luzon police director, said the operation was a result of "concerted operations and diligent efforts of the police and the military to arrest all lawless elements in the region."

The Armed Forces' Northern Luzon Command (Nolcom) said in a separate report that the NPA had stepped up attacks.

On Jan. 23, Nolcom tagged the NPA to be behind the killing of Johnny Adao, a retired policeman, at Sitio Luyucan in Tabuk City, Kalinga province.

Kalinga clash

On the same day, a clash took place in Pinukpuk town, also in Kalinga, where two soldiers were killed and two others wounded.

The NPA, the military wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines, had stepped up attacks in parts of Luzon before President Duterte unilaterally canceled the peace talks in late 2017. The attacks took place in Batangas and Northern Luzon provinces.

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net>

148 Abu Sayyaf members have surrendered since last year —WesMinCom

From GMA News (Jan 25):

A total of 148 Abu Sayyaf members from Zamboanga, Basilan, Sulu, and Tawi-Tawi have surrendered to the government since last year, the Western Mindanao Command said Thursday.

Lieutenant General Carlito Galvez, Jr., commander of the Western Mindanao Command, said they ascribe the massive surrender to the relentless operations of the troops on the ground and the robust support of the people of Mindanao.

"Especially our local chief executives that are now involved in our fight against decades-long internal aggression on the islands," he said in a press statement.

From January 1 to December 31, 2017, a total of 70 Abu Sayyaf bandits yielded to the troops in Basilan, 53 in Sulu, and 21 in Tawi-Tawi.

On January 21, 2018, four Abu Sayyaf members, including three in Sulu and one in Basilan, surrendered to the Joint Task Forces under the WestMinCom.

The three were identified as Reymal Abe Majan, 23; Tarun Uhad Ismael, 63; and Makdar Jikiri, 25, yielded to Captain John Armand Guevarra of the 2nd Special Forces Battalion, Special Forces Regiment (Airborne) in Barangay Kanaway, Parang, Sulu.

Ismael and Jikiri are followers of Abu Sayyaf sub-leader Idang Susukan, while Majan is a follower of Abu Sayyaf sub-leader Maradjan Hadjiri.

They also surrendered two M1 Garand rifles and an M16 rifle.

Government troops recovered three high-powered firearms of the Abu Sayyaf from January 1 to 23, 2018.

Galvez encouraged other Abu Sayyaf members to surrender.

"The government in coordination with the Ulama has prepared rehabilitation programs to those who have surrendered to ensure that they do not go back to their ill beliefs," he said.

He said this January, the WesMinCom through its Joint Task Force Basilan, in collaboration with Balay Mindanaw, ARMM, Eisenhower Fellowship Association US Embassy, and Nagdilaab Foundation Inc conducted an "Expository Tour" under the ASG Returnees Rehabilitation Program (ARRP) for 40 Basilan Abu Sayyaf surrenderers.

He said the activity intends to provide the surrenderers an avenue for personal, spiritual, values formation and the opportunity to gain new experiences.

The tour also seeks to expose to the surrenderers to progressive communities outside Basilan Province; create positive disposition among the surrenderers through leisure and other activities; foster cohesion and team spirit; and reinforce positive and moderate view of Islam.

"This program will set as a pioneering model similar to the NPA returnees Comprehensive Local Integration Program (CLIP)," Galvez said.

He said all surrenderers will also undergo the same program to ensure that they will be fully integrated and mainstreamed as productive members of their community.

<http://www.gmanetwork.com>

2 soldiers dead, 1 injured in clash with Reds in Kalinga

From the Philippine News Agency (Jan 24):

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) suffered three more casualties as two soldiers died and one was injured in an encounter with members of the New People's Army (NPA) in a town in Kalinga province on Tuesday, the Army's 5th Infantry Division (5ID) said on Wednesday.

5ID Public Affairs Office (DPAO) chief, Captain Jefferson Somera, said the names of the casualties are put on hold pending information to the family of the two fallen and injured soldiers.

The Army believes that the NPA also suffered casualties in the 15-minute gunfight.

He said the encounter happened at around 10 a.m. of Tuesday in Sitio Matayog, Barangay Baay in Pinukpuk town, about three hours from this capital city.

Somera said that according to 50th Infantry Battalion (50IB) commander, Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) Martin Daiz Jr. based in Pinukpuk municipality, the government troops responded to information from members of the community of the presence of terrorists doing extortion activities in the area.

5ID commander, Brigadier General Perfecto Rimando Jr., ordered the immediate evacuation of the injured soldier and two slain troopers.

Somera said the commander also ordered a hot pursuit operation against the fleeing rebels.

"There will be no let-up in our operations in Kalinga Province until the last rebel is either neutralized or has yielded to the government," he said.

Rimando said, "we also express our deepest sympathy to the family of our soldiers who paid the ultimate sacrifice in serving the people of Kalinga from the hands of the rebels."

He assured that all the benefits intended for them will be received by their families the soonest possible time.

Somera said the 5ID commander had already deployed additional soldiers to Kalinga to augment the troops of the 50IB in pursuing the fleeing rebels.

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

Army's 2ID camp welcomes 356 new soldiers

From the Philippine News Agency (Jan 24):

CAMP GEN. MATEO CAPINPIN, Tanay, Rizal — The Army's 2nd Infantry (Jungle Fighter) Division (2ID) under the leadership of Major General Rhoderick Parayno, has admitted 356 new soldiers who graduated from the Candidate Soldiers Class 484-2017 at the camp headquarters here Monday.

The new soldiers, composed of 336 males and 20 females, completed their five-month rigid Candidate Soldier Course (CSC) at the Division Training School.

Brigadier General Glorivine Dida, Assistant Division Commander of the 2ID, told the new soldiers that their enlistment in the AFP was the start of their true service to the government.

"Just like in the oath you mentioned a while ago, that you will give your best effort in serving our people, even if it may cost your lives," he added.

Dida also thanked the parents, relatives and friends of the new soldiers for the support and congratulated the Division Training School personnel.

The activity culminated with a symbolic entrustment of firearms to the new privates with Baras Vice-Mayor Wilfredo Robles along with other local government chief executives.

Officials of the 2ID said the ceremonial entrustment of firearms would instill nationalism and service-oriented attitude among soldiers who willfully accepted the magnitude of the responsibility, duty and authority vested upon them in protecting the country and the Filipino people.

They deemed it necessary to involve the local government officials in this ceremonial entrustment since the new soldiers will soon become partners in promoting peace and development in their respective localities.

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

Marines in Western Mindanao train for urban warfare

From the Philippine Star (Jan 24):



Members of the Philippine Marines practice urban warfare. US Embassy/Released, file

ZAMBOANGA CITY, Philippines — The Philippine Marines are stepping up urban warfare training after five months in Marawi City against Islamic State-inspired terrorists.

R. Adm. Rene Medina, commander of Naval Forces Western Mindanao, said the Marines now have regular training support from the Australian Defence Force.

"The training on urban terrain is very important to us, particularly to our Marines because of what had happened in Marawi," Medina said.

Medina said the Marines are also taking special operations training, including a sniper course.

Government efforts to retake Marawi, parts of which were taken over by Abu Sayyaf and Maute militants on May 23, 2017, were hampered by threats posed by terrorist snipers and marksmen.

He said the siege of Zamboanga City in 2013 and of Marawi City last year changed the landscape of operations and security forces have to adapt to changing operational environments.

The Marines were initially organized for amphibious operations.

Lt. Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr., chief of the Western Mindanao Command, recently disclosed that cities and population centers in Mindanao are probable targets of the IS-inspired Maute and Abu Sayyaf groups.

Galvez said this has prompted authorities to increase security in urban areas.

Medina said the Philippine Fleet has also been receiving training, especially in ship boarding procedures, interception and on encounters in the high seas.

He said the US Navy has been providing operational training to Philippine sailors.

Personnel of the Naval Special Operations Group have been undergoing training on detecting, controlling and disrupting improvised explosive devices.

He said the US and Australia have been providing support as allies against extremist terrorists.

"These are usually technical supports, and we are grateful for that like what happened in Marawi. The other armed forces are filling the technical support which we lack. They complemented a lot," Medina said.

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