

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



**TEAM ARMY**  
Serving the people. Securing the land.

[oacpa.army2012@gmail.com](mailto:oacpa.army2012@gmail.com)  
OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

# NEWS CLIPPINGS

05 March 2018

**Monday**

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

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

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

05 MARCH 2018

PAGE NR.	TITLE	WRITER	NEWSPAPER
1	Weather Forecast	-	Phil Star p.20
<b>NATIONAL NEWS</b>			
2-3	SC employees gird for anti-Sereno rally	Marlon Ramos	PDI p.A1
<b>ARMY RELATED NEWS</b>			
4-5	UP Cebu Masscom graduate captured, tagged as Red	Florence Baesa	PDI p.A18
6	Panibagong 120 NPA surrenderees, bibigyan ng Duterte's dinner sa Palasyo		Police Files p.2
7	Sumusukong rebelde, dumarami	Francis T Wakefield	Balita p.5
8	NPAs continue to yield in ComVal, Davao del Norte	Francis T Wakefield	Mla Bulletin p.26
9	Mag-asawang NPA arestado sa recruitment ng menor	Mike U Crismundo	Balita p.5
10	War on terror exacts heavy toll on Sayyaf	Ben Cal	Mla Standard p.A2
11	Close to 100 Abus killed in last 12 months	PNA	The Daily Tribune p.1
12	4 Abus surrender in Sulu	Roel Pareno	The Phil Star p.20
13	Army chief: Maute Group still recruiting new members	Victor Reyes	Malaya p.B2
14	7,000 illegal guns targeted in Maguindanao	Jeoffrey Maitem	PDI p.A18
15	257 sundalo ng Philippine Army sinanay sa urban warfare	Betchai Julian	Abanta p.3
<b>AFP RELATED NEWS</b>			
16	Duterte to AFp, PNP: Keep your guns cocked and locked vs state's enemies	Genalyn D Kabiling	Mla Bulletin p.2
17	ARMM officials, military validating 4Ps anomalies	Moh Saaduddin	The Mla Times p.A8
18	BCDA raises record-high P8B for AFP modernization	PNA	The Daily Tribune p.3
19	Duterte OKs 00-year lease of AFP, PNP camps	Alexis Romero	The Phil Star p.1
20	Terror groups continue recruitment in Mindanao	Dempsey Reyes	The Mla Times p.A1
21	4 ASG terrorists surrender to Sulu forces	Francis T Wakefield	Mla Bulletin p.26
22	Photo: SWAT Challenge	Keith Bacongco	Mla Bulletin p.1
<b>OPINION/ COMMENTARY</b>			
23	MArawi: from Islamic City to garrison city?	Macabangkit B Lanto	PDI p.A14
<b>ONLINE NEWS</b>			

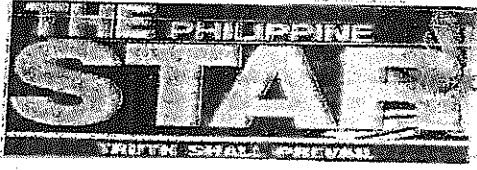
Army Core Purpose: Serving the people. Securing the land.

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

24-25	<b>Close to 100 Abu Sayyaf bandits killed in last 12 months</b>	Ben Cal	<a href="http://www.pna.gov.ph">www.pna.gov.ph</a>
26	<b>AFP vows zero tolerance over violence against female soldiers</b>	Priam Nepomuceno	<a href="http://www.pna.gov.ph">www.pna.gov.ph</a>
27	<b>Army slams Karapatan report on 'tortured' NPAs</b>	Rhoda Grace Saron	<a href="http://www.pna.gov.ph">www.pna.gov.ph</a>
28	<b>Army turns over rubber seedlings to IPs in Maguindanao</b>	Edwin Fernandez	<a href="http://www.pna.gov.ph">www.pna.gov.ph</a>

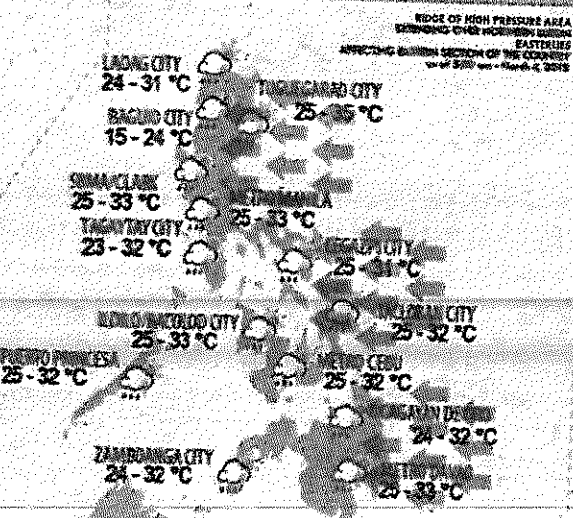
*Army Core Purpose: Serving the people. Securing the land.*

5 March 2018



Page: 20

TODAY'S WEATHER FORECAST MARCH 05, 2018 | MONDAY



EXTENDED WEATHER FORECAST	MAR 6			MAR 7			MAR 8		
	TUE	WED	THU	TUE	WED	THU	TUE	WED	THU
METRO MANILA	25 °C 33 °C	25 °C 32 °C	24 °C 31 °C	PUERTO PRINCESA	25 °C 31 °C	25 °C 31 °C	24 °C 30 °C		
TUGUEGARAO	25 °C 34 °C	24 °C 33 °C	24 °C 32 °C	ILOILO/ BACOLOD	26 °C 33 °C	25 °C 32 °C	24 °C 31 °C		
LAAG	25 °C 32 °C	24 °C 31 °C	23 °C 30 °C	METRO CEBU	25 °C 33 °C	25 °C 33 °C	25 °C 32 °C		
BAGUIO	15 °C 23 °C	14 °C 22 °C	14 °C 21 °C	TACLOBAN	24 °C 32 °C	24 °C 31 °C	24 °C 30 °C		
SBMA/ CLARK	25 °C 32 °C	24 °C 31 °C	24 °C 30 °C	CAGAYAN DE ORO	24 °C 32 °C	23 °C 31 °C	24 °C 31 °C		
TAGAYTAY	22 °C 32 °C	22 °C 31 °C	22 °C 30 °C	METRO DAVAO	25 °C 32 °C	25 °C 32 °C	25 °C 32 °C		
LEGAZPI	25 °C 31 °C	24 °C 30 °C	24 °C 30 °C	ZAMBOANGA	24 °C 32 °C	24 °C 32 °C	24 °C 31 °C		

5 March 2018

# PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Page: A1

# SC EMPLOYEES GIRD FOR ANTI-SERENO RALLY

STORY BY MARLON RAMOS AND VINCE F. NONATO

Today's flag ceremony at the Supreme Court is expected to turn into a sea of red in a show of support not for the Chief Justice but for her 13 colleagues who forced her to go on indefinite leave, according to two insiders.

A2

## FROM A1

By Marlon Ramos  
and Vince F. Nonato  
@Team\_Inquirer

The flag-raising ceremony at the Supreme Court on Taft Avenue in Manila today may turn into a "reverse show of force" for embattled Chief Justice Maria Lourdes Sereno, two court sources told the Inquirer on Sunday.

Court employees unhappy with Sereno's leadership are expected to show up at the weekly gathering wearing red shirts or red arm bands, according to the sources, who asked not to be named as they were not authorized to speak about the activity.

Some justices, who had not been attending the ceremony since Sereno was appointed head of the tribunal in 2012, will also join the protesters, according to one of the sources.

Sereno is expected to skip the event after 13 of her colleagues forced her to go on an indefinite leave starting March 1 to let her prepare for her imminent trial in the Senate im-

peachment court.

"I will not be surprised if the flag ceremony will be a 'sea of red,' but not in support of the Chief Justice," the first source said.

### Judges invited

The source said members of the Philippine Judges Association and several lower court judges had also been "invited" to the 7 a.m. flag ceremony at the Supreme Court grounds.

"There will be court employees and officers who will attend the flag ceremony wearing red shirts. Others will be in their [office] uniform, but they will wear red armbands," a second source said.

"Their presence is in support of the 13 justices who urged Sereno to take an indefinite leave [last week]," the source added. "It's also a show of support for [Senior Associate Justice] Antonio Carpio as caretaker of the Supreme Court while she's on indefinite leave."

Last week, Sereno apologized to the 13 justices for the confusion caused by her spokespersons, who announced that she was taking a 15-day



Maria Lourdes Sereno

"wellness leave" to prepare for her defense in the Senate.

The wellness leave was not the indefinite leave she agreed to take at the full-court meeting on Feb. 27.

The second source claimed none of the high court's justices or senior court officials had required the court workers to attend the flag ceremony.

### Chance to speak up

"This is already a message to Sereno that the court personnel and justices do not like her," the source said. "They are actually disgusted with her. It's only now that they got the opportunity to speak up."

Former President Benigno Aquino III appointed Sereno, then 52, Chief Justice in 2012, bypassing senior members of the Supreme Court.

Sereno, who previously issued a memorandum mandating court employees to attend the weekly flag ceremony on the Supreme Court grounds, is expected to be impeached by the House within the week.

The voting on the House of Representatives is scheduled for March 8.

After the committee submits its report, the plenary is expected to vote later this month to decide whether to impeach Sereno and send her case to the Senate for trial.

A vote of one-third of the 293 members of the House against Sereno will send the articles of impeachment to the Senate.

A two-thirds vote (16 of 23 senators) is needed to convict Sereno.

#### **No resignation**

Sereno has repeatedly turned down calls for her to step down as she dared her accusers to let her face them at

the Senate impeachment court.

Rep. Reynaldo Umali, chair of the House justice committee, said on Sunday that almost all the allegations in the impeachment complaint against Sereno were supported by evidence.

The one exception Umali could think of was the allegation that Sereno had tasked a high Supreme Court official with calling the judges of the Muntinlupa Regional Trial Court to block the issuance of a warrant of arrest against Sen. Leila de Lima.

#### **27 allegations**

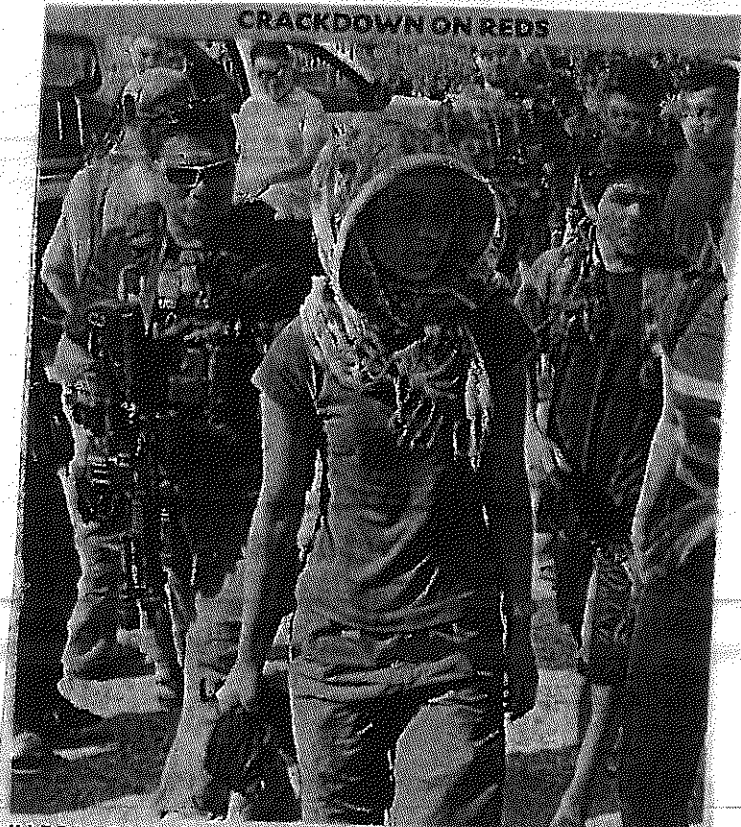
In an interview on radio station dzBB, Umali said members of his committee would still vote whether each of the 27 allegations laid by complainant Lorenzo Gadon had probable cause.

These include falsifying various Supreme Court resolutions, delaying action on the petitions for the benefits of retired judges or the spouses of deceased judges, manipulating the nomination of justices, embellishing her credentials, failing to truthfully disclose her wealth, and using public funds on a luxury vehicle and extravagant accommodations. INQ

5 March 2018



Page: A18



CRACKDOWN ON REDS

**ILLEGAL POSSESSION OF FIREARMS** Soldiers escort Myles Albasin, a mass communication graduate of the University of the Philippines-Cebu, and her companions to the prosecutor's office in Dumaguete City to be charged with illegal possession of firearms. —FLORENCE BAESA/CEBU DAILY NEWS

## UP CEBU MASSCOM GRADUATE CAPTURED, TAGGED AS RED

Army

OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF P

pride

845-9555 Local: 5285, 5295

**BAGUIO CITY**—Charges of illegal possession of firearms and explosives were filed against six alleged communist rebels who were captured in Mabinay town, Negros Oriental on Saturday.

The six were brought to the Hall of Justice in the capital city of Dumaguete in Negros Oriental on Sunday to undergo inquest proceedings on the complaint filed against them by the military.

The military claimed that four M-16 assault rifles, with M-203 grenade launcher and two M-4 assault rifles were seized from them when they were captured.

They were later detained at the Negros Oriental Provincial Detention and Rehabilitation Center after they refused the inquest proceedings and opted to undergo preliminary investigation.

#### **Meeting with farmers**

In a radio interview, Myles Albasin, one of the arrested suspects, admitted she and her companions were in a remote community in the village of Luyang, Mabinay town, Negros Oriental to discuss poverty with farmers there.

She denied that the firearms seized by soldiers belonged to them. She said the guns belonged to the "organization." She declined to elaborate.

Albasin, 21, and a native of Cagayan de Oro City, was a graduate of mass communications at the University of the Philippines-Cebu College.

Arrested with her were Carlo Ybanez, 18, Mandaue City, Cebu; Ajomar Indico, 29 and Randel Hermino, 19, of Himamaylan City in Negros Occidental; Joel Baylousis, 18, of Mabinay and Bernard Guillen, 18, of Kabankalan City, Negros Occidental.

#### **Chance encounter**

Lt. Col. Darrel Banes, 62nd Infantry Battalion commanding officer, claimed that soldiers captured the suspects on their way to Mabinay to check

on reports of rebel extortion.

The soldiers, said Banes, was met with gunfire which prompted them to fire back.

After a 45-minute clash, soldiers captured the suspects, including Albasin.

While studying in Cebu, Albasin was a member of progressive groups allied with the left.

After graduating last year, she became secretary general of the Cebu provincial chapter of Anakbayan, according to Joisa Cesista, the group's current chair.

But Cesista said the group had not heard from her, following a meeting with Iurnad and Moro groups in August.

#### **'Publicity stunt'**

The Nagkahiusang Kusog sa Estudyante, a leftist student organization in UP Cebu, said it refused to accept the military's "publicity stunt."

In its Facebook page, the group said Albasin was "steadfast in the struggle of the exploited and oppressed masses."

It said the "heightening crisis" was forcing people, especially the youth, into taking up "an advanced form of struggle."

In rejecting peace talks with the rebels, President Duterte earlier vowed to crush the New People's Army (NPA) and run after so-called "legal fronts" of the rebel group.

In Agusan del Norte, the military arrested a couple allegedly behind the recruitment of minors into the NPA.

#### **NPA recruiters**

1st Lt. Teresita Ingente, spokesperson of the Army's 4th Infantry Division based in Cagayan de Oro City, said Aladin Apolinaria, 49 and his wife, Luzviminda, 45, were arrested in the village of Mahayahay on Saturday.

Ingente tagged the Apolinaria as members of the NPA's Guerrilla Front 16, operating in Northern Mindanao. —REPORTS FROM FLORENCE BAESA, JOSE SANTINO BUNACHITA, CARLA GOMEZ, ERWIN MASCARINAS AND LEAH AGONAY INQ



5 March 2018

**POLICE FILES**

Page. 2

## Panibagong 120 NPA surrenderees, bibigyan ng Duterte's dinner sa Palasyo

**HINIKAYAT** pang-4th Infantry "Diamond" Division, Philippine Army ang mga aktibong rebeldeng New People's Army (NPA) na bumaba na at tuluyang iwan ang umahap y walang natutun- guhan na pakakapka sa kabundukan laban sa go- byerno.

Siya ang 4th ID spokesman Lt. Teres- ita Ingente ang paghikayat matapos kumpirmahan na panibagong 120 NPA surrenderees ang nakatakdang makipagkita kay Pangal- long Rodrigo Duterte sa Malacanang nitong buwan.

Siabi sa Bombo Radyo ni Ingente nakatu- lad sa una at pangalaw ang batch ng NPA surren- derees sasabay din ang pangulo sa kanilang hapunan sa Palasyo.

Imhanyag ni Ingente na bibigyan din ng pagkakata- on ang mga NPA surren- deree na mapuntahan ang historical sites na simbolo ng mga pagkabayani ng unang mga magiting na mga kababawang Pilipino para maisaisip o maisapu- so din ang mga sakripisyo mangipalaya lamang ang bansa.

Wala pang tyak na per- saking kailan uluwas na sabay-sabay ang mga ito mula Caraga at Northern Mindanao regions.

Sa ngayon, nasa 300 NPA surrenderees na ang nakaapak sa Malacanang at personal na nakausap si Duterte simula noong Pe- brero nitong taon.

5 March 2018



Page. 5

## Sumusukong rebelde, dumarami

Patuloy sa pagsuko ang mga miyembro ng New People's Army (NPA) sa Compostela Valley at Davao del Norte, ayon sa Eastern Mindanao Command (EastMinCom).

Paliwanag ng 1001st Brigade ng 10th Infantry Division ng Philippine Army (PA), resulta lamang ito ng pagkumbinsi ni Pangulong Duterte sa mga ito na piling sumuko sa pamahalaan, nang bumisita ang Presidente sa Panacan, Davao City noong nakaraang taon.

Timukoy ng militar na aabot na sa 877 miyembro ng kilusan ang sumuko sa kanila hanggang Disyembre 21, 2017.

Sa nabanggit na panahon, nakarekober ang militar ng 15 iba't ibang bati at siyam na improvised explosive device (IED), sa dalawang

nabanggit na probinsya.

Kaugnay nito, dalawa pang miyembro ng NPA ang naaresto ng militar sa Maco, Compostela Valley.

Ang unang dinakip, na nakilala lamang sa alyas "Jaro", ay sinasabing

miyembro ng liquidation squad ng NPA, habang ang isa pa, na nakilala sa alyas na "Lenny" ay kolektor umano ng extortion sa mga residente.

**Francis T. Wakefield**

5 March 2018

**MANILA BULLETIN**  
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

Page: 26

## NPA's continue to yield in ComVal, Davao del Norte

Elements of the New People's Army (NPA) in Compostela Valley and Davao del Norte have continued to yield to the government, according to the Eastern Mindanao Command (EastMinCom).

Since December 21, 2017 up to this date at least 39 regulars, 179 Milisya Ng Bayan, 73 Sangay Ng Partido and 586 Mass Supporters of the NPA surrendered to the Army's 1001st Infantry Brigade.

During the same period, 15 firearms and nine Improvised Explosive Devices were recovered by the government forces in these two provinces.

Among the surrenderers were 16 personalities holding vital positions in the movement like Ka Anthony, the Commanding Officer of Sandatahang Yunit Pampropaganda of Guerilla Front 2, Ka Charry, the Vice-Commanding Officer of Pulang Bagani Company 8 and

Ka Dindo, a Political Instructor of Guerilla Front 33.

In an assessment made by the Army's 1001st Brigade of the 10th Infantry Division, which has operational jurisdiction of some parts of Davao Norte and some parts of Compostela Valley, the massive influx of surrenderers was the result of President Rodrigo Duterte's visit to Panacan in Davao City last December 21, 2017, where he had a dialogue with 700 former rebels and offered them various assistances to start a new and peaceful life and encouraged other terrorists who are still active in the terrorist movement to surrender.

According to Col. Erwin Bernard L. Neri, Commander of the Army's 1001st Brigade, many of those who surrendered felt the difficulty of continuously running away from the pursuing troops. (Francis T. Wakefield)

5 March 2018



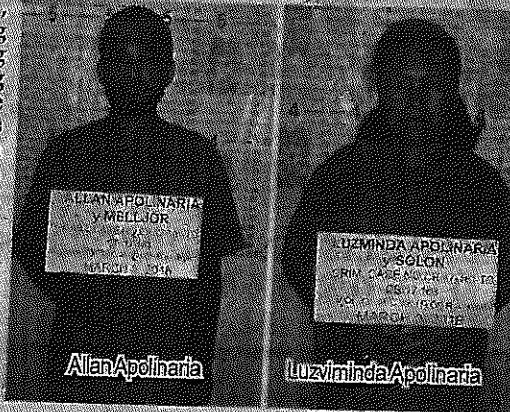
Page. 5

### Mag-asawang NPA arestado sa recruitment ng menor

NI MIKE U. CRISMUNDO

CAMP BANCASI, Butuan City - Inaresto ng pulisya at militar ang isang mag-asawang kaanib ng Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army (CPP-NPA) dahil sa umano'y pangangalap ng mga menor de edad para sa kilusan sa Agusan del Norte, nitong Sabado ng umaga.

Ang dalawa ay kimilala ni 1st Lt. Tere Ingente, public affairs officer ng Northeastern and Northern Mindanao 4th Infantry (Diamond) Division (4th ID) ng Philippine Army (PA), nasina Allan Apolinaria, 49, at Luzviminda Apolinaria, 45, parehong kasapi umano ng Sangay Partido sa Ilaon 16-A (SPP 16A) ng Guerilla Front Committee 16 (GF16) ng CPP-NPA Northern Mindanao Regional Committee (NMRC).  
Sinabi ni Lt. Ingente na dinakap ang dalawa sa Purok 7, Barangay



Allan Apolinaria

Luzviminda Apolinaria

Mahayahay, Kitcharao Agusan del Norte sa bisa ng warrant of arrest na nilabas ng 10th Judicial Region Branch 34, Cabaobaran City, Agusan del Norte.

Walang piyansang irekomenda ang korte.

"The couple are the alleged

recruiters of former rebels, Glenn Omahas also known as (AKA) 'Dave', Garry Alimbayong, AKA 'John', and Rudy Alimbayong, AKA 'Bunso' who surrendered last December 2016," paliwanag ni Lt. Ingente.

Natuklasan din sa mabestigasyon na nangangalap umano ang mag-asawang mga bata upang sumapi sa kilusan sinula pa noong 2014.

The former rebels were recruited at a minor age. In fact, Omahas was only 16 years old and Garry Alimbayong was 15 years old when he became

a member of Militia ng Bayan (MB) sometime in 2014 and was 17 years old when he joined the NPA as regular member. This showed that NPAs are not only terrorists but also child exploiters," pagdadamin pa ni Lt. Col. Glen Aynera, commanding officer ng 29th Infantry Battalion.

5 March 2018

Manila  
**Standard**

Page: A2

# War on terror exacts heavy toll on Sayyaf

By Ben Cal

**T**HE government's war on terror continued to gain ground after 97 Abu Sayyaf members, including 14 ranking leaders, were killed from Feb. 21, 2017 to Feb. 28, 2018, a military official said Sunday.

Brig. Gen. Cirilito E. Sobejana, commander of the Armed Forces of the Philippines Joint Task Force Sulu, said at least 57 Abu Sayyaf members were also wounded, 79 were captured and 66 surrendered during the same period.

All in all, 299 bandits were neutralized during the period, cutting down the number of remaining Abu Sayyaf fighters to about 488 but were still considered a force to reckon with, Sobejana said.

On the government side, nine soldiers were killed and 109 others were wounded in 39 gun battles with the terror group in various parts of Sulu.

Sobejana said his troops also seized 251 firearms of various calibers during the period.

Since being named JTFFS commander in February last year, Sobejana, a recipient of the Medal of Valor, the highest military award for gallantry in combat, has ordered his troops to sustain their offensive to "destroy the ASG at the soonest possible time."

The Abu Sayyaf, which has links to the Islamic terror groups in the Middle East, is engaged in terror activities, including kidnapping for ransom, for over two decades.

Sobejana said that from Feb. 21, 2017 to Feb. 27, 2018, the Abu Sayyaf had kidnapped 45 people.

Of that number, four were beheaded, another four had escaped, 16 had were released and 11 were rescued, but 10 were still under Abu Sayyaf custody, Sobejana said.

Sobejana said those rescued included five Malaysians, four Filipinos and two Indonesians.

The Abu Sayyaf has also been involved in bombings, assassinations and extortion activities in the southern Philippines.

For their notorious activities, the Abu Sayyaf has been tagged as a terrorist group by the United Nations, Indonesia, Malaysia, Canada, Australia, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United Arab Emirates. PNA

5 March 2018



Page: 1

## Close to 100 Abus killed in last 12 months

The government's war on terror continued to gain ground with 97 Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) members killed, including 14 ranking leaders of the bandit group during the past 12 months, a military official yesterday said.

According to Brig. Gen. Cirilito E. Sobejana, commander of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Joint Task Force Sulu (JTFS), said at least 57 were also wounded, 79 captured and 66 surrendered from Feb. 21,

2017 to Feb. 28, 2018.

All told, a total of 299 bandits were neutralized during the period, cutting down the remaining Abu Sayyaf fighters to about 488, but still, a force to reckon with, Sobejana pointed out.

On the government side, he said nine soldiers were killed and 109 others wounded in 39 fierce gun battles with the terror group in various parts of Sulu.

Sobejana said his troops also captured 251 firearms of various calibers during the 12-month period,

depleting the firepower of the Abu Sayyaf.

Among the firearms recovered were three 81-mm mortars, one 160-mm mortar, one 90RR, two .50 cal. machine guns, one 30-caliber machine gun, one M-60 machine gun, 220 high-powered assault rifles, 22 light firearms and thousands of rounds of bullets.

Since assuming as JTFS commander in February last year, Sobejana has ordered his troops to sustain the military

offensive to "destroy the ASG the soonest possible time" as he vowed there will be no let-up in the war on terror in Sulu, his area of responsibility.

The Abu Sayyaf which has link with Islamic terror groups in the Middle East has been engaged in terrorist activities, including kidnapping-for-ransom for over two decades.

Their target for kidnapping is both Filipinos and foreigners.

Sobejana said that from  
**Turn to page 2**

### From page 1

Feb. 21, 2017 to Feb. 27, 2018, the Abu Sayyaf had snatched 45 individuals

Of that number, the terror group beheaded four of their kidnap victims, another four had escaped, 16 had been released, and 11 had been rescued, but 10 are still in the Abu Sayyaf custody, Sobejana said.

He added those rescued included five Malaysians four Filipinos, and two Indonesians.

The Abu Sayyaf has also been involved in bombings, assassinations and extortion activities in the southern Philippines.

For their notorious activities, the Abu Sayyaf has been tagged as a terrorist group by the United Nations, Indonesia, Malaysia, Canada, Australia, Japan, United Kingdom, United Arab Emirates, among others.

PNA

5 March 2018



Page: 20

## 4 Abus surrender in Sulu

By ROEL PAREÑO

**ZAMBOANGA CITY** - Four suspected Abu Sayyaf bandits surrendered to the military in Sulu on Saturday.

The suspects turned over their firearms when they gave themselves up to the Army's 2nd Special Forces Battalion at past 8 a.m., the military said.

The firearms included three rifles and a .45 caliber pistol, according to Brig. Gen. Cirilito Sobejana, commander of the Joint Task Force Sulu.

The four - Raddoh Jamah, Saddam Hussein, Okim Jikiri and Abdulsali Abda Abdulkarim - were said to be followers of slain Abu Sayyaf leaders Sibih Pisi and Alhabsy Misaya.

The surrender was attributed to a campaign of the local government to bring the militants back into the fold of the law.

"Those who were in hiding decided to come out after seeing that the government is serious in giving them a second chance to live a peaceful life," Sobejana said.

5 March 2018

**Malaya**  
The National Newspaper

Page: 82

## Army chief: Maute Group still recruiting new members

BY VICTOR REYES

ARMY chief Lt. Gen. Rolando Bautista said the Daesh-inspired Maute Group continues to recruit fighters, five months after the group's defeat in Marawi City, in preparation for another siege.

Bautista said they have information that recruitment is not limited to Lanao del Sur where Marawi is a component city. He said recruitment is also ongoing in Basilan and Sulu, bailiwick areas of the Abu Sayyaf.

"Actually, that's expected. In fact, after the Marawi liberation the common action of the supporters of the enemy neutralized is to recruit," Bautista told a recent interview at the Army headquarters in Fort Bonifacio.

Maute members laid siege on Marawi in May 2017. The city was liberated by government forces five months later, leaving 974 Maute members, 168 soldiers and policemen and 47 civilians dead.

"We have received reports that the recruitment is not limited within Lanao del Sur. It also continues in the areas of Basilan and Sulu and even in the area of Palimbang (a town in Sultan Kudarat)," said Bautista.

The military initially revealed the Maute Group's recruitment efforts weeks after the liberation of Marawi City.

Asked why many soldiers are still deployed in Marawi City five months after the siege, Bautista said: "There is threat," referring to potential attacks by the Maute Group.

"The recruitment continues, meaning when there is recruitment there is still a possibility that they will lay siege or occupy another city, not particularly Marawi City. That is a big possibility," said Bautista.

Bautista said the rehabilitation of Marawi City is among the issues being used by the Maute Group in the recruitment of new members.

Last December, President Duterte cited several reasons in requesting Congress to ex-

tend martial law in Mindanao for one year or until the end of this year, including the recruitment of Maute members.

Duterte declared martial law shortly after the Marawi siege. The initial two-month martial law was first extended by Congress in July, until the end of December last year.

"The rehabilitation of Marawi City is continuous because part of their recruitment is how they see the progress of the rehabilitation of Marawi, that's why our President is doing all he can," said Bautista.

"He (Duterte) has mobilized all government agencies, he directed local government units to fast-track the rehabilitation of Marawi City and our troops are there to ensure (the security) of the residents," said Bautista.

Bautista said soldiers would not leave the residents even after the liberation of Marawi because "one of their worries is what will happen to them if they will be abandoned (by soldiers)."



5 March 2018



Page: A18

**PNP, ARMY BID**

# 7,000 ILLEGAL GUNS TARGETED IN MAGUINDANAO

MAGUINDANAO—The military continued to avoid the use of force to pry up to 7,000 unlicensed firearms from civilian hands in the province, but was bent on recovering the guns, as part of the stepped up campaign against criminality, an Army spokesperson said.

Capt. Arvin John Encinas, spokesperson of the 6th Infantry Division, said the number of unlicensed firearms was provided by the provincial police but does not include those in the hands of members of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), a Moro guerrilla group that struck a peace deal with the government.

"The weapons of the MILF are technically illegal but we have ongoing peace talks," said Encinas, explaining why rebel firearms were not part of the count.

Encinas said military and police were implementing an amnesty program called "Balik Baril (Surrender Guns)," which officials hoped would entice owners of illegal guns to give up their weapons.

He said the military had asked for the help of village officials in the campaign as "these guns might have been used" to commit crimes.

### Diplomatic

Lt Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr., head of the Western Mindanao Command, based in Zamboanga City, said the military "would continue to employ a diplomatic approach" in recovering unlicensed firearms.

Police continued to enforce laws against illegal firearms and arrested a man roaming in the town of Buadipuso-Buntong in Lanao del Sur, with an unlicensed gun. —JEFFREY MAITEM, WITH A REPORT FROM DIVINA SU-SON INQ

5 March 2018



Pahina. 3

## 257 sundalo ng Philippine Army sinanay sa urban warfare

SA layuning mapalakas pa ang puwersa sa pag-laban sa terorismo sa bansa, umaabot sa 257 sundalo ng Philippine Army ang sumailalim sa urban warfare training na pinangunahan ng Australian Army

Nakapaloob sa pagsasanay ay para palakasin pa ang operational capability ng militar para labanan ang mga terorista na may planong masama

sa mga siyudad at mga highly populated communities kagaya ng ginawa nila sa Marawi

Ayon kay 10th Infantry Division Commander, Maj. Gen. Noel Clement, sinimulan noong Pebrero 15 ang nasabing training saan ang mga kalahok ay binubuo ng anim na opisyal at 252 enlisted personnel

Nakasentro ang dalawang linggong pag-

sasanay sa urban close combat, search and breach operation, managing trauma, communication operation, command and control in urban operation, sniping, and counter-sniping, joint fires at airspace deconfliction.

Bahagi ng Philippines-Australia Army to Army Exercise ang nasabing pagsasanay sa bahaging Mindanao. **(Betchai Julian)**

5 March 2018

**MANILA BULLETIN**  
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

Page: 2

# Duterte to AFP, PNP: Keep your guns cocked and locked' vs state's enemies

BY GENALYN D. KABILING

**W**arning that the country lives in "dangerous times," President Duterte has ordered government security forces to keep their guns "cocked and locked" against the enemies of the state.

The President said both the military and police must remain on guard and weapon-ready as they confront the "challenging task" of dealing with criminality, illegal drugs, and terrorism.

"Bantay ka talaga. Nakatrigger ka palagi, ngayon nakatrigger ka talaga. Cocked and locked ka. Sabihin ko sa mga sundalo huwag 'yung magluhod-luhod ka pa, but be careful sa procedure. Be on guard. You should always be on the trigger — cocked and locked. I'll tell the troops not to kneel but be careful about the procedure," he said during a recent police shootfest held in Davao City.

"Those are the things that you have to remember. We live in dangerous times because we have so many fronts to confront. We are confronting the NPAs (New People's Army), we are confronting the terrorists, meron pang droga. May mga organization pa na backup sila. There are illegal drugs too, there are organizations that back them up!" he added.

Duterte acknowledged that terrorism would stay "for quite a time" but he vowed there would be no retreat in the government's battle against such menace.

"I predict that it would not go out of this

planet within the next five to 10 maybe seven years," he said.

"Isang kalaban natin 'yan. Iyan talaga bakbakan 'yan. At walang atrasan diyan [That's one of our enemies. That will really be a battle and there will be no retreat]," he added.

As the government works to keep peace and order, Duterte also directed the police, military and other law enforcement agencies to work towards interoperability in their operations, professional training, and capability development.

He said a coordinated approach at law enforcement would ensure the success of their missions and minimize government and civilian casualties in the operations.

Apart from being weapon-ready, Duterte advised government troops to conduct mobile checkpoints instead of staying in fixed detachments along highways that have become easy targets by lawless elements. He said troops should always be alert to avoid getting attacked by snipers and other assassins.

When leaving military camps, troops should also use government vehicles to their destination for additional security, according to the commander-in-chief.

"Yung mga Army palabas sa barracks, I do not advise na magpara-para kayo ng sasakyan. Eh tatal eh, gobyerno man 'di ubusin ninyo 'yung gasolina. Di magpahatid kayo [Those Army personnel leaving the barracks, I do not advise that you flag down any vehicle. Besides, you're in government so use our gasoline. Just ask to be escorted]," he said.

5 March 2018

The Manila Times

Page: A8

# ARMM officials, military validating 4Ps anomalies

BY MOH SAADUDDIN

**MARAWI CITY: Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) executives are making the rounds of the five provinces in the region to re-validate reported anomalies in the implementation of the Department of Social Welfare and Development's (DSWD) Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps).**

ARMM Executive Secretary Lisa Alamia, regional DSWD secretary, heads a team with her executives that is meeting mayors, barangay (village) chairmen and social welfare employees in the five provinces to talk about the drive to eradicate years-old irregularities in the national flagship program 4Ps

They started with an IIGU Assembly on Social Welfare Protection held in Sulu early in February, then in Maguindanao at the Army's Camp Siongco in Datu Odin Sinsuat on February 28 and recently in Marawi City at the Provincial Capitol of Lanao del Sur on Friday. Assemblies in the two remaining provinces will follow in

the next few days.

"Our target is to re-validate the list of 4Ps beneficiaries before submitting the final report to the DSWD national office," Alamia said.

There are 415,389 ARMM households registered as 4Ps beneficiaries. Of this number 160,972 are in Maguindanao, 93,734 in Sulu, 93,051 in Lanao del Sur, 36,139 in Tawi-Tawi, and 31,439 in Basilan.

Forty percent of the total beneficiaries are "legitimate" according to a regional DSWD report.

Alamia said there were also instances when poor households only received P500 out of the normal payment of P1,400 cash after withdrawals from automated teller machines.

She said they have asked the DSWD national office to suspend release of 4Ps subsidies in ARMM until the re-validation process is completed.

from process is completed.

"We are giving unscrupulous beneficiaries a two-month waiver for them to surrender their 4Ps cards," Alamia said.

After the grace period, she said, the military as martial law enforcer in Mindanao, will step in to arrest the emping parties. Arrested persons will be prosecuted to the full extent of law, she added.

She clarified that the data provided to them was based on reports from the "intelligence community" of President Rodrigo Duterte.

Maj. Gen. Arnel Dela Vega, Army's 610 commander, attended the event in Maguindanao, while Joint Task Force Ranao Deputy Commander Col. Romeo Browner Jr. and Lt. Col. Joel Mamon of the Western Mindanao Command's U7 joined the assembly in Marawi City and reiterated their support to the cleansing drive.

5 March 2018



Page: 3

## BCDA raises record-high P8B for AFP modernization

The state-owned Bases Conversion and Development Authority (BCDA) has contributed P8 billion for the modernization program of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) during the first two years of the administration of President Duterte.

The amount represents 20 percent of the total P40 billion received by the men and women in uniform from BCDA since the state-run agency was created in 1992.

"That is very, very significant. Two out of the 25 years of BCDA, and under the term of President Duterte, 20 percent of the total

P40 billion was remitted to AFP," BCDA President and Chief Executive Officer Vivencio Dizon said Thursday.

At a forum with public information officers of the AFP on Thursday, Dizon expressed high hopes that the trend "would keep on going up."

"That just shows everyone how important the AFP is to this administration. We want this to just keep on growing and growing," he said.

Dizon stressed BCDA's mandate to transform military bases into premier centers of economic growth.

"BCDA is here, it exists to help

strengthen our Armed Forces while we build great cities. That's what really BCDA is all about," he said.

The event held Thursday was also attended by Deputy Chief of Staff for Plans and Programs Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla Jr. and Department of National Defense (DND) spokesperson Director Arsenio Andolong.

For his part, AFP spokesman Brig. Gen. Bienvenido Datuin Jr. recognized BCDA as an "active partner" not only in AFP modernization but also on infrastructure development.

"I believe that the support will be increasing and

forthcoming from the BCDA. Again, we welcome such effort and initiative from the BCDA," he said.

Padilla, for his part, said that the government's support for the AFP boosts the morale of the troops, especially after the Marawi siege.

"We felt the strong backing of the public, and of course, the commander-in-chief himself for I am to make a point to come to Marawi," Padilla said.

Duterte has given soldiers the assurance that the further modernization of the military will be one of his administration's top priorities.

PNA

5 March 2018



Page: 1

## Duterte OKs 99-year lease of PNP, AFP camps

By ALEXIS ROMERO

President Duterte has allowed government security forces to lease their camps for at least 99 years to create a pension fund for their retirees.

Duterte said parts of Fort Bonifacio

were sold to the private sector but the proceeds were placed in the government's general fund.

"*Nawala* (The fund disappeared)," he said in a speech in Davao City last week. "I'm not blaming anybody. It went to the government."

Duterte said the proceeds of the lease would be used to create a pension fund for retired soldiers.

"I will give the (Philippine National Police) and the military the authority to lease (their camps). Do not sell (them)," the President said.

"I will only allow you to lease it for 99 years then renewable for another 99 years. That's a lifetime. That will reach billions... If you count it by years, it will reach a trillion. That's huge," he added.

Turn to Page 7

Duterte wants the lease to be implemented this year. He said he was "hurrying up" the lease of parts of Camp Aguinaldo, the military's main headquarters located in Quezon City.

"Then, I will set up something like (the Government Service Insurance System) so that the children of ordinary soldiers can study even beyond the four years (college course)," he said.

The money from the proceeds of the lease may also be used to support the medical needs of uniformed personnel, according to the President.

Duterte said he has given P50 million to the Veterans Memorial Medical Center and the Armed Forces of the Philippines Medical Center.

He said soldiers and policemen would also benefit from the revenues of gaming regulator Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp.

5 March 2018

# The Manila Times

Page:   A1  

## ERROR GROUPS CONTINUE RECRUITMENT IN MINDANAO

ERROR groups have not stopped their recruitment activities but have gone beyond Lanao del Sur to wooing recruits, Lt. Gen. Rolando Bautista, the Army's commanding general, said. He said the military has received reports that the groups were trying to recruit in Basilan and Sultan Kudarat.

"They continue to recruit in the areas of Basilan, Sulu and at Palimbang [in Sultan Kudarat]," Bautista, who was the commander of Joint Task Force Marawi set up after the Maute Group attacked the Islamic city last year, said.

"[The recruitments] are expected. In fact, after the Marawi liberation,

the common actions of the supporters inside the area and several others we have neutralized have been recruiting and we have received reports that the recruitment is not limited within Lanao del Sur," he told reporters Friday night.

The official explained that different groups joined forces under

the leadership of Islamic State (IS) Southeast Asian "emir" Isnilon Hapilon in support of one goal: to form a caliphate in the city of Marawi.

Hapilon was killed by military forces in Marawi City in October last year, along with Maute brother Omarhaxayam and Abdullah.

► Recruitment A1

### RECRUITMENT FROM A1

## Terror

"We all know that Isnilon was an Abu Sayyaf but he managed to unite different local terrorist groups to establish a caliphate within Marawi and we all know that they had support coming from different leaderships [of the IS] particularly from Indonesia and Malaysia," Bautista pointed out.

Hapilon led the Islamic State-inspired Maute group attacking Marawi City. The group battled soldiers for months, leaving more than 1,000 soldiers, civilians and terrorists dead.

Bautista also revealed that military officials are validating reports that several terrorists have sneaked into the country through the southern backdoor or via the provinces of Tawi-tawi and Sulu.

He did not discount the possibility that some terrorists may already be in Metro Manila.

"The concentration of these terror-

ists is in Central Mindanao," he said.

"When you talk of local terrorist group in Central Mindanao, these are the BIFF (Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters) since there have been plenty of incidents of other local terrorist groups that have been uniting with the BIFF since their area is in Central Mindanao," he added.

Bautista admitted that with the continuous recruitment activities of terrorist groups in Mindanao, there remains a threat on Marawi City and other areas.

"There is still a possibility that they will occupy another city, not particularly Marawi City. That is a huge possibility, that is why the rehabilitation of Marawi City has been continuous as well because part of their recruitment is how they see the progress of the rehabilitation of Marawi City," he explained.

He said soldiers will remain in Marawi during the reconstruction process.

"The populace there will not be left behind by soldiers. We have to calm down the populace and at the same time, if the rehabilitation contractors

enter, there will be confidence from the builders for them to execute the rehabilitation," Bautista said.

### Eyes on NPA, too

Bautista said the military, particularly the Army, will also be keeping a close watch on the communist New People's Army (NPA).

He said NPA rebels have been committing atrocities in areas under the military's Eastern Mindanao Command (EastMinCom).

"We are talking of Davao region and areas around Bukidnon. The resource generation there is really booming, in terms of extortion since there are several businesses there such as banana plantations so from there, they have been thriving there and that is where they get their income generation," Bautista said.

Duterte terminated the peace talks with the National Democratic Front last year after NPA rebels attacked a convoy of the Presidential Security Group in North Cotabato.

DEMPSEY REYES

5 March 2018



Page: 26

## 4 ASG terrorists surrender to Sulu forces

FRANCIS T. WAKEFIELD

Four Abu Sayyaf terrorists in Sulu surrendered to soldiers of the Second Special Forces Battalion of the Joint Task Force Sulu on Saturday.

Raddoh Jamah and Saddam Hussein, both residents of Talipao Sulu; Okim Jikiri and Abdulsali Abda Abdul karim, both of Omar, Sulu, voluntarily turned over their firearms to the soldiers upon their surrender at about 8:30 a.m.

Jamah and Hayudani were members of Abu Sayyaf Subleader Sibih Pisih, while Jikiri and Abdul karim were trusted followers of Alhabsy Misaya.

The turned-over firearms included an M16 rifle, two Garand rifles, and one Colt cal. 45 pistol.

The Abu Sayyaf members are currently at the headquarters of the 2nd SFBn at Sitio Bayug, Brgy. Samak, Talipao and were later taken to the headquarters of JTF Sulu in Brgy. Bus-Bus, Jolo, Sulu for medical examination and custodial debriefing.

"We greatly attribute the current surrenders to the efforts of the local government of Sulu and the information from those Abus who surrendered earlier," said Brig. Gen. Cirilito Sobejana, commander of Joint Task Force Sulu.

"Those who are still hiding have come out after they saw that the government was serious in giving them a second chance to live a peaceful life," he added.

For 2018 alone, a total of 28 Abu Sayyaf personalities have already sur-

rendered.

WestMinCom has accumulated a total of 186 ASG surrenderers since 2017 and continue to process feelers as it sustains the campaign against the bandit group particularly in BaSulTa (Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi) area.

"We will maintain the momentum and we will cater and process future Abu Sayyaf surrenderers with the support of all the Governors, Mayors and Barangay officials of the region including the traditional and religious leaders," Lieutenant General Carlito G. Galvez, Jr., Commander of the Western Mindanao Command said.

"The AFP through WestMinCom will continue the pressure and sustain the strategic alliance with our partners in eradicating the ASG menace and terror threats in Western Mindanao."

"As long as the community and the local government units are with us in this fight, we will surely accomplish our mission," Galvez added.



5 March 2018

MANILA BULLETIN  
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

Page: 1



**SWAT CHALLENGE** – Members of the Philippine Marines' Special Operations Group skip along the 'island hoppers' obstacle course during the final stage of the national competition for Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) teams held in Davao City over the weekend. (Keith Bacongco)

5 March 2018



Page: A19

## Marawi: from Islamic City to garrison city?

In an apparent effort to forestall a repeat of the war in Marawi City, the government recently announced a plan to put up another military camp there, this time within striking distance of ground zero. The apparent thinking is that it will secure the city and address the exponential growth of restiveness and radicalization among the local Muslim youth and their attraction to the Salafist-Islamic State ideology. The President said he would assign a regiment (3,000-5,000 soldiers) to the planned camp.

Such a move will not serve the purpose.

And were the stakeholders consulted? Are we seeing a manifestation and imposition of martial law authority that is insensitive to the peculiar cultural, social and political values and life of the Marawi residents, despite the commander in chief's claimed kinship with the locals? The decision without consultation (a core value of a republican government) is less democratic and has the potential of generating more problems than solutions. Once again, the national government has fallen into the error and folly of deciding what the residents need, instead of the residents deciding what they need—a culprit in misgovernance.

If the plan materializes, it will transform Marawi into a garrison city with all the marks and infrastructure of a military zone of conflict. Did anyone tell the President that at present, there is the military Kampo Ranao strategically located at the northwest side of the city and a huge police camp which is just a kilometer away? Added to these are irritating outposts and checkpoints.

With another military camp, the religious ambience of Marawi will be desecrated and its landscape marred by

### COMMENTARY

MACABANGKIT B. LANTO

military installations, trenches, dugouts, rolled barbed wire, foxholes, and display of war hardware. (Whatever happened to the supermodern design of a dream megapolis presented by architect Jun Palafox?) This kind of environment will only serve to perpetuate the scars of war on the psyche of the youth who are nurturing a rebellious and vindictive mindset because of their exposure to catastrophe in Marawi. The great danger now is that their anger is slowly shifting from the Islamic State to the government as authorities procrastinate on the city's rehabilitation.

Will a new fort deter and repel any future rebel attack? Residents say it will even be a magnet for marauding jihadis. In fact, a video showing the rebels poring over a map of the city preparatory to the attack on Marawi confirmed that their real and original plan was to attack and overrun Kampo Ranao. But this was thwarted by the premature sighting of and hunt for the fugitive Isnilon Hapilon, which triggered the war.

Can the new camp protect Marawi? Its residents don't need protection from ideology-driven rebels, whose advocacy they strongly condemn; having learned lessons from the war, they vow to fight to the death any such attack. What they need protection from is a flawed decision by policymakers or military commanders. They feel the ruin of Marawi could have been avoided had the government shown a

modicum of accommodation for dialogue when the rebels sent surrender feelers.

Amnesty International tells us that there were human rights violations during the war. The public is asking for evidence. But there are documented tales of abuse by soldiers on civilians in places where soldiers are encamped.

The death of Osama bin Laden did not dismantle the war apparatus of al-Qaida, in the way that the liberation of Mosul did not end the dream for a world caliphate. The death of Hapilon and the Maute brothers did not render kaput their followers and their cause. The war in Marawi was a symptom of a deep and more complex sociopolitical problem. The solution, trite as it may seem, lies in sincerely addressing the social malaise of Moros, their poverty and illiteracy, their health conditions, their political aspirations. The government should likewise design a module to reverse the ideological appeal of jihadism.

Those are the solutions, not another military camp in Marawi.

Macabangkit B. Lanto (amb\_mac\_lanto@yahoo.com), UP Law 1967, was a Fulbright fellow in New York University for his post-graduate studies. He has served the government as congressman, ambassador, and undersecretary, among other positions.

## ONLINE NEWS

05 MARCH 2018

www.pna.gov.ph

# Close to 100 Abu Sayyaf bandits killed in last 12 months

By Ben Cal

**MANILA** -- The government's war on terror continued to gain ground with 97 Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) members killed, including 14 ranking leaders of the group during the past 12 months from Feb. 21, 2017 to Feb. 28, 2018, a military official said Sunday.

Brig. Gen. Cirilito E. Sobejana, commander of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Joint Task Force Sulu (JTFS), said at least 57 were also wounded, 79 captured and 66 surrendered during the same period.

All in all, a total of 299 bandits were neutralized during the period, cutting down the remaining Abu Sayyaf fighters to about 488, but still, a force to reckon with, Sobejana pointed out.

On the government side, he said nine soldiers were killed and 109 others wounded in 39 fierce gun battles with the terror group in various parts of Sulu.

Sobejana said his troops also captured 251 firearms of various calibers during the 12-month period, depleting the firepower of the Abu Sayyaf.

Among the firearms recovered were three 81mm mortars, one 160mm mortar, one 90RR, two .50 caliber machine guns, one 30 caliber machinegun, one M60 machinegun, 220 high-powered assault rifles, 22 light firearms, and thousands of rounds of bullets.

Since assuming as JTFS commander in February last year, Sobejana, a recipient of the Medal of Valor, the highest military award for gallantry in combat, has ordered his troops to sustain the military offensive to "destroy the ASG the soonest possible time" as he vowed there will be no let-up in the war on terror in Sulu, his area of responsibility.

The Abu Sayyaf which has link with Islamic terror groups in the Middle East has been engaged in terrorist activities, including kidnapping-for-ransom for over two decades.

Their target for kidnapping is both Filipinos and foreigners.

Sobejana said that from Feb. 21, 2017 to Feb. 27, 2018, the Abu Sayyaf had snatched 45 individuals.

Of that number, the terror group beheaded four of their kidnap victims, another four had escaped, 16 had been released, and 11 had been rescued, but 10 are still in the Abu Sayyaf custody, Sobejana said.

Sobejana said those rescued included five Malaysians, four Filipinos, and two Indonesians.

24

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

The Abu Sayyaf has also been involved in bombings, assassinations and extortion activities in the southern Philippines.

For their notorious activities, the Abu Sayyaf has been tagged as a terrorist group by the United Nations, Indonesia, Malaysia, Canada, Australia, Japan, United Kingdom, United Arab Emirates, among others. **(PNA)**

www.pna.gov.ph

## AFP vows zero tolerance over violence against female soldiers

By Priam Nepomuceno

**MANILA** -- As the country celebrates National Women's Month, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) said it would do everything to ensure that women serving the military will not be subjected to harassment and violence during their training and service.

AFP public affairs office chief Lt. Col. Emmanuel Garcia said the military would intensify its gender and development (GAD) programs to prevent violence and discrimination among its ranks.

"The AFP continuously intensifies its efforts to develop plans, policies, and mechanisms in addressing identified gender discrimination and inequalities within the organization. This is part of the military's on-going campaign towards women empowerment and equal rights for its members," he said.

The AFP has lined up gender and development programs including Gender Sensitivity Training, Seminar-Workshops on Gender Analysis; GAD Executive Briefing to Senior Military Officials/Top Level Management; and lectures on GAD-related laws and mandates.

Garcia said the AFP also actively participates in national and international mandated GAD-related advocacies such as the Campaign to End Violence against Women.

The military official said programs on GAD have been ongoing since the military started accepting women in its ranks.

He added that same privileges and opportunities in terms of pay, remunerations, benefits and awards are being accorded to men and women in the military.

Garcia stressed that equal considerations in terms of the area or field of assignment are given to both men and women in the AFP.

The military also provides decent and separate billeting facilities and quartering for men and women regardless of location or type of assignment.

Garcia added that the AFP salutes all its female soldiers and civilian employees for their bravery and hard work in the organization.

"The AFP is dedicated to enabling equal rights and opportunities in all aspects of its service, whether these are combat to noncombat operations. We assure the public that efforts will continue to pave the way for more programs that will further expand the military's commitment to women empowerment and gender equality," he added. (PNA)

www.pna.gov.ph

## Army slams Karapatan report on 'tortured' NPAs

By Rhoda Grace Saron

**DAVAO CITY** -- The Philippine Army's 71st Infantry battalion has debunked the allegation of a leftist human rights group that two individuals who were suspected members of the New People's Army (NPA) were tortured and burned.

Lt. Col. Esteveyn Ducusin, commander of the Army's 71st battalion, said no trooper would do such heinous acts as these are contrary to the mandate of the military to serve and protect the people, adding that state troops strictly adhere to the Anti-Torture Law of 2009.

"The issue can be considered as black propaganda to deviate people and to further threaten NPA members who want to go back to the folds of the law because it creates an impression that surrenderers are mistreated and abused," Ducusin said.

In a press statement released by Karapatan on March 2, 2018, the leftist group claimed that January Mensis, 22 and alias "Jerry," 17, were reportedly abducted on Nov. 28, 2017 and were "falsely accused" as thieves by the Philippine National Police (PNP) in Tagum City.

After being cleared, Karapatan claimed that the two were turned over to the 71st IB, brought to the camp and were tortured.

On Dec. 6, 2017, the two were allegedly brought to a mountainous area in Compostela Valley and were thrown to a pit where soldiers tried to burn them alive.

"The 71st IB troopers are professional and disciplined, committed to respect human rights and adhere in International Humanitarian Law and it would be a privilege for us to be investigated to expose of the truth," Ducusin said.

He said the 71st IB welcomes any legitimate investigation to prove its innocence on the issue.

Ducusin said Karapatan wanted to make an impression that communist rebels who surrender would be tortured, citing the increasing number of NPA members and supporters who have surrendered to the government.

The military reported that as of March this year, a total of 418 NPA members and mass supporters voluntarily surrendered to the said battalion.

The former rebels were bound to attend the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority's (TESDA) livelihood training programs, which are projects aimed at helping them reintegrate into society.

On March 2, 2018, there were 15 personalities who were apprehended within the area and were sent to jail, including bomb makers, Special Partisan Unit members, and some alleged drug personalities.

"This has gained the support and respect from the civilian community. They are able to build a school building in Maragusan, the water system in Maco, and distributed school supplies, bags and chairs within Compostela Valley and Davao del Norte," the commander said.

"All of these accomplishments have paved way for anti-government groups to create gorge destroying the mission of Philippine Army especially 71st IB who are performing their duties and responsibilities in attaining peace and order for the progress of the community," Ducusin said. (PNA)

www.pna.gov.ph

## Army turns over rubber seedlings to IPs in Maguindanao

By Edwin Fernandez

**AMPATUAN, Maguindanao** -- The military's 1st Mechanized Infantry Battalion (MIB) on Saturday distributed over 800 rubber seedlings to Indigenous Peoples (IPs) in the upland village of Ampatuan in a bid to help natives have alternate sources of income.

2Lt. Giftsy Labaniego said the seedlings were distributed to IPS in far-flung Barangay Tomicor here.

"It was part of our community support program as we continue to win the hearts of our IPs," Labaniego said after he and his staff handed over the seedlings to Editha Panes, IPs mandatory representative of Barangay Tomicor.

The Maguindanao provincial agriculture office provided the seedlings intended for all IP communities that have limited or no agricultural support at all.

Maguindanao Governor Esmael Toto Manguadatu has specific programs for the IPs who he described as protectors of the forest as their ancestral domain.

Labaniego also said that the outreach program is one way of bringing the IPs away from communist movement recruitment in the hinterlands.

Panes lauded the efforts of the military for the delivery of the seedlings. She assured the soldiers that the IPs would take care of the agricultural assistance.

Rubber is a rising industry in Maguindanao, which has a vast track of uninhabited forest lands suitable for rubber and heat resistant crops.

"We have just planted the seed of peace in this community," Labaniego said as his team left the mountain village. **(PNA)**