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TEAM ARMY

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OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

NEWS CLIPPINGS

07 March 2018

Wednesday

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

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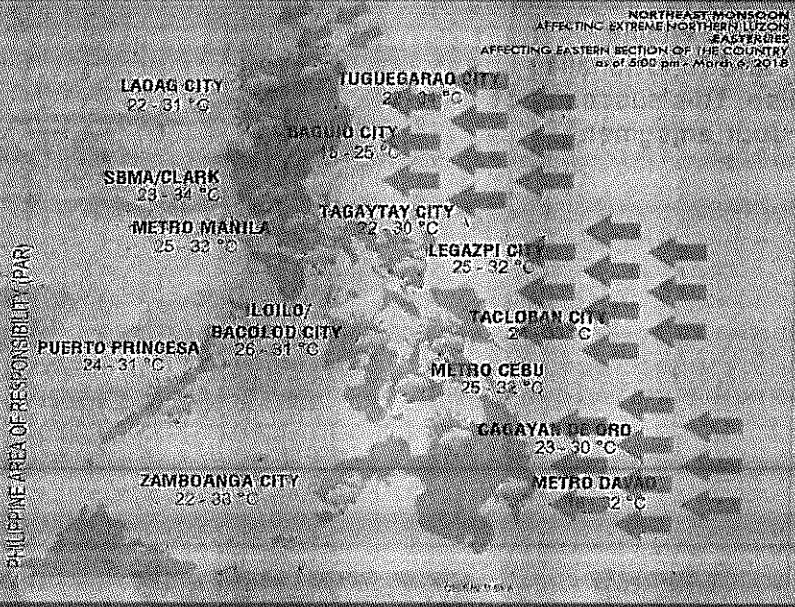
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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS • FEARLESS VIEWS

TODAY'S WEATHER FORECAST | MARCH 7, 2018 | WEDNESDAY

NORTHEAST MONSOON AFFECTING EXTREME NORTHERN LITZON EASTERLIES AFFECTING EASTERN SECTION OF THE COUNTRY as of 6:00 pm - March 6, 2018



PHILIPPINE AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY (PAR)

SUNRISE	SUNSET
6:09 AM	6:05 PM
MOONRISE	MOONSET
10:52 PM	9:58 AM
FULL MOON	LAST QUARTER
MAR 2 8:51 AM	MAR 7 7:20 PM
LOW TIDE	HIGH TIDE
MANILA SOUTH HARBOR	
8:35 PM	4:42 PM
0.10 Meter	0.87 Meter

Partly cloudy to at times cloudy with rainshowers

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

Cloudy a.m. with rainshowers and/or thunderstorms

Light rains

MAR 6	MAR 7	MAR 8	MAR 9	MAR 10	MAR 11
METRO MANILA 25 - 33 °C	TAGAYTAY 24 - 32 °C	TACLOBAN 22 - 30 °C	CAGAYAN DE ORO 21 - 29 °C	METRO DAVAO 24 - 33 °C	ZAMBOANGA 24 - 32 °C
TUGUEGARAO 21 - 34 °C	LEGAZPI 20 - 32 °C	METRO DAVAO 25 - 32 °C	CAGAYAN DE ORO 23 - 30 °C	METRO DAVAO 23 - 29 °C	ZAMBOANGA 23 - 29 °C
LAOAG 22 - 31 °C	PUERTO PRINCESA 20 - 29 °C	METRO DAVAO 24 - 31 °C	METRO DAVAO 25 - 31 °C	METRO DAVAO 18 - 32 °C	METRO DAVAO 18 - 33 °C
BAGUIO 14 - 24 °C	ILOILO/BACOLOD 14 - 23 °C	METRO DAVAO 26 - 31 °C	METRO DAVAO 26 - 31 °C	METRO DAVAO 22 - 33 °C	METRO DAVAO 22 - 33 °C
SBMA/CLARK 23 - 33 °C	METRO CEBU 22 - 33 °C	METRO CEBU 25 - 32 °C	METRO CEBU 24 - 32 °C		

DZRHNEWS TELEVISION

MONDAY - FRIDAY
11 AM & 5 PM

PILIPINAS HD

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

7 March 2018



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SC JUSTICE REJECTS OUST-SERENO PETITION

STORY BY MARLON RAMOS

Associate Justice Marvic Leonen is the lone opponent of a decision by other Supreme Court members to compel the Chief Justice to answer the quo warranto petition filed by Solicitor General Calida.

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FROM A1

By Marlon Ramos
@MRamosINQ

Supreme Court Associate Justice Marvic Leonen was quick on the draw and blasted a move to oust Chief Justice Maria Lourdes Sereno outside the impeachment process.

Exactly a week after joining 12 other justices who forced Sereno into taking an indefinite leave, Leonen swiftly moved on Tuesday to block an attempt by Solicitor General Jose Calida to unseat the Chief Justice by attacking the legality of her appointment.

In a news briefing, Supreme Court spokesperson Theodore Te said Leonen was the lone opponent of the decision of the other members of the high court to compel the Chief Justice to answer within 10 days the quo warranto petition against Sereno, which Calida filed on Monday.

A quo warranto petition challenges an official's right to hold a government position.

"Leonen dissented on the ground that in his opinion, the petition should be dismissed outright," Te told reporters.

Impeachment

Two court sources, who agreed to speak on condition of anonymity, said Leonen argued that Sereno, like the rest of the high court magistrates, could only be removed from office through impeachment proceedings in Congress, as spelled out in the 1987 Constitution.

"He said the justices of the Supreme Court, being impeachable officers, can be removed only through impeachment," the first source said.

"For him, the quo warranto petition may supplant the constitutional requirements of taking out impeachable officers from authority," the second source said.

Oral arguments

The first source said the magistrates considered holding oral arguments to make the public understand the deliberations on Calida's petition.

"The justices had a discussion on that issue, but they opted to tackle that after the Chief Justice has filed her comment," the source said.

"We don't know yet if that will happen. It's up to the majority (of justices) to decide on that," the source added.

SALN submission

In his petition, Calida said Sereno was unlawfully holding the position and that she did not prove her integrity as an applicant for the judiciary's top post.

Calida said Sereno had failed to comply with the re-

quirements set by the Judicial and Bar Council (JBC), including the mandatory submission of statements of assets, liabilities and net worth (SALNs).

Preemption

He said Sereno filed her SALN only in 1998, 2002 and 2006 during her 20 years as a faculty member of the University of the Philippines College of Law.

The two court sources said all the 14 magistrates were present during the regular weekly full-court session.

Vice President Leni Robredo on Tuesday said Calida's move could preempt the outcome of the impeachment proceedings already under way.

Unconstitutional

"To think of other ways to remove (Sereno) is unconstitutional," Robredo, who is a lawyer, told reporters in Marawi City.

She cited a disbarment case filed against Chief Justice Marcelo Fernan, which was rejected by the high tribunal.

"The Supreme Court said it could not accept the case because a magistrate can only be removed through impeachment," she said.

Robredo also said she wished the Supreme Court kept its impartiality "because it was the most important feature of our justice system."

"Without it, who else do we trust?" she said.

IBP reaction

The president of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP), Abdiel Dan Fajardo, also disputed Calida's legal tack, which also did not comply with the time limitations in the filing of the petition.

"A quo warranto petition may not be a constitutionally sanctioned [method]," Fajardo told the Inquirer.

The only "constitutionally recognized move" to oust any member of the Supreme Court is through impeachment, he said.

Fajardo said questions of integrity, which Calida raised against Sereno, could not be scrutinized by the tribunal.

"Twice removed, the court in itself cannot pass judgment on [its members] on the basis of integrity because that is purely political. It's the discretion of the appointing power, which is the President," he explained.

"Let's just hope that the Supreme Court will really take these matters judiciously. I'm hopeful that they will," he said. "I hope they will exercise extreme prudence in the disposition of this petition."

Prescriptive period

Fajardo said Calida also should have abided by the prescriptive period in challenging Sereno's authority, citing Rule 66 of the Rules of Civil Procedures, which states that a quo warranto petition should be filed within one year after a person had assumed office.

Senate President Aquilino Pimentel III said he did not see "any legal basis [for] how you can remove an impeachable official through a nonimpeachment proceeding."

'Dangerous reasoning'

In a radio interview on Tuesday, Pimentel also warned that claiming Sereno's appointment was invalid was a "dangerous reasoning" that could be used against anyone holding public office.

Opposition Sen. Risa Hontiveros said Calida's petition was an assault on the Senate's integrity and democratic processes, and it could set a dangerous precedent to relegating the Senate to the political sidelines.

"It is part of a greater scheme to render the Senate obsolete and irrelevant, when it is one of the few institutions left where the government's abuses can still be checked," Hontiveros said.

Senate Minority Leader Franklin Drilon earlier said any petition to nullify Sereno's appointment would not prosper.

Drilon said there were only three qualifications for a Chief Justice: citizenship, age and a minimum 15-year law practice.

—WITH REPORTS FROM RICHEL UMEL AND JOCELYN R. UY INQ

pride

845-9555 Local: 5285, 5295

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Manila
Standard

Page: A1

Terrorists target six areas—AFP

IS-allied Maute, other groups seen stepping up attacks

By Francisco Tuyay

A MILITARY official on Tuesday said security forces are keeping a tight watch on four to six urban areas that could be the target of increased terrorist activity, now that a new emir for the Islamic State in Southeast Asia has been named.

Brig. Gen. Bienvenido Datuin, spokesman of the Armed Forces of the Philippines said that with the huge resources available to the terrorist group, increased activity is possible.

“We are closely guarding, monitoring the urban areas to make sure that any attempts will be deterred,” Datuin said.

Datuin added that they are coordinating with the Philippine National Police to prevent any terrorist attacks, particularly during the Lenten season.

“The standing order is to prevent atrocities or terroristic acts within these critical days. So we will make sure it will not happen,” Datuin said.

Terrorist leader Abdul Nasser Lomondot, who was arrested recently in Manila, said the terrorists have moved to the city to evade security forces hunting them after they escaped from the siege of Marawi City.

The PNP said Abdul Nasser was among the 10 remaining Maute sub-leaders after



SECURITY THREAT. The military projects increased terrorist activity in Mindanao with reports that Maute group sub-leader Abu Dar has taken over the leadership of the Islamic State in Southeast Asia. Dar, say military authorities, has assumed command of the terror group in Southeast Asia following the death of Abu Sayyaf leader Isnrlon Hapilon last Oct. 16. **File photo**

the fall of the ISIS-inspired Maute group following the death of its top leader Abudullah and three of his brothers in the Marawi City siege.

Datuin said they are also trying to confirm the veracity of reports that 23 armed groups are working together in one command of ISIS in the Philippines.

“As we said there are groups, remnant groups from Marawi that are still at it, meaning there are still organizing, recruiting and retraining and we cannot discount the possibility of a plan, another attack and that is what we are trying to preempt,” he added.

Despite reports that Abu Dar has been named the new emir of ISIS in Southeast Asia, Maj. Ronaldo Suscano, spokesman of the Army’s 1st Infantry

Division said others, including Indonesian and Malaysian terrorists, could also be considered potential successors to Isnrlon Hapilon, who was killed in the Marawi fighting.

In a statement released Tuesday, Manila Auxiliary Bishop Broderick Pabillo urged the public to be vigilant because “there are always groups who are out to make trouble.”

“We pray that days of prayer and penance be respected by all,” Pabillo added.

Rev. Fr. Jerome Secillano, executive secretary of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines-Public Affairs Committee, said that it is the job of authorities to ensure the safety of the public, and make sure that intelligence gathering is working properly. **Next page**

Terrorists...

From A1

“Law enforcers should tighten security. They should be more visible in public. More importantly, they should improve and make intelligence gathering efficient and truly reliable,” he said.

The Catholic priest echoed Pabillo’s statement that the people should always be wary of their surroundings.

“The public, too, should be vigilant lest we become victims of possible terror acts,” Secillano said.

On Saturday, authorities arrested an

alleged leader of the Islamic State-linked Maute terror group in Manila.

Spouses Abdul Nasser and Raisalam Lomondot, both from Lanao del Sur, were arrested along CM Recto, Divisoria. Police confiscated a grenade and a handgun from them.

The PNP, meanwhile, said it is checking on reports that ISIS members have entered the country by posing as fishermen.

But PNP spokesman Chief Supt. John Bulalacao said reports of the ISIS presence in Mindanao should not alarm the public because security measures have been tightened there.

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Rody open to new talks with Reds

By ALEXIS ROMERO

President Duterte may reconsider his decision to terminate the peace talks with communist rebels if negotiators come up with a ceasefire deal.

Duterte said he was ticked off by the recent statements of Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) founder Jose Maria Sison but had to tone down his rhetoric because of an appeal by government chief negotiator Silvestre Bello III.

"Bebot Bello asked me to just tone down... As far as I'm concerned, no talks, no ceasefire," Duterte said during the 10th Filipina Entrepreneur-

ship Summit in Pasay City yesterday.

"Work it out. If you can have it, fine, show it to me, maybe I can reconsider," he added.

Last November, Duterte scrapped the peace negotiations with communists, whom he said are pushing for a power-sharing setup that violates the 1987 Constitution.

He was also angered by the rebels' attacks that harmed civilians and their collection of revolutionary taxes from businesses.

Duterte, who had a friendly relationship with communist rebels when he was still mayor of Davao City, has also clas-

sified the CPP and its armed wing New People's Army (NPA) as "terrorist organizations."

While Duterte has described holding talks with communists as a "waste of time," he has assured Idun Tvedt, Norwegian special envoy to the peace process, that his administration remains committed to peace. Norway served as third party facilitator for the peace talks between the government and the communists.

"So I'm talking to the communists. The Norwegian officials came here to explore the possibility of talking again. I have to consult my military

people. Why? They are the ones dying, not me. I said I will talk to the military. If you would agree, I might," the President said in a speech last month.

"I won't waste my time. I am not thinking about it even. Why? Because now it's beyond my control... How do you feel? What's your take? It is good for us to fight forever or should we talk?" he added.

Duterte sparked outrage recently after saying that female NPA members should be shot in their vaginas. He later clarified that his comment was directed at rebels who leave their children to wage an armed struggle against the government.

Have papers, will travel

Meanwhile, the military will assist female rebel returnees who want to avail themselves of the government's Hong Kong tour offer, all expenses paid, including processing of travel documents.

Maj Ezra Balagtey, spokesman for the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP)'s Davao-based Eastern Mindanao Command (Eastmincom), said they are under instructions to help former NPA female rebel returnees secure the needed documents for them to acquire passports.

"We will be helping any of the 89 female rebel returnees who joined the tour in Manila and Malacañang in securing the necessary papers in anticipation of their special tour to Hong Kong on a date yet to be determined," Balagtey said.

He added though that some of the 89 former rebels would not join the trip since they are either sick or pregnant.

Duterte earlier encouraged the rebels to lay down their weapons, promising that his government will take care of their needs through various livelihood projects and enlist them as militiamen.

– With Jaime Laude

7 March 2018



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AFP welcomes 188 ex-NPA members from Mindanao

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) said a total of 188 former New People's Army (NPA) rebels and supporters from Mindanao arrived yesterday at Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon City to meet the top officers of the military and for their turn to visit President Duterte in Malacañang.

AFP Vice Chief of Staff Gen. Salvador Melchor Mison Jr. led the welcome ceremony for the former rebels who are part of a group of 683 former rebels who met with the Chief Executive in Panacan, Davao City, on Dec. 21, 2017 and the last of three batches to visit Metro Manila.

The former rebels were earlier toured to Luneta Park and Intramuros for their historical and heritage trip. They will also get a chance to interact with other former NPA members who now work as advocates of peace and development.

The tour is expected to conclude today as they return to Davao City and Butuan City via C-130 aircraft.

The former rebels are composed of 537 males and 93 females who were former regular NPA members, Milita ng Bayan, underground mass organizations members, and mass supporters from Compostela Valley, Davao Del Sur, Davao Del Norte, Agusan, Surigao, and nearby provinces.

The most notable in the group is Noel Legaspi alias Ka Efrén, former deputy secretary and spokesman of the Far South Mindanao Region (FSMR) of the NPA. He surrendered with his wife, a medical staff of FSMR, on Jan. 15, 2018.

Ka Efrén became a leader of the leftist youth organization League of Filipino Students in 1992 and

became a regular member of the NPA six years later.

The AFP Eastern Mindanao Command also reported that females who are part of the 683 FRs will have a special tour to Hong Kong in a date yet to be determined while their papers are being processed. **(Francis T. Wakefield)**

7 March 2018

Malaya

The National Newspaper

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Joma: Military concocting NPA surrender stories

BY VICTOR REYES

JOSE Maria "Joma" Sison, founding chair of the Communist Party of the Philippines, yesterday said military psy-war experts fabricated reports on the surrender of thousands of New People's Army rebels and communist supporters throughout the country.

"The Duterte regime looks ridiculous and even funny by staging the fake surrenders of NPA fighters and their supporters," said Sison who has been on self-exile in the Netherlands since the late 1980s.

In a statement, Sison said there

were "serious violations of civil and political rights" by the government and by the military "in their intensified drive to produce fake surrenders."

He likened the military's "Oplan Kapayapaan" to the PNP's "Oplan Tokhang," wherein policemen would knock on the doors of houses of users of illegal drugs and ask for the surrender of the drug addict.

"In Oplan Kapayapaan, people are also being coerced or persuaded by barangay officials to sur-

See JOMA ► Page B6

JOMA

sunder themselves as NPA fighters or members of the people's militia, mass organizations, self-defense units and the local organs of political power," Sison said adding the people are promised "cash rewards, jobs, housing and other benefits."

"But the list of surrenderers serves as the basis for the military to fulfill their quota of killing revo-

lutionary suspects at the variable rates of P25,000 to P100,000 per head, depending on the rank ascribable to the victim," said Sison.

The military has said nearly 700 NPA rebels surrendered last year in Eastern Mindanao alone. They were toured to Luneta Park and Intramuros and had dinner with President Duterte in three batches.

"The luckiest of the fake surrenderers are selected to have a junket in Manila and have an audi-

ence with Duterte. In his Palace, Duterte even promises to bring the fake surrenderers to Hong Kong and China. But there is a deadly and tragic side to these fake surrenders. As in Oplan Tokhang, so is it in Oplan Kapayapaan," said Sison.

On Monday, the AFP said 2,263 rebels and supporters have surrendered to the military from January 1 to March 4, mostly in the Davao region. The military said it is expecting more rebels to

surrender due to dissatisfaction in the underground movement.

Military estimates placed the NPA strength at 3,700 as of end 2017.

Sought for a reaction, AFP Eastern Mindanao Command chief Lt. Gen. Benjamin Madrigal ridiculed Sison for saying the military is resorting to "fake surrenders."

He said Sison has not lived in the Philippines for decades, and should ask people from Mindanao what is happening.

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MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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NPA losing three fighters to AFP daily – EastMinCom

By FRANCIS T. WATFIELD

The terrorist group New People's Army (NPA) is losing at least three regular fighters daily to the government – either through surrender or arrest – in combat operations in Eastern Mindanao.

This was revealed by Lt. Gen.

Benjamin Madrigal Jr., commander of the Armed Forces of the Philippines-Eastern Mindanao Command (AFP-EastMinCom) which has jurisdiction over Davao, Compostela Valley, and CARAGA Region.

"Basically, the NPA loses about three regular members daily. Two, due ▶ 11

NPA losing three fighters... ◀ 1

to surrender and the other arrested during combat operation. We are also able to recover about three firearms daily," Madrigal said.

The military is also able to effect the surrender daily of at least five militia men. More than 300 of them have turned themselves in since January.

"We have a good turn-out not only on regular members but the most important is the support elements like the militia, the parties in the localities and what we call active masses or members of the underground mass organization. Without their support, the regulars won't survive," Madrigal added.

Support, Madrigal said, does not only come in terms of food but they also provide information, collect funds and provide means of transportation to the regular NPA fighters.

Sincerity factor

One of the reasons terrorists return to

the fold of the law is the sincerity shown by the President and how the government strives to provide for returnees in order for them to live normal and better lives, Madrigal explained.

The EastMinCom chief said through the help Noel Legaspi, he was able to convince members in Davao del Sur, Sarangani, and General Santos to come down from the mountains, return to their families and live a normal life.

Legaspi alias Ka Efen is the deputy secretary and spokesman of the Far South Mindanao Region (FSMR) of the NPA. He surrendered with his wife, a medical staff of FSMR on January 15, 2018. He was a leader of the League of Filipino Students in 1992 and became a regular member of the NPA six years later.

As the returnees increased in number, the NPA's recruitment program suffered immensely, Madrigal said.

On Monday, about 188 former NPA rebels and supporters from Mindan-

ao arrived in Manila for their turn to break bread with President Duterte in Malacañang and top officers of the AFP some of whom they have crossed paths in their respective operations for ideology and territory.

The third batch of NPA returnees were welcomed by AFP Vice Chief of Staff Gen. Salvador Melchor Mison Jr. in simple ceremony at Camp Aguinaldo on Tuesday.

The 188 former rebels are part of a group of 683 NPA fighters who met with President Duterte in Panacan, Davao City on December 21, 2017.

After meeting the President, the former rebels will be given a tour of historical sites today, among them Luneta Park and Intramuros and meet former NPA fighters who now work as advocates of peace and development.

The returnees are composed of 537 males and 98 females who are regular NPA members, supporters and mass organizations members from Compostela Valley, Davao Del Sur, Davao Del Norte, Agusan, Surigao, and nearby provinces.

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PRESIDENT'S TREAT

EX-REBELS READY FOR HK HOLIDAY

**MAY PANG-SHOPPING
DIN BA SILA?**



**By Frinston Lim
@flimINQ**

DAVAO CITY—The government is helping process the passports and other travel documents of about 90 female former communist rebels who had been promised a trip to Hong Kong by President Duterte after their surrender, a military spokesperson said on Tuesday.

Maj Ezra Balagtey of the military's Eastern **A8**



MANILA TOUR Members of the communist New People's Army who surrendered earlier in Davao City are met by journalists upon their arrival at Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon City. They were scheduled to meet and dine with President Duterte later in Malacañang. —JAM STA. ROSA

FROM A1

Mindanao Command said the date had yet to be set for the trip, which, he stressed, was a way for the government to “reintegrate the former enemies of the state to mainstream society.”

The women were among the 683 members of the communist New People's Army (NPA) who had earlier surrendered and whom the President had earlier met in Davao City.

Dinner in Malacañang

They later dined with Mr. Duterte in Malacañang during a military-sponsored trip to Manila last month.

On Feb. 7, when he met with some of the former rebels in Malacañang, the President asked them about going to Hong Kong, one of China's special administrative regions.

“You want to go to Hong Kong? All my female soldiers who fought in Marawi, from the police and the military, I

sent them to Hong Kong for a vacation. And it may be the same for you," he said.

Mr. Duterte praised the surrendered rebels, saying they made a good decision because the NPA was fighting for a dying and flawed cause.

Changes adopted by China

He said the Hong Kong trip was aimed at showing the former rebels the changes adopted by China, which previously inspired Maoist insurgents in the Philippines and other countries.

He said communism was no longer relevant as major former communist powers, such as Russia and China, "embraced capitalism and became successful."

The President, known for cracking jokes, said male rebels could also join the Hong Kong trip but they had to take a military aircraft.

"When you're up in the air above the China Sea, I'll tell the Air Force to throw you out of the plane," he said in jest. INQ

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Gov't ready to crush IS under new leader – Palace

By ALEXIS ROMERO

Malacañang is unfazed by reports that the Islamic State (IS) has a new leader in Southeast Asia, saying government forces are bent on crushing the terrorists with the help of foreign allies.

The military has identified the new IS leader as Abu Dar, a Maranao sub-leader of the Maute group and one of the militants who attacked and occupied Marawi City last year.

Dar succeeded Abu Sayyaf leader Isnilon Hapilon, who was killed during an encounter with government forces last October.

Asked to react to the naming of Dar as new IS leader in Southeast Asia, presidential spokesman Harry Roque said, "Whoever takes over, the government will obliterate them."

"(We can do this) with the help of countries who gave us firearms and with the help of intelligence information given by some countries," he added.

IS-linked Maute terrorists laid siege to Marawi City last May, prompting President Duterte to impose martial law in the entire island of Mindanao.

The President declared Marawi liberated from terrorists after the death of Hapilon and his lieutenant Omar Maute last October.

However, he did not lift the military rule supposedly because of threats in other provinces. Congress has agreed to extend martial law in Mindanao until the end of the year.

Last month, Duterte said he was worried that the IS ideology may spread in Luzon and lead to attacks similar to the Marawi siege.

"It seems they are already spreading. All the groups have been contaminated, the Abu Sayyaf, all of them. All have pledged allegiance to ISIS," the President said, referring to the other acronym of the terror group.

"I'm worried about what's going to happen. It has happened in Marawi. My only worry is that they are really out, dispersed in the Visayas and maybe in Luzon," he told a private meeting in Cebu City last Feb. 13.

Duterte, nevertheless, is optimistic that the military and the police would be able to handle the threat posed by remaining members of the Maute group.

The military said it is closely monitoring the activities of known terrorists and validating reports that 23 militant groups have joined forces as IS-Philippines.

Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) spokesman Brig. Gen. Bienvenido Datuin said the military and other government agencies are taking all reports of terrorist threats seriously.

"Our (terror threat) monitoring is continuing. The Philippine Coast Guard, the Armed Forces of the Philippines, the Philippine National Police, and of course we have protocols and agreements with other countries," Datuin said.

He said the monitoring is directed towards all reported personalities who may have links with the Islamic militants who escaped the fighting in Marawi City.

There were reports that IS-affiliated militants Amin Bako, a Singaporean identified only as Muayiyah and Abu Toraypa of the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters, despite their reported deaths, are alive and currently recruiting, organizing in Mindanao for future terrorist activities.

"I don't have the exact names or identities of personalities that are actually involved but as we said, there are remnant groups from Marawi that are still at it, meaning organizing, recruiting and retaining and we cannot discount the possibility of a plan, another attack and that is what we are trying to preempt," Datuin said.

He also said the terrorists could also be using minors and women whom they have recruited for their future terror plans.

On reports that Abu Dar has taken over the leadership of IS in Southeast Asia, Datuin said this is still subject to military validation.

"We have no confirmation except reports coming from the 1st Infantry Division. He may have the capability as a leader," Datuin said.

As to how Abu Dar was able to escape despite reports that he was among the planners of the Marawi siege, Datuin said this is also being looked into.

But he added that at the height of the fighting there might have been security gaps that the terrorists could have taken advantage of to escape from the main battleground.

Datuin said government forces have increased monitoring operations and other anti-terror activities ahead of the Holy Week.

"The standing order is to prevent atrocities or terroristic acts to happen during the critical days. We will make sure it will not happen. We will coordinate (with other law enforcement agencies) on this matter," Datuin said.

He assured the public that there are no confirmed or validated terror threats in Metro Manila and other urban centers across the country.

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"All urban areas, not only those reportedly being targeted by these terrorists, are under close watch by combined government security forces," Datuin said.

Meanwhile, the Department of National Defense (DND) is reiterating its earlier request for Congress to increase the country's defense budget.

Defense spokesman Arsenio Andolong said the country is only spending 9 percent of its GDP for national defense, which he said is the lowest in the region.

Andolong urged lawmakers to enact a law increasing the defense budget to 15 percent of GDP.

The total defense budget for this year amounts to P149.7 billion, which is way below that of other states, Andolong said.

- With Jaime Laude

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Case: Serving the people. Securing the land.

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AFP still validating claims on Hapilon's successor

By Mario J. Mallari

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) yesterday retracted pronouncements that Abu Dar is now the emir or leader of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in Southeast Asia.

Brig Gen. Biervenido Datuin, AFP spokesman, said that the information tagging Dar, who is known to operate in Lanao del Sur, as the successor of Abu Sayyaf leader Isnilon Hapilon as emir is still being validated.

"That only came from the 1st Infantry Division and we are working overtime to confirm that," said Datuin.

The same statements were echoed by Col. Romeo Brawner, deputy commander of Task Force Ranao, saying "that is still for verification. Those are raw information that we are verifying."

Brawner stressed that there are still other terrorist personalities who are vying for the title vacated by Hapilon after being killed during the Marawi City siege.

On Monday, Maj. Ronaldo Suscano, spokesman of 1st ID, described Dar as the new emir of ISIS.

Yesterday, he himself admitted that his information was based on "rumors."

"It is not official yet that Abu Dar succeeded Hapilon as emir, it was mere rumors and not confirmed," Suscano admitted.

Dar was among the 10 sub-leaders

of the Maute-ISIS who managed to slip out of Marawi City before the military liberated the Islamic City from the terrorists last year.

Datuin, however, described Dar as having the resources and skills to lead a group.

"They say he has the money, he has the resources, he has the connections and capability to lead," said Datuin.

"We have identified (him) as one of the sub-leaders leading the sub-groups of the remnants of Maute (group)," he added.

The 1st ID said that Dar was reported in the outskirts of Lanao del Sur – a known area of operations of the Maute-ISIS, where the terrorist remnants of the group that launched the Marawi City siege are now regrouping and retraining.

Datuin refused to admit there were lapses in sealing off Marawi City during the five-month siege that resulted in the escape of more than 300 terrorists as stated by 1st ID.

He said the military is doing its best to monitor the activities of the Maute-ISIS remnants.

"We do not know the exact details on how they were able to get out so we cannot say if there were lapses," Datuin said.

"There may be security gaps but we are trying our best to control them within the bounds of Mindanao area especially in Zamboanga, Basilan, Sulu and Tawi Tawi," he also said.

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Malaya

The National Newspaper

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Terrorist recruitment ongoing: AFP

BY VICTOR REYES

THE Armed Forces yesterday said the reported assumption of Maute sub-leader Abu Dar as leader of the Islamic State for Southeast Asia could lead to increased terrorist activity in the Philippines.

Dar has the capability, resources, and connections to carry out violent activities, said AFP spokesman Brig Gen Bienvenido Datuin in an ambush interview in Camp Aguinaldo.

"It may be possible but we are closely guarding, monitoring the metropolis, the areas to make sure they won't succeed insofar as terrorist activities, plans are concerned," said Datuin.

While acknowledging that Dar's

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TERRORIST

group has the resources, Datuin said government security agencies can address any threat.

Datuin declined to elaborate as to the areas that may be targeted by the terrorists but gave the assurance those areas "are under close watch from us right now."

Datuin also said the military has information that the terrorists are

"still organizing, recruiting and retraining and we cannot discount the possibility of a plan, another attack and that is what we are trying to preempt."

Maj. Ronald Suscano, spokesman of the Army's 1st Infantry Division, on Monday said Dar assumed as IS Southeast Asia emir, replacing Isnilon Hapilon, a senior Abu Sayyaf leader who died during the five-month siege of Marawi City last year.

Suscano yesterday said the information on Dar being IS leader for Southeast Asia is still subject to verification.

"I was not aware that it was not yet confirmed... There are reports that he is the acknowledged leader but we have no information if he is officially the successor (of Hapilon)," he said.

Dar was among those who took part in the May to October 2017

Marawi siege but was able to get out, slipping through the supposedly tight military cordon. Reports said he and his men were able to cart away about P500 million in cash they looted from various establishments.

"Ever since, we are monitoring him... He's the one who got most of the resources in Marawi and he is a possible recruiter. He is using the resources to recruit possible members again," said Datuin.

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23 grupo sa ISIS-PH kinukumpirma

Tatuloy na binberipika ng militar ang impormasyon na may 23 armadong grupo ang nagtutulung-tulong sa ilalim ng ISIS Philippines.

Sa isang panayam, sinabi ni AFP spokesman at concurrent Special Operations Service at US Army, Brig. Gen. Bienvenido Datun sa maagang-matagalang karanalanan sa tulong ng Philippine National Police (PNP) at ng Philippine Const Guard (PCG).

We are trying to confirm that the veracity of that information. As of yesterday informal reports came in regarding the matter and (the) intelligence community, operations and people on the ground are trying to confirm that," sabina Datun.

"Hindi natin binabalalwala. Sali ko rin sa mga complete, strong monitoring natin. Tuloy-tuloy ang monitoring natin with the Philippine Const Guard and the Philippine

National Police (PNP) and crews, we have the records, the operations, the training and bilateral, exercises and protocols and agreements with other partners. So that's why, I'm doing a lot of joint intelligence and counter monitoring," sabina.

Nang ibangin, kung may ibang impormasyon kung bakay sa direktang pagtutulungan sa mga armadong sa Mindanao ang IS-affiliated militants na sha Arun Bako. Mula sa bahat Abu Jayyir, sinabi nila kung tinatungin nila bakay ang mga pangalan ng mga taong sangkot.

"But as we said there are groups remain groups from the Marawi (siege) that are still at it, meaning they are still organizing, recruiting and training and we cannot discard the possibility of a plan, another attack and that is what we are trying to preempt," pahayag ni Datun.

Francis T. Wakefield

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The Manila Times

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6 urban areas under tight watch against terrorists

THE military is keeping a tight watch on about six urban areas where extremist groups may be planning terrorist activities, a spokesman for the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) said on Tuesday.

"There are different areas that were found [to be possible target areas]. Four, six, but these are all metropolis and urban areas. So all urban areas are

under close watch from us right now. Maybe, it is not just four areas," Brig. Gen. Bienvenido Datuin, Jr. told reporters in a chance interview at Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon City.

Datuin said that considering the vast area of Mindanao and the resources terror organizations in the country have, it "may be possible" for the terrorists to stage attacks in certain

urban areas.

"It may be possible, but we are, as I have said, we are closely guarding, monitoring all the metropolis and the urban areas to make sure that they will not be able to make their way in [the urban areas] insofar [as] their terroristic activities and plans are concerned," Datuin said.

► TerroristsA2

6 urban areas under tight watch against terrorists

"There are still remnant groups, Islamic State (IS)-affiliated groups in Marawi. This means that they are still terrorizing and may plan another attack," he added.

Datuin's statement comes as the Philippine Army said on Monday that the IS in Southeast Asia has a new "emir" in the person of Abu Dar, who was one of the leaders of the Islamist extremists in the five-month long Marawi siege. He

replaced Isnilon Hapilon who died in the war.

"We are trying to get information regarding [Dar]. We are getting information about his personality and capability. We're trying to establish since what we just know is that he was among the sub-leaders [of Hapilon]," he said.

"He may be the new [IS] 'emir' and we have to confirm that [since] that only came from the 1st In-

fantry Division [of the Philippine Army] and we are working overtime to confirm that," he added.

When asked about reports of the terrorists using women as front-liners, Datuin told reporters that this has not been confirmed although, he added, it was possible.

"Etiang mga terrorists sa Marawi ginagamit kung sino-sino. Tipong pati mga bata ginagamit nila, so this means the information is possible

(These terrorists in Marawi are using different people. They are even using children, so this means the information is possible)," Datuin said.

Asked about the threat in Metro Manila, Datuin said, "There are possibilities."

He said, however, that the Philippine National Police (PNP) would help prevent the attacks and that the military had a strong collaboration with the PNP.

The IS-inspired Maute group staged a series of attacks in Marawi City starting on May 23, 2017, after the military tried but failed to arrest Hapilon, the Abu Sayyaf leader.

The siege that lasted for five months displaced thousands, destroyed homes and other infrastructure, and killed about 1,000 civilians, troops and terrorists.

Datuin is the new commander of the Civil Relations Service of the AFP, replacing Maj. Gen. Ronnie Evangelista on January 11.

DEMPSEY REYES WITH A REPORT FROM ALEC NALDO

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Ligtas na Mahal na Araw tiniyak ng AFP

Inihayag kahapon ng Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) na mahigpit nilang ipatutupad, katuwang ang Philippine National Police (PNP), ang seguridad laban sa teroristang grupo sa bansa sa darating na Mahal na Araw.

Kinumpirma ito ni Joint Task Force Lanao deputy commander Col Romeo Brawner kasunod ng utos ng PNP na magsagawa ng beripakasyon sa tuluyang pagpasok ng 40 dayuhang terorista mula sa Indonesia patungong Mindanao.

Aniya, nakararating din sa kanila ang impormasyon ngunit nasa validation process pa ang

kanilang intelligence community hinggil sa nasabing report.

Avon pa kay Brawner, muling nagpalakas ang natitirang Maute-ISIS sa Lanao sanhi ng serye ng engkuwento nitong Enero hanggang Pebrero.

Batay sa police intelligence information, nagpanggap na mangingisda ang 40 foreign terrorist kaya malayang nakapasok sa Mindanao at sa liblib na mga probinsiya.

Target umano ng ISIS-inspired terrorists ang mga siyudad sa Luzon, Visayas at mismong sa Mindanao.

Fer Taboy

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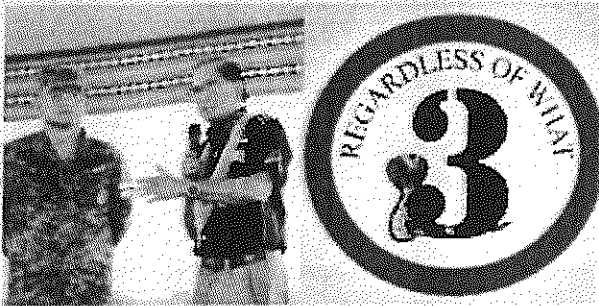
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TALK ACROSS THE TABLE | 3IB to use “Community-based Approach” in Peace- Building

Posted by Alvin Santiago

DAVAO CITY – “Fire the gun only when it is necessary. But keep it quiet when there is a way to peacefully engage them.”



This was the challenge given by Presidential Peace Adviser Jesus G. Dureza to the men and women of the 3rd Infantry “Regardless of What” Battalion, 7th Infantry Division, in his remarks during the commemoration of the unit’s 45th Founding Anniversary held at their headquarters here.

In referring to rebels who have expressed their desire to lay down their arms and live peaceful, productive lives, Sec. Dureza advised members of the 3rd ID to give the rebels a chance to reform themselves.

He pointed out that the main objective of the security sector is not to engage the insurgents in armed battles, but “to accept them” and help them make the transition to mainstream society.

Sec. Dureza said he had adopted this mindset after being instructed by President Rodrigo Duterte to “talk across the tables” in order to find a long-lasting solution to the armed conflict in the country.

As the national government’s top peace negotiator, he has told the leadership of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP), “You are only a small table. The bigger table is the general public.”

The Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process has established various “peace tables” which aim to provide a venue for stakeholders to discuss pressing peace-related issues and come up with recommendations on how to best address them.

According to the presidential peace adviser, there is a need to use a “community-based approach” in dealing with the insurgency problem in the country.

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During a recent visit he made in Brgy. Gupitan, Kapalong, Davao del Norte to inaugurate a Payapa at Masaganang Pamayanan (PAMANA) bridge project, he was informed by tribal leaders that the event almost did not push through after they received threats from a rebel group operating there.

But what he found most touching was their assurance that no harm will come to him, as members of the Lumad community had secured the area themselves.

"Don't worry, we will protect you," one of the elders told him, as he pointed to village folk who were armed with native weapons.

From his conversations with the village folk, he could sense their strong desire to maintain peace and order and sustain the gains of economic growth in the community.

Sec. Dureza believes in the power of diplomacy in resolving situations of conflict.

He said that through diplomacy, he has been able to effectively carry out talks with the leaders of various rebels groups in the country.

"Use diplomacy," Sec. Dureza told the members of the 3rd ID, as he urged them to continue being agents of peace and development in the communities they serve. **OPAPP/MCAG**

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NEW LIFE | Third batch of Former Rebels visits Manila

Posted by [Alvin Santiago](#)

CAMP GEN EMILIO AGUINALDO, Quezon City (DWDD) – The third batch of Former Rebels (FR) will be visiting Camp Gen Emilio Aguinaldo in Quezon City after being flown to Manila yesterday from Davao via a Philippine Air Force C-130 aircraft.



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

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

Like the previous two tours, the former rebels will dine with President Rodrigo Duterte in Malacañang tonight.

Part of their tour was a historical and heritage trip to Luneta and Intamuros yesterday and today, they will be given a warm Welcome Ceremony at Camp Gen Emilio Aguinaldo, to be hosted by General Rey Leonardo Guerrero, AFP Chief of Staff, then afterwards a tour and dinner at Malacanan and a visit to a mall.

Prior to their dinner with the President, they will also get a chance to interact with other former NPA members who now work as advocates of peace and development. **AES / MCAAG**

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PAMANA | Payapa at Masaganang Pamayanan meeting in Zamboanga

Posted by [Alvin Santiago](#)

ZAMBOANGA CITY (DWDD) – Officials of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, heads of different government offices, and representatives of local government units in Western Mindanao gathered for a two-day meeting to discuss interventions of socio-economic programs under Payapa at Masaganang Pamayanan (PAMANA) in Zamboanga City on March 5, 2018. **OPAPP / MCAG**

