

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



TEAM ARMY

Serving the people. Securing the land.

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OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

NEWS CLIPPINGS

08 March 2018

Thursday

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

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

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PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER

BALANCED NEWS • FEARLESS VIEWS

TODAY'S WEATHER FORECAST | MARCH 8, 2018 | THURSDAY

PHILIPPINE AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY (PAR)

NORTHEAST MONSOON AFFECTING EXTREME NORTHERN LUZON
EASTERLIES AFFECTING EASTERN SECTION OF THE COUNTRY
as of 5:00 pm - March 7, 2018

CALAPAN SEA

SUNRISE	SUNSET
6:09 AM	6:06 PM
MOONRISE	MOONSET
11:42 PM	10:41 AM
FULL MOON	LAST QUARTER
MAR 2 8:51 AM	MAR 9 7:20 PM
LOW TIDE	HIGH TIDE
MANILA SOUTH HARBOR	
9:56 PM 0.09 Meter	2:17 PM 0.72 Meter

- Partly cloudy to at times cloudy with mistshowers
- Partly cloudy to at times cloudy with rainshowers and/or thunderstorms
- Cloudy skies with rainshowers and/or thunderstorms
- Light rains

	MAR 9	MAR 10	MAR 9	MAR 10	MAR 9	MAR 10		
METRO MANILA	23 - 32 °C	22 - 31 °C	TAGAYTAY	20 - 29 °C	19 - 28 °C	TACLOBAN	24 - 30 °C	24 - 30 °C
TUGUEGARAO	22 - 30 °C	22 - 30 °C	LEGAZPI	24 - 30 °C	23 - 29 °C	CAGAYAN DE ORO	24 - 32 °C	24 - 32 °C
LAGAG	21 - 29 °C	21 - 28 °C	PUERTO PRINCESA	25 - 32 °C	25 - 32 °C	METRO DAVAO	25 - 35 °C	25 - 34 °C
BAGUIO	13 - 23 °C	13 - 23 °C	ILOILO/BACOLOD	26 - 32 °C	26 - 32 °C	ZAMBOANGA	24 - 34 °C	24 - 34 °C
SBMA/CLARK	24 - 34 °C	24 - 34 °C	METRO CEBU	25 - 31 °C	25 - 30 °C			

DZRHNEWS TELEVISION

MONDAY - FRIDAY
11AM & 5PM

PILIPINAS HD

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

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CJ HITS PERSECUTION OF ADMIN'S ENEMIES

By Marlon Ramos and Dona Z. Pazzibugan @Team Inquirer

Chief Justice Maria Lourdes Sereno—forced to take an indefinite leave by colleagues and faced with a disqualification petition in the Supreme Court and a looming impeachment trial in the Senate—on Wednesday lambasted the “dominant order” for subjecting its “perceived enemies” to “harassment, intimidation and persecution.”

Sereno assailed attempts to circumvent the constitutional process of exacting accountability from government officials two days after Solicitor General Jose Calida sought her ouster from the top post in the judiciary through a quo warranto petition.

Calida questioned the validity of Sereno's appointment as Chief Justice in 2012, claiming she did not submit the required statements of assets, liabilities and net worth.

Thus, he said, Sereno had failed to prove her integrity as an applicant for Chief Justice.

Associate Justice Marvic Leonen, one of the 13 magistrates who compelled Sereno to take an indefinite break, has rejected outright Calida's pleading, reiterating that the Chief Justice may be removed only through impeachment.

But other members of the Supreme Court decided to require Sereno to answer within 10 days the quo warranto petition, which challenges an official's right to hold a government post.

In a 25-minute speech at St. Scholastica's College in Manila, Sereno said that in the current state of the nation “shortcuts are preferred over adherence to constitutional guarantees of human rights, including denial of due process.”

Harmful to future

“Fake news and propaganda abound to deceive and manipulate, rather than enlighten and educate, the public,” she said.

Sereno expressed hope that the public would soon recognize that “impromptu, extemporized, unprepared and un-

thought-out plans of action that run contrary to the structured way the Constitution designed accountability, harm our nation's long-term future.”

Looking poised in a black business attire, she said: “Eventually, as our people get exposed to understanding the Constitution, they will internalize the painstaking steps that must be taken to truly build a nation.”

The Chief Justice, however, declined to be interviewed by reporters after the event.

“Happy women's month,” a smiling Sereno told journalists when asked to comment on Calida's legal action against her.

Denigration of women

Hurling potshots at President Duterte, the Chief Justice lamented that “coarseness, including the denigration of women, rather than civility, mark the language of the podium.”

At the gathering on the eve of International Women's Day, Sereno urged the audience, which included former Commission on Audit Chair Grace Pulido-Tan and former Social Welfare Secretary Judy Taguiwalo, “not to be passive spectators to what is happening.”

Mr. Duterte, who repeatedly boasts about his philandering ways, has been under fire from women's groups and human

rights activists for his penchant for making rape jokes and sexist remarks in his speeches.

Just society

In her speech, Sereno maintained that the 1987 Constitution clearly spells out that the "nation's goal is to build a just and humane society" and that it should promote "independence and democracy, not authoritarianism."

"Anything that diminishes its humanity and justness is anti-Constitution and anti-Filipino," she said.

"[The] government must embody the highest level of nobility, good, wisdom, righteousness in the Filipino and this qualitative standard is the norm, nothing else," she added.

Although Sereno shied away from discussing the impeachment complaint against her and Calida's attempt to solicit her colleagues' help in ousting her from the judiciary's top post, Sereno said several agencies were created by the Constitution to ensure transparency in the bureaucracy.

Champions of accountability

She said the Supreme Court was part of a group called the Constitutional Fiscal Autonomy Group (CFAG), whose mandate is to scrutinize the performance of

officials in certain government offices and "be the public champions of accountability."

The Civil Service Commission, Commission on Elections, Commission on Audit, Office of the Ombudsman and Commission on Human Rights are also members of the group.

She said these offices were created by the Constitution to "stay above the fray and look at the future on a long-term structured basis."

Inspiration

Sereno said she drew inspiration from the late Supreme Court Associate Justice Cecilia Muñoz-Palma, whose life was "dedicated to the defense of the rule of law, justice and human rights."

"In some of the darkest days of our nation's history, similar to the situation that I described a few days ago, when hope seems at its dimmest, she was at her very best. And I call upon all of you to be at your very best when hope seems at its dimmest," Sereno said.

It was Sereno's second public appearance since she was forced to go on an indefinite leave by other justices on Feb. 27.

On March 2, Sereno told a university forum that she would not resign and insisted that the impeachment process should be respected. INC 2

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The Manila Times

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Peace talks depend on 'sincerity' of National Democratic Front

RESUMING peace talks between the Philippine government and the National Democratic Front (NDF) would depend on the sincerity of the communists and on their agreeing to a ceasefire, the Philippine Army said on Wednesday.

The NDF is an umbrella organization that counts as members among others the Communist Party of the Philippines and the CPP's armed

wing, the New People's Army (NPA).

Lt. Col. Louie Villanueva, Army spokesman, said the Army has always campaigned for peaceful settlement of issues between the NDF and the government.

"It [resumption of the peace talks] depends on the sincerity of these people [in the NDF] because as far as the AFP [Armed Forces of the Philippines] is concerned, especially us, the

Philippine Army, we are the forces on the ground," Villanueva added.

"In the first place, it's always us who are in the [arena] of conflict. We are the ones being greatly affected and if these [peace negotiations] will be pursued anew, it will be a good condition," he said.

President Rodrigo Duterte on Tuesday said in a speech in Pasay City that he may reconsider termi-

nation of peace talks with the Left.

But he said the reconsideration to resume the peace negotiations would depend on the NPA agreeing to a ceasefire first.

In December last year, the President signed Proclamation 360 officially terminating the peace negotiations with the NDF.

Days later, he signed another proclamation tagging the CPP-

NPA as terrorist organizations.

Earlier last year, Duterte canceled the talks over an NPA ambush of a convoy of the Presidential Security Group in Arakan, North Cotabato, in southern Mindanao.

Villanueva said the communists "are the ones destroying the process and we are the ones abiding with the rules prescribed by the peace negotiations."

DEMPSEY REYES

08 March 2018

Malaya
The National Newspaper

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Army favors peace talks if rebels declare ceasefire

BY VICTOR REYES

THE Philippine Army yesterday said it is favorable to the resumption of peace negotiations with the Communist Party of the Philippines/New People's Army if the insurgents would declare a ceasefire.

Army spokesman Lt. Col. Louie Villanueva noted that Army soldiers are in the forefront in the fight against the insurgents. Military estimates placed the NPA strength at 3,700 as of end 2017.

On Tuesday, President Duterte

said he is open to resuming peace talks with the communists if they would declare a ceasefire. He said he discussed with Norwegian officials the possibility of continuing the talks.

Norway is brokering the peace talks between the government and the communist-led National Democratic Front.

Duterte terminated the peace talks with the communists in November due to a series of rebel attacks against government and civilian targets.

Last December, Duterte de-

clared the CPP-NPA as a terrorist organization. Last month, the justice department asked a Manila court to legally declare the group as terrorist in line with the Human Security Act.

"The Army's interest is to have a settlement of this issue," Villanueva said. "If this (peace talks) push through, it's a good development."

Villanueva, however, said the sincerity of the communists to talk with the government has to be ensured before talks resume.

"We've given them chances in

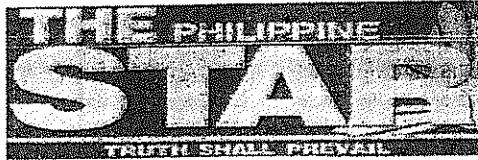
the past but they undermined the (peace) process. We supported the peace process but they undermined the process," said Villanueva.

AFP spokesman Brig. Gen. Bivenvenido Datuin said: "The AFP is for peace and development and will always follow the policy direction of the President and political leaders

"The CPP-NPA-NDF should reciprocate with sincerity in their actions once they declare ceasefire and go back to the negotiation table," Datuin added.

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AFP, PNP trucks to transport Mayon evacuees

By CET DEMATERA
and CELSO AMO

LEGAZPI CITY – Army and police vehicles are ready to transport to their homes evacuees residing within the eight-kilometer extended danger zone of Mayon Volcano.

Around 15,000 families or 55,261 individuals have been allowed to decamp after Mayon's alert level was lowered on Tuesday. Those with vehicles returned to their homes on Tuesday afternoon.

"Local government units can request the Office of Civil Defense through the Albay provincial security and emergency management office (Apsemo) so we can send the vehicles," Col. Patrick Cinco, head of the Task Force Sagip of the 9th Infantry Division, said yesterday.

Cinco said they have prepositioned vehicles in Guinobatan and Ligao.

Jun Pavericio, Guinobatan disaster risk reduction and management officer, said evacuees could go home today.

"We will provide them with food packs to sustain their needs since most of them can't get inside the six-kilometer danger zone to tend to their crops," Pavericio said.

He said evacuees hired under the the Department of Social Welfare and Development's cash-for-work program would clean the evacuation sites and prepare them for the resumption of

classes on Monday.

Highly abnormal

The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) said Mayon remains "highly abnormal" even as it warned residents not to enter the six-kilometer permanent danger zone.

Phivolcs reminded the public of sudden explosions, lava collapses, pyroclastic density currents and ashfall.

The agency said those residing near danger zones are also advised to observe precautions as loose volcanic materials on Mayon's slopes could be mobilized.

Mayon's activity in the past 24 hours was characterized by "brief periods of weak lava fountaining, gravity-driven lava flow and subsequent quiescence."

At least 76 volcanic earthquakes and 13 rockfalls were recorded. Sulfur dioxide emission was at 4,459 tons yesterday.

Road map

Meanwhile, operators of all-terrain vehicles were asked to submit a road map or route of their activities before they could be allowed to resume operations.

"We want to make sure that they will not venture into the danger zones because Mayon is still under Alert Level 3," Cedric Daep, Apsemo head, said.

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Manila
Standard

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Martial law in Mindanao boosts AFP's anti-graft role

By Nash B. Maulana

CAMP SIONGCO, Maguindanao—The extension of martial law in Mindanao has extended the security role of the police and the military in preventing the theft of government resources intended for the poor, officials said Wednesday.

They said that extension would enable the military and the Philippine National Police to protect government resources from rebel groups and drug syndicates.

Major General Arnel Dela Vega, commander of the 6th Army Infantry Division, said "if one is hindered, the community is able to prevent a part of the concern from further aggravating a whole problem."

The alleged manipulation by unscrupulous groups or individuals include illegal assigning of beneficiaries and partitioning of government resources to fake dole beneficiaries.

Lawyer Laisa Alamia, executive secretary of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, warned that under martial law, security

forces were also authorized to covertly investigate anomalies and send their findings to higher authorities for appropriate legal action.

Alamia, who is concurrent regional secretary of the DSWD-ARMM, told the peace and order council meetings here on Feb. 26 and on March 1 that any action by the security sector to address the problem of corruption "will be out of the DSWD jurisdiction."

De la Vega said the military interventions included surgical operations that had, so far, yielded loose firearms possibly used to intimidate dole recipients in the villages of Barira, Datu Salibo, Datu Unsay in Maguindanao and in Midsayap, Cotabato.

De la Vega said the very reason why mar-

tial law had been extended was that the problem of corruption in local governance had become rampant and almost beyond the control by civilian authorities.

"This is a privilege for us to be with you in this noble endeavor together with the regional government to tackle one of the most pressing concerns in the ARMM," Dela Vega said.

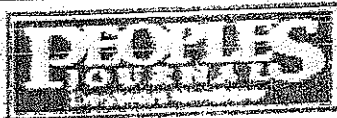
"The very reason why martial law has been extended is because of the problem in governance, especially in the implementation of government programs to address poverty.

"The 4Ps [dole] program is funded by the government to directly deliver assistance to the poorest of the poor. However when this program is not properly implemented, this will add up to the vicious cycle of corruption of funds, loose firearms, illegal drugs, criminality, arm conflicts and terrorism," Dela Vega said.

"These issues are interconnected. If one is hindered, the community is able to prevent a part of the concern to further aggravate the problem."

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Newly-trained soldiers to crush NPA

By Celso Lidot

CAMP GENERAL MATEO CAPINPIN, Tanay, Rizal – A Philippine Army official yesterday said that a newly-trained battalion of soldiers will play a vital role in the critical task of destroying the New People's Army terrorists.

Maj Gen Rhoderick Parayno, commander of the 2nd Infantry (Jungle Fighter) Division, issued the statement following the culmination of the Battalion of Excellence (BoE) Training Program last Monday in Camp Capinpin, Tanay, Rizal.

Parayno said the return of the 1st IB to operational status fits perfectly in time with the recent acts of terrorism perpetrated by the NPA rebels, particularly in the Calabarzon (Calamba, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal, Quezon) region.

"With your experiences in Marawi, new skills acquired from Australian counterparts during your Urban Warfare Training, and currently, with your capability enhancement through the BoE program, I am confident that you are now more than ready and prepared to crush and defeat the NPA or any terrorist group that will attempt to wreak havoc in our country," he told the soldiers.

The BoE training program is the centerpiece of the Philippine Army's capability development and improvement of organizational performance. It was intended to develop the combat skills of the Infantry Battalions to perform the tasks across the different mission areas.

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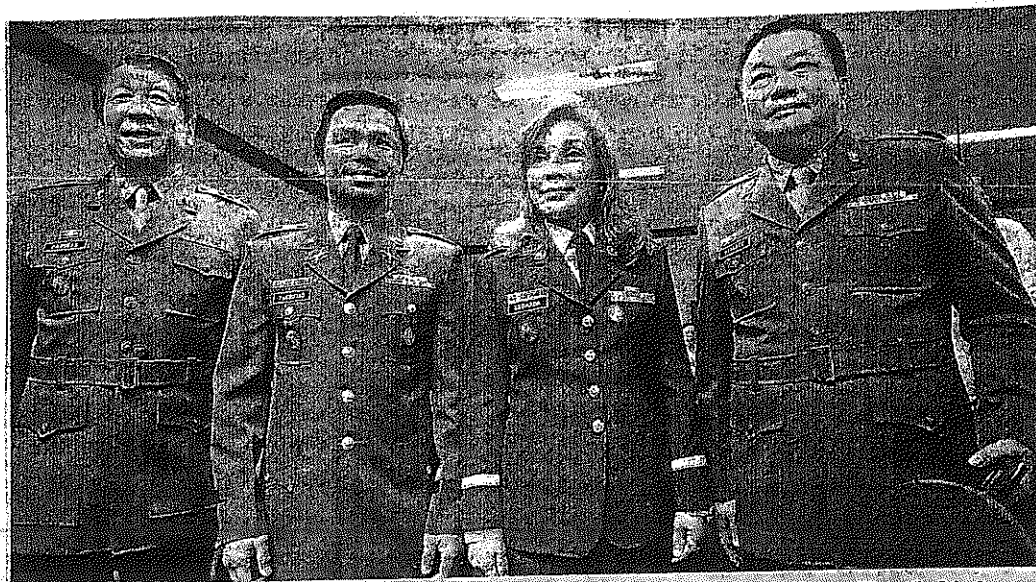
FIREPOWER Local and military officials in Mindanao say the declaration of martial law on the island has boosted the government's campaign against unlicensed firearms. Several mayors in Sulu on Tuesday turned over their guns to authorities. —JULIE ALIPALA

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SPIC AND SPAN IN MILITARY UNIFORM House Majority Leader Rodolfo Fariñas (left), Sen. Manny Pacquiao, Sen. Loren Legarda and Speaker Pantaleon Alvarez show their military uniforms after the Commission on Appointments approved their promotion to colonel in the reserve force of the Armed Forces of the Philippines on Wednesday. —JOSEPH VIDAL/PRIB

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18 March 2018

Manila Standard

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PROMOTED. Senate President Koko Pimentel III poses with Senators Manny Pacquiao, Loren Legarda and House Speaker Pantaleon Alvarez after their promotion as colonels of Philippine Army, Philippine Air Force and Navy/Marines respectively over yesterday's plenary session of the Commission on Appointments at the Senate in Pasay City. *Ey Atasio*

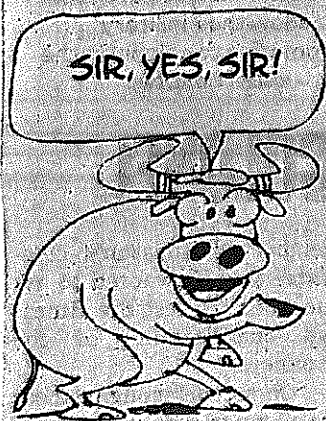
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INQUIRER

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MILITARIZATION OF CONGRESS?

8 SOLONS GET RANK OF COLONEL



By **Christine O. Avendaño**
@foavendanoINQ

No fake uniforms here.

Unlike Interior Undersecretary Martin Diño, who donned a rear admiral's uniform of the Philippine Coast Guard without authority, Speaker Pantaleon Alvarez, Senators Loren Legarda and Manny Pacquiao, and five other lawmakers wore official formal military uniforms on Wednesday af

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ter the Commission on Appointments (CA) approved their promotion to colonel in the reserve force of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

Along with Alvarez (Philippine Navy-Marines), Pacquiao (Army) and Legarda (Air Force), also promoted were House Majority Leader Rodolfo Fariñas (Judge Advocate General Service) and House Deputy Speaker and Cebu Rep. Gwendolyn Garcia (Army).

The others were Cavite Rep. Roy Loyola, Maguindanao Rep. Sandra Sema and Pangasinan Rep. Marlyn Agabas, all of the Army reserve.

The CA also confirmed the interim appointment of Maj. Gen. Rene Glen Paje, chief of staff for civil-military operations.

Miffed at late start

The CA hearing was 15 minutes late as reporters and cameramen took pictures of the unusual sight of lawmakers in military attire.

Sen. Gregorio Honasan II,

chair of the CA national defense committee, sounded miffed at the late start of the confirmation hearing.

"Suppose the enemy is on time, that would be embarrassing to the enemy. And you are wearing the uniform," said Honasan, a retired Army colonel who led several coup attempts against the late President Corazon Aquino.

Snappy salute

The lawmakers saluted as the national anthem was played at the start of the hearing.

After their confirmation, they all posed for pictures around Senate President Aquilino Pimentel III, executing President Duterte's signature clenched fist salute.

Honasan said the committee was seeing an "unprecedented number of nominees" for the AFP reserve force from the ranks of lawmakers.

He joked that Legarda's staff refused to disclose her "vital statistics" when the committee conducted a background check on the senator.

Sen. Panfilo Lacson, a

member of Honasan's committee said he wanted to ask questions "to test the fitness and qualification" of the nominees.

"On second thought, these are all my friends and this is a lineup of remarkably distinguished members of Congress so I will not ask questions," Lacson said, drawing laughter.

Ready to fight terrorists

Alvarez and Pacquiao, however, were open to questions from reporters about what they could do as reserve officers.

Can they leave the halls of Congress to fight terrorists? Yes, we can, the two lawmakers said.

"Anytime! Even now, we're ready," said the 60-year-old Speaker.

Pacquiao, a former eight-division world boxing champion, said he was even considering being "active" in the Army reserve force so that he could be an inspiration to Filipino soldiers.

He said he did not mind where he would be assigned by the military, if ever. INQ

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PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER

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Sulu execs surrender arms cache to AFP

By Julie Alipala
and Edwin Fernandez
@inquirermindanao

JOLO, SULU—"It's like my wife had left me," said Datu Al Anzar Julkarnain, as he handed over more than 20 assorted firearms to the military here on Tuesday.

Julkarnain, 35, village chair of Umangay in Patikul town, was among dozens of local government officials and residents who had decided to part with one of their prized possessions.

"We are doing a great sacrifice here. It's like seeing my wife leaving me. For us Tausug, no one is complete without a firearm; having a gun is like having a wife," he told the Inquirer.

Julkarnain said he had to think hard before surrendering his firearms.

What he feared the most, he said, was his enemies might take advantage of him unarmed.

Clan wars

"Rido" or clan wars erupt in different provinces in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), including Sulu.

In May 2017, three people were killed when a clan war broke out in Panamao town. In August 2015, members of two warring clans in Siasi town engaged in a firefight, killing eight people.

Julkarnain said he was also worried that village officials would be "incapacitated to run against drug pushers ... because we do not have firearms."

He, however, chose to trust government soldiers to protect local officials.

Like Julkarnain, Parang Mayor Madzfar Loong also surrendered 30 firearms that he and other town officials owned.

Stopping violence

"As mayor of Parang, I take this move as one big sacrifice to better our place," Loong said.

He believed that the surrender of firearms, especially those

in the hands of civilians, would reduce, if not stop, the violence in the province.

Talipao Mayor Nivukadnizar Tulawie and other town officials turned in 60 firearms.

"It was chance for us to voluntarily hand them over," Tulawie said, adding that if they did not, authorities would eventually run after them.

Brig. Gen. Cirilito Sobejana, commander of the Joint Task Force Sulu, said 187 firearms

were turned over by unlicensed gun holders in the province on Tuesday.

Lt. Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr., chief of the Western Mindanao Command, said the guns were surrendered by officials of Parang, Talipao, Indanan, Patikul, Jolo and Maimbung.

He said this was the offshoot of President Duterte's appeal to local officials to help gather unlicensed firearms and turn them over to authorities.

Galvez, citing military estimates, said Sulu had about 28,000 loose firearms.

Sobejana said the officials' cooperation was a major step in achieving peace in the province. "This is a milestone towards a gun-free Sulu," he said.

Peace, development

"They embrace their rifles as their wives, now they are changing their wives, they are embracing [a] new relationship towards peace and development and harmony to the people," Galvez added.

In Maguindanao province, residents of Datu Salibo town turned over 10 high-powered firearms to Mayor Norodin Salasal.

Maj. Gen. Arnel dela Vega, commander of the 6th Infantry Division and head of Task Force Central Mindanao, said the surrender followed last week's turnover of 15 high-powered firearms, through Datu Unsay Mayor Reshal Ampatuan.

"The increasing number of loose firearms [that had been surrendered] is the result of the intensified campaign of the [Armed Forces of the Philippines] amid the implementation of martial law in Mindanao," said Brig. Gen. Diosdado Carreon, chief of the Army's 601st Infantry Brigade.

ARMM Gov. Mujiv Hataman said the implementation of martial law added teeth to the campaign against loose firearms.

—WITH A REPORT FROM CHARLIE SEÑAL
SE INQ

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ROQUE: PRESIDENT WILL DIE FOR PH TERRITORY

By Leila B. Salaverria
@LeilasINQ

Malacañang on Wednesday appealed to critics to unite with the Duterte administration on its policy on the West Philippine Sea.

Presidential spokesperson Harry Roque said the critics were not the only ones who had the Philippines' best interest in mind.

Legal experts and academics have challenged the administration's plan to undertake a

joint exploration with China in the West Philippine Sea, which the President has likened to "co-ownership."

The areas being considered for exploration are in the West Philippine Sea, waters within the country's 370-kilometer exclusive economic zone (EEZ) in the South China Sea.

Appeal to critics

"We appeal to the critics, we have to be united on this issue. Please do not claim to have a monopoly of upholding the na-

tional interest. Philippine President Duterte has been consistent that he will die for Philippine territory, but meanwhile he will not sacrifice even a single life for an issue that can be resolved on the basis of friendly relations," Roque said in a press briefing in Puerto Princesa City, Palawan province.

According to him, Mr. Duterte maintains that the West Philippine Sea and the islands that the Philippines occupies and claims are parts of Palawan, save for Panatag (Scarborough)

Shoal, which is part of Zambales province.

"The President has said that he will not surrender any inch, even a single inch, of Philippine territory to any foreigner," Roque said.

Mr. Duterte's position, he said, is that the UN-backed Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague has ruled that China cannot lay claim to "any waters of" the West Philippine Sea on the basis of historic title or on the basis of the so-called nine-dash line—dashes on Chinese

maps demarcating China's claim to nearly all of the South China Sea—and that the areas where China has built artificial islands are part of the Philippines' EEZ.

'Land territory'

But Mr. Duterte also holds that the reality is that the Philippines is facing an unresolved controversy concerning "land territory," as the arbitral tribunal's ruling concerns only the law of the sea.

"So the issue of land territory

remains disputed, that is why we still have to refer to it as the 'disputed islands of the West Philippine Sea,'" Roque said, adding that the arbitral tribunal's ruling did not cover the islands.

The question of the islands would have to be resolved through negotiation and diplomacy, he said.

"That is why the President has for the time being, pursued friendly relations with China in contrast to the antagonistic position taken by his predecessors," he added. INQ

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CHINA'S JOINT VENTURE DEALS UNSUCCESSFUL

By **Nikko Dizon**
and **DJ Yap**
@Team_Inquirer

The joint development agreements (JDAs) China has with other countries have been "unsuccessful," a maritime expert said on Wednesday as lawmakers warned the government against allowing itself to be taken in through Beijing's "debt trap diplomacy."

"The success rate, measured in both actual production of petroleum and improvement of relations between the parties in relation to their dispute, leaves very much to be desired," lawyer Jay Batongbacal, director of the University of the Philippines (UP) Institute for Maritime Affairs and Law of the Sea, wrote in a post on Facebook.

Batongbacal said China had JDAs with Vietnam, North Korea, South Korea and Japan, with whom it also had longstanding maritime disputes.

China, he said, also had trilateral agreements with South Korea and Japan, and Vietnam and the Philippines.

Batongbacal discussed China's JDAs with other countries in the second of a series of Facebook posts that he began on Monday in an effort to make the public understand better what the Duterte administration, and the country, would be getting into with a joint development with China in the West Philippine Sea.

West Philippine Sea refers to waters within the Philippines' 370-kilometer exclusive economic zone (EEZ) in the South China Sea.

'Co-ownership'

Mr. Duterte has described the proposed joint exploration with China as like "co-ownership."

In his Facebook post, Batongbacal gave some examples of China's failed JDAs with other countries.

The China-Vietnam agreement for joint development in the Gulf of Tonkin has not been implemented, he said.

The JDA appears in a clause in a 2002 agreement delimiting the maritime boundaries of the

two countries in the gulf, which is located off the coast of northern Vietnam and southern China.

In 2008, South Korea and Japan entered into separate JDAs with China. Batongbacal said these were both described as "brief consensus documents" lacking the necessary technical and legal details.

"They were more like political statements rather than contract provisions. Cooperative

efforts did not go far beyond the initial announcements that the parties would establish the domestic procedures and arrangements for the JDA. Tensions [on] the Korean Peninsula and souring of relations between China and Japan after 2010 stalled further efforts," he said.

JMSU with the Philippines

Batongbacal recalled that the 2005 Joint Marine Seismic

Undertaking (JMSU) among China, Vietnam and the Philippines lapsed in 2008 "amid allegations of corruption."

To this day, the JMSU results have yet to be made public, he said.

"On the whole therefore China's track record for joint development with various partners [has] been consistently unsuccessful in either resulting in the discovery and development of reserves, or definitely improving their relations with their joint development partners," Batongbacal said.

He said this was because of "the ambiguity of the JDAs China has been willing to sign and the issues over implementation and intention arise and interfere because inconsistencies between text and conduct create mistrust and lead to non-pursuit of the commitments."

Chinese state-controlled media reported on Monday that \$7.34 billion in loans and grants given by Beijing to Manila would be repaid under an arrangement that included natural resources as collateral.

Malacañang denied the report on Tuesday, but Muntinlupa Rep. Ruffy Biazon on Wednesday called for a "categorical statement of rejection of the concept of natural resources as collateral" from the government.

Foreign loan collateral

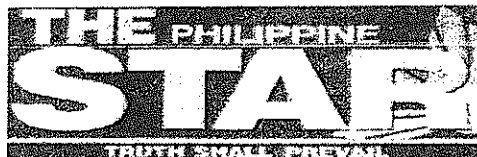
Using the country's natural resources should never be a condition or option when the government enters into foreign loan agreements, Biazon said.

He said the Philippines should not be easily swayed by China's "enticing proposals" but instead deftly steer clear from the template that the Chinese had used in their loans to other developing countries.

Bayan Muna Rep. Carlos Isagani Zarate, speaking at a news briefing, warned against China's "debt trap diplomacy."

"We may fall victim to China's debt trap, as we get loans and eventually, because there are collateral and conditions, the Filipino people will only suffer," Zarate said. INQ

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AFP hunting down new IS regional 'emir'

By CHRISTINA MENDEZ

Security forces are going after a certain Abu Dar, said to be one of the leaders of the Maute group behind the five-month siege of Marawi City last year.

National Security Adviser Hermogenes Esperon Jr. said Dar had managed to slip past the military cordon in Marawi, carrying with him a large amount of cash purportedly to finance terrorist activities in other areas in Mindanao.

The military has identified Dar as the new regional Islamic State (IS) leader. He is known to be a Maranao sub-leader of the Maute 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.

Esperon stressed many foreign terrorists were monitored during the Marawi siege.

He also revealed security forces are closely monitoring the activities of known terrorists and validating reports that 23 militant groups have joined forces as IS-Philippines.

He said the reports prompted the deployment of 50 percent of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) troops in Mindanao.

According to Esperon, the defense department is not likely to recommend the early withdrawal of martial law implementation in Mindanao.

"We requested for the extension of martial law for the rest of the year, so I think there's no point in ending martial law that we requested," he said.

Esperon assured the public anew that the martial law imposed by the President in Mindanao "is not the kind of martial law we know," referring to the military rule during the regime of the late strongman Ferdinand Marcos.

"Remember that local governments and executives are functioning and in their positions, the military has not taken over the civilian functions," he said.

Esperon said the government remains serious in going after the Islamic militants to thwart any attempt to establish a caliphate in the country.

AFP spokesman Brig. Gen.

Bienvenido Datuin had said the military and other government agencies are taking all reports of terrorist threats seriously.

A senior military official gave assurance that Metro Manila remains free of any verified threat from local and foreign militants.

He said troops are now deployed in key areas of the metropolis with specific missions to touch base with Muslim communities in their respective areas of assignment.

"On our end, we are continuously coordinating and planning to keep in touch with Muslim communities in Metro Manila, especially with their religious and business leaders," the security official said.

This coordination is aimed at countering and preventing extremism and violence within the ranks of Muslim communities, he said.

For now, the official added the security situation in entire Metro Manila remains stable, despite the possible presence of Islamic militants.

In a related development, the Department of Justice (DOJ) has junked the criminal charges against the arrested Egyptian tagged by authorities as IS "commander."

In a seven-page resolution, the DOJ dismissed the charges of illegal possession of explosive devices and firearms filed against Fehmi Lassqued and his Filipina partner Anabel Salipada.

The DOJ held the Philippine National Police (PNP) failed to prove its allegation that explosive devices, including four pipes, two batteries, three capacitors, two integrated circuits, three battery clips and 11 resistors as well as a .45-caliber pistol and ammunition, were seized from the couple during their arrest.

"Basic and well-established is the rule that the party alleging has the burden of substantiating his allegation and any declaration or assertion not so substantiated is, at best, a self-serving statement or declaration which is inadmissible in evidence for being hearsay," the DOJ said.

The DOJ instead bought the defense of respondents, saying the PNP submitted false information in its complaint. – With Jaime Laude, Edu Punay

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209 guns, 155 bombs seized from NPA rebels

By JAIME LAUDE

Government troopers have recovered a total of 209 guns and 155 improvised explosive devices (IEDs) from New People's Army (NPA) rebels in the past two months of sustained anti-insurgency operations, the military reported yesterday.

The bulk of the seized firearms and IEDs came from the Davao and Caraga regions, where the NPA continues to maintain its strong presence, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) public affairs office said.

The firearms were either voluntarily surrendered by rebel returnees or recovered from NPA camps.

The military campaign also resulted in the surrender of more than 2,500 NPA regular fighters and their supporters.

Among the latest to surrender were Noel Legaspi, alias Ka Efen, the deputy secretary and spokesman of the NPA's Far South Mindanao Region. Legaspi's wife also of the FSMR, surrendered last Jan. 15.

Legaspi and around 187 former rebels were flown to Manila last Monday for a military-guided tour at Luneta Park and Fort Santiago and a dinner with President Duterte at Malacañang on Tuesday.

"Surrenderees, mostly from the eastern part of Mindanao, brought along their firearms and submitted themselves to authorities," the AFP said.

The military is calling on the remaining NPA rebels to return to the fold of law and be productive members of the community.

While expressing its readiness to welcome more surrenderees, the AFP said military operations would continue to degrade the armed capability of the rebels.

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AFP seeks help of Muslims in Metro in arresting terrorist

BY VICTOR REYES

THE Armed Forces is coordinating with the Muslim community in Metro Manila for the arrest of members of the Maute Group who are said to have taken refuge with relatives in the metropolis.

"Our thrust is to touch base with the Muslim community to alienate the Maute members. We are exerting efforts to ensure the safety of Metro Manila," a senior military official said on condition of anonymity.

The source said initial coordination has been made with Muslim religious leaders and businessmen.

"The objective is to prevent violent extremism in NCR (National Capital Region)," the source said.

On Saturday, security forces arrested Maute sub-leader Abdul Nasser Lomondot in Manila. He took part in the five-month Marawi City siege but managed to slip out of the military cordon in the city.

The Marawi conflict, which

broke out May 23, resulted in the death of 974 terrorists, 168 soldiers and policemen and 47 civilians.

Officials earlier said Lomondot arrived in Metro Manila sometime last month, mainly to hide from security forces who are pursuing remnants of the terrorist group involved in the bloody siege of Marawi.

"There is a big possibility but we cannot give you the details," the source said when asked if there are other Maute members currently in Metro Manila. "We cannot dismiss that possibility... They, migrating to Metro Manila, is a big possibility," he added.

The source nevertheless said they have not received any information about an imminent attack in Metro Manila but said the military establishment is ready to respond to any terrorist activity.

"Metro Manila is stable but our troops are ready for any eventuality. What's important is ready to render immediate response," the source said.

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CPP's Joma wants a coalition government —Duterte

By Vito Barcelo
and Francisco Tuyay

PRESIDENT Rodrigo Duterte said he wanted to have peace talks with Communist Party of the Philippines founder Jose Maria Sison, but terminated the dialogue because Sison demanded a coalition government.

"The problem with Sison, which I would like to have peace talks, reach out to him, is Sison wants at the end of the day a coalition government," Duterte said.

"Sison and the government have had these talks in Netherlands and from the summaries that are given me after every meeting, I read it, then I digest it and look for the meaning beyond the words and the commas and the periods. There's something wrong," the President said.

"Pagka 'yan ho ang hinihingi niya, 'di ko talaga maibigay sa kanya because sovereignty or the power to run the country, which is the sovereign power of the State, is given to Filipinos who are elected by the people," Duterte said.

"You might elect a President who is a son of a b**** wala na ho tayong magawa diyay if it's the choice of the people. The military, the police and the civilians will have to honor the mandate because that is the voice of the people and that is provided in our Constitution," the President said in his speech during the 14th Founding Anniversary 2nd Kanlahi Festival in Tarlac.

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Pacquiao, 6 others promoted to colonel

THE Commission on Appointments yesterday confirmed the promotion of seven lawmaker-reservists to the next higher rank.

Promoted to the rank of full colonel were Sens. Loren Le-

garda and Manny Pacquiao, Speaker Pantaleon Alvarez, Deputy Speaker Gwendolyn Garcia, House Majority Leader Rodolfo Fariñas, Cavite Rep. Roy Loyola, and Maguindanao Rep. Bai San-

dra Sema.

The CA also confirmed the appointments of two other military officials – Major Gen. Rene Glen Paje and Col. Marlyn Agabas, who is also a reservist. – *JP Lopez*

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Military recovers 209 high-powered guns, 155 IEDs from rebels

By Zaida delos Reyes-Palanca

GOVERNMENT forces recovered a total of 209 high-powered firearms and 155 improvised explosive devices (IED) from the New Peoples' Army (NPA) in a span of two months.

Lt. Emmanuel Garcia, chief of the Public Affairs Office of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, said the firearms and IEDs were recovered from the months of January and February this year.

He said in the Eastern Mindanao Command (EASTMINCOM), a total of 165 firearms and 131 IEDs were confiscated from NPA terrorists and their supporters in the same reckoning dates.

On February 27, the 16th Infantry Battalion of the Philippine Army discovered an arms cache as revealed by a former rebel in Calinan District, Davao City.

The troops seized six firearms and other war materiel.

On February 21, three arms cache were discovered by the 60th Infantry Battalion of the Philippine Army in Compostela Valley, including six high-powered guns, five IEDs, and several war materiel.

Surrenderers, mostly from the eastern part of Mindanao, brought along with them their firearms.

Garcia said the AFP will continue to conduct operations to degrade the armed capability of the terrorists and further enhance Community Support Program to empower local government units in providing basic services to the people to encourage more NPA rebels to surrender.

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NAGPAPALAKAS NG PUWERSA SA SULU

Bagong grupong terorista, 'wag nang papormahin pa

MARAWI CITY – Hinimok ng mga local peace activist ang mga militar at pulisya, gayundin ang Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) at Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) na magsanib-puwersa upang pulbusin ang natitirang miyembro ng teroristang grupo na nagtangkang kumubkob sa Marawi City bago pamuting magpalakas ng puwersa ang mga ito at maglunsad ng kaparehong mga pag-atake sa iba pang lugar sa bansa.

"Why wait for them to regroup and stage another attack? Why not uproot them from where they are hiding, recruiting and training, without destroying a city or town? If dare all those who have information about (the enemies) – the AFP, PNP now including the MILF – to help or reveal their hideouts and... use all necessary forces/arsenal to neutralize them," sinabing kabatang aktibista na taga-Marawi si Orleza Abatol Limding Kasalikuyang pinuno ng Moro

Consensus Group (MCG), sinabi ni Limding na sa halip na propaganda ay dapat madong aksiyon ang makailangan ngayon laban sa mga teroristang grupo.

WAG NANG MACHINTAY NG MARAWI

"Let us not wait for another siege elsewhere in Mindanao... If claims about regrouping of Maute radicals or followers of Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) are just propaganda to sow fear and perpetuate martial law for hidden agenda, just stop. Please spare us!" mensaheniya sa pulisya at militar.

Una nang nagbabala si Octavio Dirampo, propesor sa Mindanao State University (MSU) at pinuno ng Save Sulu Movement, sa posibilidadang isa pang pagsalakay ng mga natitirang sa mauunlad na siyudad sa Mindanao, gaya ng Cagayan de Oro, Cotabato and General Santos.

Dating pinag ng Abu Sayyaf sinabini Dinamponan nagsanib-puwersa ang lahat

ng tagasunod ng napatay na lahat ng grupo na si Isnilon Hapilon – hinirang na emir ng ISIS sa Southeast Asia – at buong tinatayag na Abdullah Al Islamia, na puspusan umano ngayon ang recruitment at mga pagsasahay sa mga bayaning Jolo, Patikul, Indanan, Maimbung, Parang at Kallangari Catiang sa Sulu.

BACONGEMIR

Itimunag ang militar nitong Linggo namay humaliin na kay Hapilon bilang bagong emir ng ISIS sa Southeast Asia, si Abu Dar, isang full-blooded Maranao na kilalang sa mga pangalang Alim Owaiday at Humam Abdumajid.

Handler ng magkapadid na teroristang Omarat Abdullah Maute, si Abu Darang pinakamahasay na Arabic speaker sa lahat ng miyembro ng ISIS sa Pilipinas dahil sa matagal na pag-aaral sa Gimang Silangan. Isarin siyang ideologue at mahasay na sniper.

Ali G. Macabalang

March 2018

INQUIRER

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DND: FRIGATE ACQUISITION PROJECT 'ABOVEBOARD'

The Department of National Defense (DND) would like to clarify several points raised by Maj. Gen. Ramon Farolan, AFP (Ret.) in his recent Reveille column ("Letter to a friend, Vice Adm. RJ Mercado," 2/26/18).

During the hearing conducted by the Senate committee on national defense and security last Feb. 19, the issues surrounding the Frigate Acquisition Project (FAP) for the Philippine Navy (PN) were discussed on national television. The DND stated for the record its official stand on several matters, some of which we would like to reiterate in this letter.

First, on Mercado's relief as flag officer in command (FOIC) of the PN due to insubordination. This has been confirmed earlier by no less than Defense Secretary Delfin N. Lorenzana who stated that Mercado refused to carry out official orders from the DND regarding the FAP, resulting in undue delay of the project, and, ultimately, the secretary's loss of his trust and confidence. Available records in the possession of the DND and PN can attest to this. With all due respect to Farolan, Mercado's past track record as a military officer is irrelevant to the issue at hand.

Second, Mercado's perceived "unceremonious" relief from his position is not a rare occurrence in the military establishment. In the armed services, one may assume his post or be relieved from it without fanfare or pomp, if higher authorities decide that the situation calls for it. Parades and ceremonies are traditions which can be changed or dispensed with. They are accorded to military commanders in recognition of their exemplary service or who have meritoriously completed their tour of duty. Again, with all due respect to the author, the reason and circumstances that led to Mercado's relief as FOIC are anything but meritorious.

We also beg to disagree with Farolan that the issue is about a disagreement between Mercado and the DND on the choice of combat management system (CMS) for the frigates and that the one preferred by the PN is more "superior than the other." From the DND's standpoint as the procuring entity of the two frigates, the real issue is about complying with the government procurement law. Mercado's explicit preference for Thales Nederland's Tacticos CMS goes against Section 18 of Republic Act No. 9184 or the Government Procurement Reform Act, which does not

allow the procuring entity or end-user to expressly state a specific brand or product in the technical specifications of a project.

Unlike Mercado, the DND does not have a preferred CMS. The source of the component is irrelevant for as long as: 1) It is compliant with the Navy's technical requirements as stated in the Terms of Reference, which, we might add, were crafted by no less than the PN's very own technical working group headed by Mercado; and 2) That the manner by which the procurement was undertaken does not run afoul of Philippine law. Interestingly enough, both CMS were certified by the PN to be compliant with their technical requirements, as evidenced by the Post Qualification Summary and Evaluation Report which Mercado himself signed.

In essence, Mercado is forcing the DND to violate the law with his fixation on a particular product. Unfortunately, the law is the law, and for as long as the aforementioned provisions of RA 9184 are in effect, they must be followed.

In full confidence, we assure the public that the FAP is aboveboard and was bidded out in accordance with established rules and procedures, following RA 9184 and RA 10349 or the Revised AFP Modernization Act.

Every acquisition project in the AFP modernization program is part of a bigger effort to enable the DND to fulfill its mandate of "guarding against internal and external threats to national peace and security." Acquiring the frigates will enable our nation's defenders to guard and patrol our territorial waters and secure our nation.

In closing, we would like to point out that it is to the best interest of the Filipino people for the frigate project to continue. To rescind the contract agreement for causes other than what are authorized in RA 9184 is disadvantageous to the Filipino people. It runs counter to the DND's thrust of upgrading the capability and modernizing the Armed Forces of the Philippines and contradicts President Duterte's commitment to give our soldiers, airmen, sailors, and marines the best equipment in the soonest possible time.

ARSENIO R. ANDOLONG, MNSA, CESE,
chief, public affairs service/spokesperson,
Department of National Defense

ONLINE NEWS

07 MARCH 2018

www.retiredanalyst.blogspot.com

Joint Task Force steps up routine seaborne patrols in NegOr

From the Philippine News Agency (Mar 7): Joint Task Force steps up routine seaborne patrols in NegOr

The Joint Task Force (JTF) Leon Kilat of Negros Oriental is stepping up its maritime and coastal patrols via the Philippine Navy and the Philippine Coast Guard to seal off the province from possible terror attacks.

JTF Leon Kilat executive director Bimbo Miraflor disclosed that this is in line with their ongoing efforts to ensure that the province and its people are safe and secure amid the terror threats in nearby Mindanao.

Miraflor also allayed public concern regarding reports of alleged ISIS presence in nearby Mindanao, following a memorandum from a Philippine National Police (PNP) Regional Office in Mindanao regarding the validation of alleged "ISIS bombers and expert bomb makers" following the receipt of a text message.

According to Miraflor, upon verification, the said memo appeared authentic but the information that it contained was just subject for validation.

The memo has been circulating on social media, prompting the Task Force executive director to once more appeal to the public to not spread it around to prevent undue public panic.

Police are still verifying possible links to the ISIS following the arrests of suspected foreign terrorists that authorities say have been neutralized, Miraflor disclosed.

His sources in the military and the police have assured him that at present, there are no reports of terror threats in Negros Oriental.

Nevertheless, "a strong security presence must be maintained at all times with heightened proactive security deterrence along (the) Sulu Sea and among all points of entry from Mindanao to prevent unwarranted entry" of persons of interest and watercrafts, Miraflor further quoted his sources.

www.retiredanalyst.blogspot.com

Army soldier hurt in clash with NPA

From the Philippine News Agency (Mar 7): **Army soldier hurt in clash with NPA**

A soldier of the Army's 102nd Division Recon Company (DRC) was wounded in an encounter with more or less 50 members of the communist New People's Army (NPA) at the vicinity of Sitio Gurem, Barangay Sibulan, Sta Cruz, Davao del Sur on Monday.

But after the encounter, the troops were also able to recover an improvised explosive device (IED) with a detonating cord, one backpack and subversive documents with high intelligence value.

Capt. Jerry Lamosao, spokesperson for 10th Infantry Division, said the encounter transpired around 12:12 p.m between the 102nd DRC and the NPA.

Lamosao said the troops responded to information from a concerned citizen that a group of NPA members were consolidating at Sitio Gurem and were planning to conduct atrocities for their upcoming anniversary on March 29.

"With the on-going focus military operation, the troops were alerted for the combat operation," he said.

Lamosao said the troops sighted the presence of the armed NPA some 200 meters from the direction of the government forces. The firefight followed that lasted for almost 45 minutes.

Lamosao said the troops launched a pursuit operation

According to Lamosao, the 10ID will relentlessly pursue the remaining CPP-NPA members to protect the people and secure the communities.

www.retiredanalyst.blogspot.com

Duterte promises government assistance to rebel returnees

From the Philippine News Agency (Mar 7): **Duterte promises government assistance to rebel returnees**

President Rodrigo R. Duterte on Tuesday, March 6, hosted a dinner at Malacañan Palace for former members of the New People's Army (NPA).

Speaking before the rebel returnees, Duterte said the rebel group has been fighting the government for the past 50 years and has brought nothing except misery to the lives of the people.

The demand for a coalition government by the communists is not acceptable, the President said, noting that in order to assume power, one must win the elections.

The Chief Executive promised the former rebels financial assistance, education, training, and as well as integration to the Armed Forces.

He also pledged to bring female rebel returnees to Hong Kong for them to see the achievements of capitalist societies, contrary to the promises of the NPA.

As the government starts massive infrastructure development, the President explained that it means more skilled workers are needed.

He then advised them to acquire training and new skills to be able to join the workforce. For instance, Duterte said three companies in Davao City are in need of skilled workers for their operations.

He also underscored that education of their children would allow them to have better lives.

One hundred eighty-seven rebel returnees composed the third batch to visit Malacañan Palace.

<http://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1027685>

www.dwdd.com.ph

DEVELOPMENT AND MODERNIZATION | Team NavForWem visits Marine Troops in Tawi-tawi

Posted by [Alvin Santiago](#) on March 7, 2018 at 2:25 PM

NFWM, Zamboanga City (DWDD) – Fleet-Marine Team visited the troops of 2nd Marine Brigade stationed in Marine Barracks Domingo Deluana, Tawi-Tawi last Feb 28 – Mar 1, 2018.



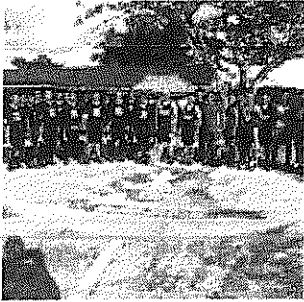
The Commander, Naval Forces Western Mindanao Rear Adm. Rene V Medina AFP together with the Deputy Commander for Marine Operations, Col. Hernanie S Songano PN (M)(GSC) and other NFWM Officials were received by the Commander of 2nd Marine Brigade (2MBde), Brig. Gen. Custodio J Parcon Jr AFP who is also the Commander of Joint Task Force Tawi-tawi and Join Task Force INDOMALPHI.

Part of the visit is the ceremonial blessing of Two Marine Transport Vehicles (Nissan Urvan Vans) and the newly constructed Marine Barracks. *"Times have changed, dati nung Ensigns pa kami hindi gaano ka-crowded at developed ang Tawi-tawi pero ngayun pahirapan na ang flights. Pero this is a good sign dahil it's a sign of progress,"* as said by Rear Adm. Medina citing the developments in the province over the decades.



The activity was also attended by Bongao Mayor, Hon. Jimuel S Que and it was followed by an inaugural FunShoot of the Firing Range in the area with 7 firing bays and 6 stages. These activities are part of the modernization and development of the AFP. The Team NavForWeM also visited the Officers and Personnel assigned at Naval Station Juan Magluyan in Tawi-tawi and later conducted Camp Inspection and Facilities assessment.

Later in the afternoon, a friendly basketball game was held at H2MBde in which Team NavForWem was pitted against the Marine Warriors of H2MBde, MBLT6, and MBLT9.



On March 1, a Wreath Laying Ceremony was held at Marine Memorial in Brgy. Simandaguit, Bongao, Tawi-Tawi in honour of the gallant Marine troops who sacrificed their lives for the peace and security of the Province of Tawi-tawi.

The Fleet-Marine Team aboard the Western Mindanao region and the AFP as a whole, assured the people of Tawi-Tawi that it will continue its fight to finally end the security threats and terrorism in the country for a peaceful and developed Mindanao. **2MBde / MCAG**

www.inquirer.net

Hostage killed as soldiers clash with kidnappers in Zambo del Norte

By: Julie Alipala- @inquirerdotnet

Inquirer Mindanao / 10:01 PM March 07, 2018

ZAMBOANGA CITY — A kidnap victim was killed when soldiers under the 42nd Infantry Battalion clashed with the armed group holding him and four other hostages in Zamboanga del Norte on Wednesday.

Senior Supt. Raul Tacaca, chief of the Zamboanga del Norte Police Provincial Office, said 37-year old Mario Rosales, also known as Mario Ungok, died in the clash that took place in Barangay Panabutan in Sirawai town.

Rosales's body was recovered in the aftermath of the clash and was positively identified by his employer, according to Tacaca.

The fate of the four other victims — Jojo Mantangan, 33; Roger Jongan, 37; Reymon Furesima, 14; and Jemar Maglangit, 29 — remained unclear.

The five hostages, all residents of Barangay San Vicente, also in Sirawai, were initially reported as missing when they failed to come home on March 3 from conducting chainsaw logging in the hinterlands of Panabutan.

On Monday, it was confirmed they were being held by a group headed by Jamilon Wahab and Bating Lumaguís when the armed men phoned an associate of the victims and demanded P10 million.

The demand was eventually reduced to P15,000 for each of the five kidnap victims.

www.inquirer.net

2 MILF members, 2 others arrested in drug buy-bust in Manila

By: Julius N. Leonen- @inquireidotnet

INQUIRER.net / 06:57 PM March 07, 2018

Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) operatives have arrested four suspected drug personalities, two of whom were self-confessed Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) members, in a Manila buy-bust operation that yielded P2.5 million worth of shabu.

In a press conference on Wednesday, PDEA Director General Aaron Aquino identified the self-confessed MILF members as Omex Omar Tuwan and Bong Masual Mondato, and two other suspects as Aladin Kulapo Ali and Kaharudin Kulapo Ali.

Aquino said the suspects were arrested after agents from the PDEA Special Enforcement Service (SES) and PDEA Regional Office VI conducted a buy-bust operation on March 6 in Ermita, Manila.

ADVERTISEMENT

During the raid, PDEA agents seized ten large heat-sealed transparent plastic sachets containing white crystalline substance suspected to be shabu with an estimated value of P2.5 million.

Also confiscated were two mobile phones, several financial documents and the marked money.

“Our assessment is that shabu came from Mindanao, either in Cotabato, Maguindanao, or somewhere in Lanao, and dinadala nila dito sa Manila. Nagkakaroon na kasi ng kakulangan ng shabu dito sa Metro Manila,” Aquino told reporters.

“That’s the reason why the supply of drugs is now coming from Mindanao, and itong dalawang MILF na ito are the ones delivering these illegal drugs to Manila. From there, Kaharudin Kulapo Ali is the one who receives these illegal drugs for distribution,” the PDEA chief said.

Moreover, Aquino disclosed that a politician from Mindanao, whom he did not name, was supporting the transportation of drugs carried out by the self-confessed MILF members.

“These alleged MILF members are working for a politician in Mindanao, at ang politician na iyon ay ang nagsu-support dito. I’m sorry I cannot divulge the name of the politician,” Aquino said. /je