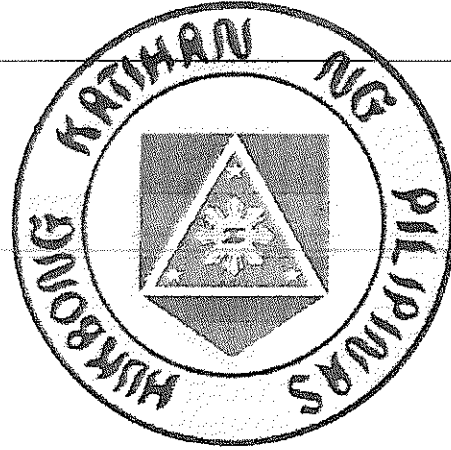


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NEWS CLIPPINGS

04 May 2018

Friday



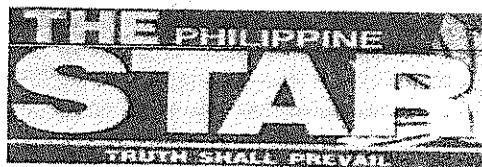
Honor. Patriotism. Duty

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**MONDAY - FRIDAY
11AM & 5PM**

PILIPINAS HD

8:00 AM - 9:00 AM
9:00 AM - 10:00 AM
10:00 AM - 11:00 AM

THE PHILIPPINE STAR WEATHER FORECAST MAY 04 2018 | FRIDAY

INTERTROPICAL CONVERGENCE ZONE AFFECTING VISAYAS AT MINDANAO as of 4:00 am - May 3, 2018

LAOAG CITY 25 - 33 °C	TUGUEGARAO CITY 24 - 37 °C
BAGUIO CITY 16 - 26 °C	
SBMA/CLARK 26 - 36 °C	METRO MANILA 24 - 35 °C
TAGAYTAY CITY 24 - 32 °C	LEGAZPI CITY 26 - 32 °C
RODRO/RAKOLOD CITY 25 - 32 °C	TACLOBAN CITY 24 - 31 °C
PUERTO PRINCESA 25 - 31 °C	METRO CEBU 26 - 32 °C
	CAGAYAN DE ORO 25 - 32 °C
ZAMBOANGA CITY 24 - 33 °C	METRO DAVAO 25 - 33 °C

EXTENDED WEATHER FORECAST	MAY 5 SAT	MAY 6 SUN	MAY 7 MON	EXTENDED WEATHER FORECAST	MAY 5 SAT	MAY 6 SUN	MAY 7 MON
METRO MANILA	25 °C 35 °C	25 °C 36 °C	24 °C 35 °C	PUERTO PRINCESA	25 °C 32 °C	26 °C 33 °C	26 °C 34 °C
TUGUEGARAO	25 °C 37 °C	25 °C 38 °C	25 °C 37 °C	ILDILU/ RAKOLOD	26 °C 33 °C	26 °C 33 °C	26 °C 33 °C
LAOAG	26 °C 34 °C	26 °C 34 °C	25 °C 33 °C	METRO CEBU	25 °C 32 °C	26 °C 33 °C	26 °C 32 °C
BAGUIO	17 °C 26 °C	16 °C 26 °C	16 °C 26 °C	TACLOBAN	25 °C 32 °C	24 °C 32 °C	25 °C 33 °C
SBMA/ CLARK	26 °C 36 °C	26 °C 37 °C	26 °C 36 °C	CAGAYAN DE ORO	25 °C 33 °C	24 °C 33 °C	25 °C 32 °C
TAGAYTAY	24 °C 32 °C	23 °C 32 °C	24 °C 33 °C	METRO DAVAO	25 °C 33 °C	25 °C 32 °C	25 °C 33 °C
LEGAZPI	25 °C 35 °C	26 °C 33 °C	25 °C 33 °C	ZAMBOANGA	25 °C 33 °C	25 °C 33 °C	26 °C 33 °C

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

Cloudy skies with rainshowers and/or thunderstorms



04 May 2018



Page: A1

China deploys missiles on 3 PH-claimed reefs

By Frances Mangosing and Melvin Gascon
@Team_Inquirer

The United States on Thursday reiterated the importance of keeping a presence in the region amid China's increasing militarization of the South China Sea, where Chinese forces recently installed antiship cruise missiles and surface-to-air missile systems (SAMS) on three Philippine-claimed reefs in the hotly contested waterway.

"We are concerned anytime a claimant, including China, takes an aggressive unilateral action toward militarization. It seems to suggest that they (China) are moving toward militarization," US Ambassador to the Philippines Sung Kim told reporters.

Kim spoke a day after the US network CNBC, citing sources with direct knowledge of US intelligence reports, said China had deployed antiship missiles and SAMS on Kagitingan, Zamora and Panganiban, three of seven Philippine-claimed reefs that China had seized and transformed into artificial islands.

The three reefs are internationally known as Fiery Cross, Subi and Mischief reefs, respectively, and they are among the marine features in the Spratly archipelago that are disputed by China and the Philippines and three other Southeast Asian nations—Brunei, Malaysia and Vietnam.

Taiwan, like China, claims all of the Spratlys, an archipelago of about 100 islets, reefs and atolls in the middle of the South China Sea.

The installation of the missiles, if confirmed, would mark the first Chinese missile deployments in the Spratlys.

At a regular press briefing on Thursday, Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying neither confirmed nor denied the deployment.

"China's peaceful construction in the Spratly archipelago, including the deployment of

necessary national defense facilities, is aimed at protecting China's sovereignty and security," Hua said.

"Those who don't intend to violate [this sovereignty] have no reason to worry," she said.

Malacañang said it had no information about the missile deployment.

"Let me verify that," said presidential spokesperson Harry Roque.

Past 30 days

CNBC quoted unidentified sources as saying that according

to US intelligence assessments, the missiles were moved to Kagitingan, Zamora and Panganiban reefs within the past 30 days.

The US defense department, which opposes China's installation of military facilities on reefs in the South China Sea, declined comment.

Surveillance photographs published by the Inquirer on Feb. 5 showed that China had almost completed transforming seven Philippine-claimed reefs in the Spratlys into military outposts.

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"I saw the report and [China's action] seems to suggest that [it is] moving toward militarization," Kim said.

Quoting sources from the Pentagon, the Wall Street Journal reported last month that jamming equipment were deployed in the past 90 days on Kagitingan and Pangahiban, a move seen as enforcing China's claim to almost all of the South China Sea and a step further in its militarization of the region.

The Inquirer reported on April 18 that China landed two military transport planes on Pangahiban in January.

US presence important

"Precisely because we are concerned [over some of] the developments [in the] South China Sea, it's very important for us to be present [there]," Kim said.

The United States, he said, continues to send its warships to the region "to display the nature of [its] relationship [with the Philippines] and [their] shared maritime concerns."

Kim cited the recent visits to the region of the US aircraft carriers Carl Vinson and Theodore Roosevelt and the assault ship Bonhomme Richard as part of the US way of reassuring its Southeast Asian allies.

He said the warships' visits demonstrated the US commitment to its alliance with the Philippines and its other allies in the region to protect the freedoms of navigation, overflight and commerce in the South China Sea.

"This is not only important for us but to everybody. So we will do whatever we can to protect these rights," Kim said.

The United States takes no

sides in the territorial disputes in the South China Sea, but has expressed interest in the peaceful settlement of the rival claims.

"We have consistently called on all claimants, including China, to refrain from unilateral aggressive actions that are inconsistent with the international law and norms, and we will continue to do so," Kim said.

Within missile range

Greg Poling, a South China Sea expert at the think tank Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, said deploying missiles on the Spratly reefs would be important.

He said such deployments were expected as China built missile shelters on the reefs last year and already deployed such missile systems on Vietnam-claimed Woody Island in the Paracel archipelago farther to the north.

Poling said the missile deployment would be a major step on China's road to dominating the South China Sea, a key global trade route.

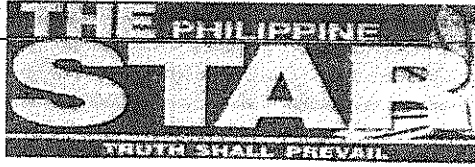
"Before this, if you were one of the other claimants . . . you knew that China was monitoring your every move. Now you will know that you're operating inside Chinese missile range. That's a pretty strong, if implicit, threat," he said.

CNBC said the YJ-12B anti-ship cruise missiles would allow China to strike vessels within 550 kilometers.

It said the HQ-9B long-range SAM could target aircraft, drones and cruise missiles within 300 kilometers. —WITH REPORTS FROM JULIE M. AURELIO, REUTERS AND AFP/INO



04 May 2018



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NPA leader killed, 4 others nabbed

LAGUNA – A New People's Army (NPA) leader was killed in an encounter with police officers in Pangil, Laguna on Wednesday.

Ismael Criste, 60, alias Maeng, leader of the Rebolusyonang Buwis Para sa Kaaway na Uri, an alleged liquidation squad of the NPA, died at the scene.

Luis Alano Jr., 44; Shirley Martinez, 47; Felicidad Villages, 60, and Cristy Lacuarta, 30, were arrested.

The rebels fired at police officers manning a checkpoint in Baran-

gay Damb'o, according to Chief Superintendent Guillermo Eleazar, Calabarzon (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal, Quezon) police director.

Eleazar said two caliber .45 pistols, a Garand, two hand grenades, a 9mm sub-machine gun, a caliber .38 revolver and various types of ammunition were recovered from the suspects.

He said the rebels, who were reportedly targeting police officers in Alaminos and Sta. Cruz towns, were under surveillance for two days. – Ed Amoroso, Emmanuel Tupas

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May 2018

The Manila Times

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NPA leader killed, 4 nabbed in Laguna clash

BY ROSELLE R. AQUINO

CAMP VICENTE LIM, Laguna: A ranking officer of the communist New People's Army (NPA) was killed while four of its members were arrested after a firefight at a police checkpoint in Barangay Dambo, Pangil, Laguna, on Wednesday.

Chief Supt Guillermo Eleazar Calabarzon regional director, identified the slain rebel as Ismael Criste, alias Ka Maeng, from Mulanay, Quezon, and leader of the NPA's Rebolusyunaryong Buwis

Para sa Kaaway na Uri.

Arrested were Shirley Martinez from San Antonio, Quezon; Luis Alano from Mulanay; Felicidad Villegas from Pakil, Laguna; and Cristy Lacuarta from Oriental

Mindoro.

They are reportedly members of the Cesar Batrallo Command based in the 4th District of Laguna.

Eleazar said they had received an intelligence report that the suspects were out on a mission to liquidate two police officers in the towns of Santa Cruz and Alaminos in Laguna.

A checkpoint was set up and the operatives chanced upon the suspects' vehicle, a Daihatsu Charade (TSX-372), which did not stop when flagged down by authorities.

Police said Criste engaged the lawmen in a gunfight while his companions eventually surrendered.

Recovered from the suspects were four caliber .45 pistols, an Ingram machine pistol, a Garand M-1 rifle, two sub-machineguns, personal belongings and subversive documents.

The captured rebels were turned over to the custody of the Regional Force Mobile of Calabarzon (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon) region.

**WITH REPORT FROM
DEMPSEY REYES**

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4 May 2018

Manila Standard

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NPA hit man slain, 4 others are captured

By Francisco Tuyay

A MEMBER of the New People's Army hit squad was killed while four others, including three amazons, were captured during a clash with government troops in Laguna Wednesday afternoon, police said Thursday.

C/Supt. Guillermo Eleazar, director of the Calabarzon police office, said the clash was between operatives of the Laguna Mobile Force Company and Regional Intelligence Unit and an NPA rebel band on board a van.

He identified the slain rebels as Ismael Criste, alias Ka Maeng, a member of the Rebolusyonaryong Buwis sa Kaaway na Uri of the NPA's Cesar Batrallo Command operating in Laguna province and nearby towns in Southern Tagalog.

The captured rebels were Luis Etolarde Alano, 44 of Tanauan, Batangas; Shirley de Guzman Martinez, alias Shee, 47 of San Antonio, Quezon; Felicidad de Mesa Villegas, alias Ka Felly, 60 of Barangay Banilan, Pakil, Laguna; and Cristy Ramos Lacuarta alias Tintin of Dao Nasunagan, Capiz City.

Eleazar said the clash occurred at about 4:30 p.m. along a checkpoint setup by the troops in Barangay Dambo, Pangil town, only 12 days before the barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan elections.

Records showed that Alano and De Guzman were reportedly members of the Cesar Batrallo Command while De Mesa and Ramos belonged to the Special Partisan Unit of the NPA.

The military's Southern Luzon Command based in Camp Nakar, Lucena City identified Cristy Ramos as the alleged leader of the NPA rebel band the military had encountered.

Military authorities said the rebel band was tasked to conduct atrocities against government troops in Sta. Cruz and Alaminos, both in Laguna.

Recovered from the slain and captured rebels were four caliber 45 pistols; and Intra Tec 9mm sub-machinegun; a garand rifle; a .38 cal. revolver and two hand grenades.

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4 May 2018

MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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Military appeals to family of kidnapped cops not to pay ransom

By FRANCIS T. WAKEFIELD

The commander of the Armed Forces of the Philippines-Joint Task Force (AFP-JTF) Sulu on Thursday appealed to the families of the two female cops and their two male companions who were kidnapped in Sulu on Monday not to pay their captors any ransom.

In an interview, Brig. Gen. Cirilito Sobejana said paying ransom to the kidnapers will only further entice them to conduct kidnappings as this will become a lucrative venture for them.

Sobejana said as far as the military is concerned, it will stick to the "No Ransom Policy" position.

"We are discouraging them and ask them to trust us in our effort to rescue their loved ones safely," Sobejana said.

"Kami naman maratili kami sa aming posisyon na no ransom policy kasi nga the more we give ransom the more na magkaroon ng kidnapping kasi nagiging lucrative venture ang kidnapping dito kung may magbahayad kaagad (On our part we will be sticking to the no ransom policy because the more we give ransom the more there will be kidnappings as this becomes a lucrative venture for them)," he added.

Sobejana earlier said that the four victims were abducted by armed men in Patikul, Sulu

on Sunday.

He identified the victims as Jakosalem Ahamad Blas of Brgy. Gandasuli, Patikul, Sulu; Faizal Ahidji and the two policewomen identified as PO2 Benierose Alvarez and PO1 Dinah Gumahad, both assigned at the Police Regional Office-9 (PRO-9) (Zamboanga City) Crime Laboratory.

Sobejana said the abduction took place at the vicinity of Brgy. Liang, Patikul, Sulu at about 12:40 p.m. Sunday.

It was learned that the victims were on board a red tricycle with body number 1899 and markings "Igasan Family" when they were flagged down by more or less 11 armed men led by one Mujir Yada.

Sobejana said the four were then forcibly taken towards the south direction.

Since the kidnapping took place, there were unverified reports circulating that the kidnapers were reportedly demanding ₱5 million for the release of the lady cops and ₱150,000 each for the release of the two men.

Sobejana said although they do understand the families that they want their loved ones to return to them safely, the AFP is doing its best to safely rescue them.

"Just the other day there was an encounter, so we are doing our best (to rescue them) that's the assurance that I can give to them," Sobejana said.

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4 May 2018

Mamla Standard

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Military nixes ransom payment

MILITARY authorities have urged the families of the four kidnap victims—two police woman and two civilians snatched by Abu Sayyaf-affiliated terrorist group—not to succumb to the ransom demand by the kidnapers.

“We are discouraging them [to pay], and to trust us in our efforts to rescue them [victims] safely,” Brig. Gen. Cirilito Sobejana, commander of the military’s Joint Task Force Sulu, currently pursuing the terrorist kidnapers, said Thursday.

He said paying the ransom demand would only encourage them to continue in their kidnapping activities.

The terrorist kidnap group had been reportedly asking P5 million and P300,000 for the release of the two policewoman and two of their companions, but PNP chief Oscar Albayalde refused to give in saying “that’s a terror activity, so we do not give in to these kinds of demands to them we consider terrorist.”

Police woman P02 Bennierose Alvarez and P01 Dinah Humahad, along with Jakosalem Ahamad Blas and Faizal Abidji were on their way back to Jolo town after strolling on the Quezon beach when flagged down and forcibly taken by the ASG last week.

Sobejana, for his part, said they could not compel the families of the kidnap victims to pay ransom just to ensure the safety of their loved ones.

“Of course, we understand the sentiments of the families who want to make sure that their loved ones will go home safe and alive but on our part, we are doing our best,” said Sobejana.

“We cannot compel them [victims’ families] not to give in...but for us, we will stop ransom payment...we need to do all we can,” he added.

Two days after the kidnapping incident, ground troops on a search and rescue mission encountered a terrorist group believed to have had a hand in the kidnapping.

As troops pursue the ASG bandits, a constant coordination with local officials and religious leaders in the area was progressing to convince the suspects to just free the victims.

Sobejana tagged the group of Mujir Rada as responsible for the kidnapping of the four victims. **Francisco Tuyay**

gmail.com – Tel no. (02) 845-9555 Local: 5285, 5295

4 May 2018



Page: 2

NPA rebel slain, 4 captured in Laguna encounter

By Mario J. Mallari

Government troops clashed with members of the New People's Army (NPA) liquidation squad in Laguna on Wednesday afternoon – killing one rebel while four others were captured, police said yesterday.

Chief Supt. Guillermo Eleazar, director of Police Regional Office-4A (Calabarzon), said that the shootout happened between elements of the Laguna Mobile Force Company and Regional Intelligence Unit in Calabarzon and an NPA band aboard a van.

According to Eleazar, the firefight erupted at about 4:30 p.m. along a checkpoint established by the troops along Barangay Dambo, Pangil town in Laguna in connection to the upcoming barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan elections.

Eleazar identified the alleged slain rebel as Ismael Criste alias Ka Maeng, member of the Rebolusyonaryong Buwis sa Kaaway na Uri (RBKU) of the NPA's Cesar Batrallo Command that

reportedly operates in Laguna and other parts of Southern Tagalog.

Captured were identified as Luis Etolarde Alano Jr., 44, resident of Tanauan, Batangas; Shirley de Guzman Martinez alias Shee, 47, resident of San Antonio, Quezon; Felicidad de Mesa Villegas alias Ka Fely, 60, of Barangay Banilan, Pakil, Laguna; and Cristy Ramos Lacuarta alias Tintin, resident of Dao Nasunugan, Capiz City.

Alano and de Guzman were reportedly members of the Cesar Batrallo Command while de Mesa and Ramos are members of the Special Partisan Unit of the NPA.

Recovered from the five rebels were four .45 caliber pistols; an Intra Tec .9mm sub machinegun; a Garand rifle; a .38 caliber revolver and two hand grenades.

The military's Southern Luzon Command tagged Criste as the leader of the encountered NPA band.

Solcom said that the NPA band was tasked to carry out atrocities against government troops in Sta. Cruz and Alaminos both in Laguna.

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4 May 2018



Page: 1

No-ransom policy stays on ASG victims – gov't

The government is maintaining a no-ransom policy after the Abu Sayyaf group (ASG) demanded a P5-million ransom for the release of four kidnap victims including two policewomen, a military official said.

Brig. Gen. Cirilito Sobejana,

commander of the military's Joint Task Force-Sulu, said that giving in to the ransom demand of the Abu Sayyaf will only embolden the terrorists to continue kidnapping.

Sobejana, however, admitted that authorities could not compel the families of PO2 Bennierose

Alvarez and PO1 Dinah Gumahad, Jacosalem Ahamad Blas and Faizal Ahidji from paying just to ensure the safe release of their loved ones.

"Our position is no ransom policy because the more we give ransom, the more that there will be kidnapping because it's

becoming a lucrative venture for them," said Sobejana.

Currently, 14 kidnap victims are still being held by the terrorist Abu Sayyaf group in Sulu.

The latest kidnapping happened despite claims by the military that

Turn to page 3

it is gaining ground in fighting the terrorists.

"We are discouraging them (to pay), and to trust us in our effort to rescue them (victims) safely," said Sobejana.

Apart from ongoing rescue operation being conducted by both the police and JTF-Sulu, Sobejana said that they are also in constant coordination with local government officials and religious leaders in the area to convince the kidnap men to just free the victims.

"Of course, we understand the sentiments of the families who want to make sure that their loved ones will go home safe and alive but on our part, we are doing our best," said Sobejana.

"We cannot compel them (victims' families) not to give in...but for use, we will stop ransom payment...we need to do all we can," he added.

Last Wednesday, Philippine National Police (PNP) chief Director General Oscar Albayalde said that the kidnap men demanded P5 million for the release of the two policewomen.

Information also circulated in Sulu that P300,000 was being asked from the families of Blas and Ahidji.

Albayalde, however, vowed that the PNP will not negotiate with the terrorists.

Sobejana tagged the group of Mujir Rada as responsible to the kidnapping of the four victims, who just came from Quezon Beach in Patikul and were on their way back to Jolo when

abducted.

Sobejana expressed fears that if ransom is paid, the ASG will only use it to buy firearms and continue with their illegal activities.

Negotiations ongoing

Earlier, Police Chief Supt. Billy Beltran, Police Regional Office-9 (PRO-9) director, said the ASG has demanded ransom payment in exchange for the release of the two policewomen and their two companions, adding that "negotiations" are ongoing.

Beltran said the case is now being handled by the Philippine National Police-Anti-Kidnapping Group, together with the victims' families.

Reports said that four were seized by ASG bandits led by Mujir Yada on Sunday, April 29, in Barangay Liang, Patikul.

Beltran said operations by the Joint Task Force Sulu to rescue the captives are also ongoing, and that the safety of hostages is of paramount concern.

Chief Insp. Helen Galvez, PRO-9 information officer, said in a statement the two policewomen were on vacation in Sulu.

She said they came from Quezon Beach, one of the famous picnic grounds in Sulu, when the ASG seized them.

Alvarez is assigned with the Engineer Service Division under the Regional Logistics Office of PRO-9. She is from Isabela City, Basilan.

Gumahad is undergoing a 45-day Criminal Investigation Course at Regional Special Training Unit-9. She is assigned in the town of Midsalip, Zamboanga del Sur.

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4 May 2018

Malaya
The National Newspaper

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NPA now operates in Zambo provinces

BY VICTOR REYES

NEW People's Army rebels have been seen in the Zamboanga provinces, prompting the military to form a battalion to address the apparent expansion of the area of operations of the communist rebels.

"We've been receiving reports of rebel activities (in the Zamboanga Peninsula). This could be part of their expansion efforts. That is

one of the considerations (in the deployment)," said Maj. Ronald Suscano, spokesman of the Army's 1st Infantry Division based in Zamboanga del Sur.

Suscano said the military started receiving reports of NPA presence in the Zamboanga Peninsula in November or December last year.

The NPA operates mainly in the Davao and Caraga regions. The Davao region covers Compostela Valley, Davao del Norte, Davao del

Sur, Davao Occidental, and Davao Oriental. Caraga covers Agusan del Norte, Agusan del Sur, Dinagat Islands, Surigao del Norte, and Surigao del Sur.

Suscano said the newly-formed 97th Infantry Battalion, composed of 400 soldiers and headed by Lt. Col. Rufino de Leon, will be deployed to Zamboanga del Norte, Zamboanga del Sur, and Zambo-

See NPA > Page B6

NPA

anga Sibugay after it completes a 45-day training which started yesterday.

Maj. Gen. Roseller Murillo, the 1st ID commander, said the training "is designed to enhance the competence and individual skills of every soldier and also develop their teamwork as a unit." It is also expected to boost the soldiers' confidence.

The NPA is the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines. In November last year, President Duterte terminated peace negotiations with the CPP-NPA-National Democratic Front of the Philippines because of continued attacks by the NPA.

Last month, Duterte directed government negotiators to work for the resumption of the talks but military operations against the NPA continue.

In Laguna, meanwhile, a member of the NPA's hit squad, the Sparu, was killed by policemen in a shootout at a checkpoint in Barangay Dambo in Pangil town.

Four other Sparu members were arrested.

Chief Supt. Guillermo Eleazar, Southern Tagalog regional police chief, identified the slain rebel as Ismael Criste aka Maeng, who is also a member of the NPA's Rebolusyonaryong Buwis sa Kaaway na Uri (RBKU) under the Cesar Batrallo Command.

Police said the RBKU is the

NPA unit tasked to collect revolutionary taxes.

Eleazar said policemen placed Criste under surveillance after they received reports that a group of communist rebels were out to assassinate policemen from the towns of Sta. Cruz and Alaminos.

Eleazar ordered his men to intensify checkpoint operations.

Criste's group was aboard a red vehicle which ignored a checkpoint.

Arrested were Luis Alano Jr., 44; Shirley Martinez, 47; Felicidad Villegas, 60; and Cristy Lacuarta, 30.

Recovered from the rebels were assorted firearms and several ammunition, two hand grenades, personal stuff, and cash. – *With Raymond Africa*



4 May 2018

Malaya
The National Newspaper

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Military to cops' kin: Don't pay ransom

BY VICTOR REYES

A MILITARY commander yesterday appealed to the families of two policewomen and their two companions not to pay ransom to the Abu Sayyaf so as not to encourage other lawless groups to engage in kidnapping.

Brig. Gen. Cirilito Sobejana, head of the military's Joint Task Force Sulu, made the appeal a day

after PNP chief Oscar Albayalde said the kidnapers are demanding P5 million for the release of the two-law enforcers.

"It (paying ransom) will allow them to continue with their operations because they can buy new weapons, they can buy supplies because currently, they are running short of logistics," he added.

The military has said the kidnapers are members of the Abu

Sayyaf but Albayalde said PO2 Benierose Alvarez, PO1 Dinah Gumahad,

Jakosalem Ahamad Blas, and Faizal Ahidji were kidnapped in Patikul town by a group composed of relatives of slain Abu Sayyaf men.

Unconfirmed reports said the Abu Sayyaf is also asking P300,000 for the release of Blas, a tricycle

See MILITARY > Page B6

MILITARY

driver, and Ahidji, who served as guide.

The policewomen are detailed with the crime laboratory of the Zamboanga Peninsula Regional Police Office in Zamboanga City. They came from a beach in Talipao town and were on the way to Jolo town when they were abducted. The military has said the kidnapers were led by Abu

Sayyaf leader Mujir Yada.

Sobejana said the military establishment will strictly observe the government's no-ransom policy. "We are going to prevent any ransom payment," he said.

Sobejana assured the families of the kidnap victims that the military establishment is exerting all efforts to rescue the four safely.

"In fact, the other day, we encountered (kidnappers). We are giving them our assurance

that we are doing our best," Sobejana said.

Troops from the elite 5th Scout Ranger Battalion clashed with part of the kidnap group in Talipao town on Tuesday, killing one of the kidnapers.

Sobejana said the military is coordinating with local government officials and religious leaders in the province to negotiate and "to convince the abductors to release the victims."

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PNP, AFP commanders pledge to be non-partisan in May 14 polls

By MIKE D. CRISMUNDO

CAMP COLONEL RAFAEL C. RODRIGUEZ, Butuan City – Top police and military commanders in Northeastern Mindanao on Wednesday assured that their forces will be non-partisan in the forthcoming Barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan elections (BSKE).

The high-ranking commanders of the Philippine National Police (PNP) and Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) also

committed that their respective field unit commanders will abide by the laws, rules and regulations in relation to the holding of May 14 BSKE.

The commitment was made during the 2nd Regional Joint Security Control Center (RJSCC) meeting held at the regional conference room of the Northeastern Mindanao Police Regional Office 13 (PRO 13) here on Wednesday by the commanding general of the Army's Northeastern and Northern Mindanao 4th Infantry (Diamond) Division (4th ID) Maj. Gen. Ronald C. Villanueva,

PRO 13 Regional Director Chief Supt. Noli A. Romana, Regional Director Atty. Francisco Pobe of the Commission on Elections (Comelec), other officials from the deputized government agencies, and other stakeholders.

Maj. Gen. Villanueva and Chief Supt. Romana stressed that their respective personnel in the field are all strictly directed to be "non-partisan" and anyone who violated this order will be administratively charged.

"The PRO 13 force will remain non-

partisan and will give its best to make this elec-

tion peaceful," said Chief Supt. Romana.

"We will fully enforce the law. Violators will be held answerable for the crime or violation they will commit," the region's police chief added.

During the RJSCC conference, all the participants focused on security preparations and deployment plan details to ensure that the upcoming elections will be peaceful and orderly.



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Balikatan troops to train vs chemical attacks

PHILIPPINE and American troops will level up their training during this year's Balikatan exercises by focusing on man-made "disasters" such as chemical attacks, an official said.

Lt. Liezl Vidallon, Balikatan (shoulder-to-shoulder) 2018 public affairs director, said troops will also be trained on how to respond to natural calamities.

The annual exercises will be held from May 7 to 18, 2018 in various locations in Luzon.

Vidallon said the tactics, techniques and procedures of the Philippine Army, Philippine Air Force and the Philippine Navy are enhanced yearly and the lessons learned in last year's Balikatan will be applied.

"The focus of Balikatan (this year) is mutual defense, counter-terrorism and HADR (humanitarian assistance and disaster response)," Vidallon told reporters.

Last year's Balikatan was more

focused on responding to natural disasters such as typhoon, earthquakes, among others.

The exercises this year will be "scenario-based," meaning that the drills will be based on real-life encounters on terrorism, natural disasters and the like.

"We also have simulation training events wherein the planner (of Balikatan), our leadership, will try to command and control different forces for any eventuality," Vidallon said.

The Philippines had invited forces from Australia, Japan and United Kingdom as observers for this year's Balikatan exercises.

The US Pacific Command said the military exercises will be consistent with the Mutual Defense Treaty and the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) signed by Washington and Manila in 1998.

DEMPSEY REYES

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US envoy cites importance of naval ship visits in SEA

By ROY C. NABASA

United States (US) Ambassador to the Philippines Sung Kim on Thursday emphasized the importance of American ship visitations in the Southeast Asian (SEA) region, following concerns about continuous militarization in the South China Sea (West Philippine Sea).

"Not only does our presence. Visits of ships are really fantastic, ships (and) carriers demonstrate our commitment to the US-Philippines alliance, the region, and also to do whatever we can to protect international flights, freedom of navigation and overflight," Kim said during the "Kapihan sa Embahada" at the US Embassy in Manila.

Kim was referring to the recent port visits of powerful US warship to the Philippines, namely aircraft carriers USS Carl Vinson and USS

Theodore Roosevelt, and the USS amphibious assault ship Bonhomme Richard.

"(It's) very important for us to be present and the recent ship visits that I mentioned are directly relevant to the situation we have in the South China Sea... So we'll continue whatever we can to protect those rights," the US envoy said.

Political rhetoric

Kim also said it is more important to listen to what is happening on the policies and substance concerning the relationship between Manila and Washington, D.C. rather than the occasional political rhetoric from President Duterte.

Kim was reacting to questions about Duterte's most recent statement saying that some countries in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) are complaining about the meddling of western countries in the internal affairs of regional neighbors like Indonesia, Cambodia, and Malaysia.

"We work together on so many fronts and making concrete progress in so many important areas, and I'm also quite optimistic what's happening right now. I think it's important to pay more attention to what's happening on the ground, what actions and policies and substance rather than occasional political rhetoric," he said.



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Abu Sayyaf plotting strike off Sabah'

ZAMBOANGA CITY Abu Sayyaf militants whose group is tied to the Islamic State is reportedly planning to strike off the coast of Sabah in Malaysia and are likely to target seafarers, according to Asian piracy watchdog ReCAAP.

The Singapore-based ReCAAP or the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia, issued the warning to seafarers.

In its report, ReCAAP said Abu Sayyaf militants will be using a 3-engine speedboat to kidnap mariners operating in the area.

"All vessels transiting the area are advised to exercise extreme caution when transiting in the waters of Lahad Dato and surrounding waters in Sabah," it said.

Since October 2016, the militants have begun to target ships of larger tonnage, such as Dong Bang Giant 2, Royal 16, Southern Falcon and Kurnel Bhaganga. Once abducted, mariners are held captive for months and are sometimes executed because the Philippine government has adopted a no-ransom policy when dealing with the Abu Sayyaf group.

Bulk carriers

In November 2016, six men were taken by the militants from the bulk carrier Royal 16. The bodies of two decapitated seafarers were found by the Philippine military in July 2017, while one seafarer was allegedly killed in a gun battle in the same month. Two seafarers have been rescued from the group, while the fate of one more mariner remains unknown.

The Abu Sayyaf is still holding over a dozen mostly foreigners, including

seafarers, kidnapped off Basilan and Tawi-Tawi. It had previously launched surprise raids in Sabah.

There was no immediate statement from Filipino authorities on the report.

The Abu Sayyaf recently kidnapped two policewomen and two civilians in Sulu province. Policemen and soldiers were searching for police officers Basierose Alvarez and Dinah Sumahad who are assigned with the crime laboratory and engineering department of the regional police force, and civilians Jakosalem Blas and Falzal Abdull.

They were travelling on a motorcycle taxi when about a dozen gunmen tagged them down in Bang Village in Pakhal town and took them away.

Police have identified the gang's leader as Mujir Yoda and that the Abu Sayyaf's demanding B5 million ransoms for the safe release of the policewomen.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines on Thursday urged the families of the kidnap victims not to pay ransom.

Brig. Gen. Grifito Sobejana, commander of the Joint Task Force Sulu, said the government will observe the "no ransom policy."

"The more we give ransom, the more that they will get involved into kidnapping and it is becoming a lucrative venture here in Sulu if there will be payments made," Sobejana told reporters.

Abu Sayyaf militants had previously attacked Jolo and kidnapped civilians despite the presence of military and police camps in the town.

Sulu Gov. Totok Tan has repeatedly rallied mayors to protect their communities.



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US to donate addl P182m for Marawi victims

UNITED States Ambassador Sung Kim on Thursday announced the US would provide an additional P182-million assistance for the people displaced due to the Marawi City conflict in 2017.

This amount brings to nearly P1.4 billion the total contribution of US government, through US Agency for International Development, for the total recovery of the southern city.

"Together with our partners on the ground, we will build transitional shelters, repair water and sanitation facilities, provide social support, establish safe spaces to protect women and children from exploitation and violence, and, hopefully, in the process, also help jump-start the local economy," Kim told reporters at the US Embassy in Manila.

Last January, the embassy allocated an additional P330 million to support young women and men to enhance job skills and attain livelihoods.

The United States, through USAID, has been a key partner of the Philippine government in the recovery, stabilization, and rehabilitation of Marawi City and its surrounding areas.

USAID's early assistance involved restoring access to water and distributing desks for schools where displaced students are enrolled. It also provided health clinics in Marawi City and surrounding areas with supplies and services to combat tuberculosis and support maternal, newborn, and child health needs. **PNA**

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The Manila Times

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Terror threat in South remains – US envoy

BY JEFFERSON ANTIPORDA

UNITED States Ambassador Sung Kim on Thursday called for vigilance and deeper cooperation between the Philippines and the US to address continuing terror threats in Mindanao.

Kim said threat from terror groups remain despite the defeat of the Maute Group in Marawi City last year.

Both our experts including those in the military and their Filipino counterparts believe that the threat continues to exist and that we must remain vigilant and we must continue to work together," Kim said during the Kapihan sa Embahada news forum organized by the embassy.

The US ambassador said cooperation between the Philippines and

US through sharing intelligence and information is important.

The US supported the Philippines by providing technical support and weapons to troops who battled the Islamic State (IS)-linked Maute group that occupied Marawi City.

Kim said the US intends to continue providing help to the Philippine military and law enforcement units to help them foil similar attacks.

In April, an official of the US Department of State said IS con-

tinues to recruit new members in Southeast Asia, including in the Philippines, to launch acts of terrorism in their hometowns.

Irfan Saeed, director of the Department of State's Office of Countering Violent Extremism, said the US had destroyed so-called caliphates in Syria and Iraq, effectively stopping IS operations and travel, but that didn't stop the group from getting new recruits.

Saeed explained that terrorists have been looking for safe havens in which to operate unfettered. This was sparked by their recent defeat in Syria and Iraq.

But apart from security related assistance, Kim said the humanitarian aid being provided by the US will continue as he announced the allocation of P182 million (\$3.5 million) to support the reha-

bilitation of affected communities in Marawi City.

The US ambassador said the money will be used to build transitional shelters, repair water and sanitation facilities, and provide psychosocial support to affected residents.

More than 300,000 people were displaced in the fighting that started in May and ended in October last year.

Part of the fund, Kim said, would also be used in the establishment of safe spaces to protect women and children from exploitation and violence and also help to jumpstart local economy through income generating activities.

"This brings the total US contributions to the Marawi humanitarian response to nearly P1.4 billion or \$26.4 million," Kim told reporters.



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The Manila Times

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Guerrero, de la Rosa get new posts

PRESIDENT Rodrigo Duterte has formally appointed former Armed Forces of the Philippines chief Rey Leonardo Guerrero as administrator of the Maritime Industry Authority.

Guerrero will replace Marcial Amaro 3rd, who was sacked by the President in January because of his excessive foreign trips.

Guerrero's term will expire on July 11, 2022.

Duterte also appointed former Philippine National Police chief Ronald "Bato" de la Rosa as director general of the Bureau of Corrections, an agency under the Department of Justice.

The bureau's interim director general, Valfride Tabian, was named deputy director general.

The president also appointed six new prosecutors in the Department of Justice.

They are Roderick Rojas Aquino, Associate City Prosecutor (Prosecutor I) in San Fernando City at La Union, Wallad Abdani Padate, Assistant Regional Prosecutor (Prosecutor II) of SOCCSKSARGEN, Jennifer Angeles Balboa-Cahig and Nikki Rose Esperanza as Deputy City Prosecutors (Prosecutor III) of Baybay City, Leyte and Bacoor City, Cavite, respectively.

Duterte also appointed Edgar Ambagan and Ma. Victoria Cabrera as prosecutors of Tagaytay City while Joven Maramba was named prosecutor for Dagupan City.

RALPH EDWIN U. VILLANUEVA



4 May 2018



Pahina. 2

AFP: NO RANSOM POLICY SA TERORISTA

Binigyang diin kagahapon ni Joint Task Force (JTF) Sulu Commander Brig. Gen. Cirilito Sobejana na pinaural ng pamahalaan laban sa teroristang grupo ang “no ransom policy”.

Kaya’t nanawagan si Sobejana sa pamilya ng mga bihag na sina PO2 Benierose Alvarez at PO1 Dinah Gumahad na huwag magbayad ng ransom sa grupo ng mga bandido.

Ang dalawang babaeng

pulis ay kapwa miyembro ng Crime Laboratory Office ng Police Regional Office (PRO) 9 na nakabase sa lungsod ng Zamboanga na nagtungo lamang sa Sulu para magliwaliw nang mangyari ang pagdukot sa kanila.

“Kami naman manatili kami sa aming posisyon na no ransom policy kasi nga the more we give ransom the more na magkaroon ng kidnapping kasi nagiging lucrative venture ang kidnapping dito kung may

magbabayad ng ransom”, pahayag ni Sobejana.

Magugunita nitong Miyerkules ay inihayag ni PNP Chief P/Director General Oscar Albayalde na humingi na ng P 5 M ransom o tig P2.5 M bawat isa ang mga kidnaper kapalit ng pagpapalaya sa dalawang pulis na binihag ng 11 armadong bandido sa pangunguna ni Mujir Yada sa Brgy. Liang, Patikul, Sulu noong Abril 29 ng taong ito dakong alas-12:40 ng hapon - *Joy Cantos*

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Page. 2

NPA leader todas, 4 arestado sa Laguna

Patay ang isang miyembro ng Special Partisan Unit (Sparu) ng New People's Army (NPA), makaraang makasagupa ang mga pulis sa isang checkpoint sa Barangay Dambo sa Pangil, Laguna kahapon.

Sinabi ni 1st Lieutenant Felise Vida Selano, public information officer ng Southern Luzon Command (Solcom), na apat pang rebelde ang nasugatan at

naaresto ng mga awtoridad sa nasabing lugar.

Ayon sa report ng Pangil Municipal Police, kinilala ang nasawi na si Ismael Criste, alias "Ka Maeng", na pinuno umano ng assassination squad ng NPA.

Ayon sa ulat, pinara ng mga pulis sa checkpoint ang pulang Daihatsu na sinasakyan ng mga rebelde.

Sinabi naman ni Police Regional Office

(PRO)-4A director Chief Supt. Guillermo Eleazar na bago ang engkuwentro, nagsagawa na ng surveillance operation ang pulisya sa bayan ng Pangil makaraang makatanggap ng ulat na may pinaplano ang mga rebelde na umatake sa mga pulis at sundalo sa lugar.

Sinabi ni Eleazar na si Criste ay lider din ng Rebolusyonaryong Buwis Para sa Kaaway na Uri ng NPA.

Kinilala naman ang apat na nadakip na sina Luis Alano, Jr., 44 anyos; Shirley Martinez, 47; Felicidad Villegas, 60; at Cristy Lacuarta, 30 anyos.

Nakuha mula sa mga suspek ang dalawang .45 caliber pistol, isang sub-machine gun na may mga bala, dalawang granada, at mga dokumento.

Fer Taboy

4 May 2018



Pahina. 3

Engkwentro sa checkpoint: NPA patay, 6 pa sugatan

LAGUNA-Patay ang isang pinaniniwalaang kasapi ng New People's Army (NPA) Special Partisan Unit (Sparu) habang limang iba pa ang sugatan makaraang makasagupa ang mga pulis sa isang checkpoint kamakalawa ng hapon sa

Barangay Dambo, bayan ng Pangli.

Ang napatay ay nakilalang si Ismael Criste, alyas "Ka Maeng," na pinuno umano ng assassination squad ng NPA.

Ayon kay 1st Lieutenant Felise Vida Solano, public information officer ng Southern Luzon Command (Solcom) ng AFP, limang iba pang rebelde ang nasugatan at naaresto ng mga otordad sa engkwentro na nagabap sa Barangay Dambo.

Batay sa report, pinara ng mga pulis sa checkpoint ang pulang Daihatsu sakay ang mga rebelde.

Sinabi naman ni Calabarzon police director Chief Supt. Guillermo Eleazar na bago ang

engkwentro, nagsagawa na ng surveillance operation ang pulisya sa bayan ng Pangli makaraang makatanggap ng ulat na pinaplano ng mga rebelde na umatake sa mga pulis at sundalo sa lugar.

Dagdag pa ni Eleazar, si Criste ay lider din ng Rebolusyong Buwis Para sa Kaaway na Uri ng NPA.

Kinilala ang apat sa mga nadakip na sina Luis Alano Jr., 44-anyos; Shirley Martinez, 47-anyos; Felicidad Villegas, 60-anyos at Cristy Lacuarta, 30-anyos.

Nakuha mula sa mga suspek ang dalawang kalibre 45 na baril, isang sub-machine gun na may mga bala, dalawang granada at mga dokumento. **ELLEN APOSTOL**

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www.dwdd.com.ph

ATROCITIES | NOLCOM condemns continuous NPA Illegal Acts

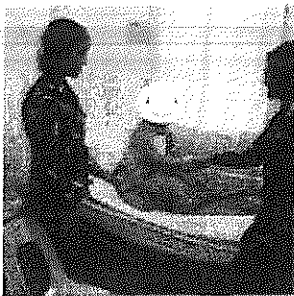
Posted by Alvin Santiago on May 3, 2018 at 9:57 PM



CAMP GEN SERVILLANO AQUINO, Tarlac City – With the spate of atrocities recently in the area, the Northern Luzon Command (NOLCOM) condemns the unlawful acts committed by the Communist New People's Army Terrorist Groups (CNTGs) operating in Northern Luzon.

The most notable incident was the killing of a Catholic priest in Cagayan province, Father Mark Anthony Yuaga Ventura. The 37-year old parish priest of San Isidro Labrador Mission Station was gunned-down by unidentified riding in tandem assailants inside the gymnasium of Brgy Pena Weste, Municipality of Gattaran at 8:00 in the morning of April 29, 2018 (Sunday).

Accordingly, he had just finished his mass and was talking to the people when he was shot in the head and other parts of his body causing his instantaneous death. The perpetrators immediately withdrew to the direction Baggao, a known NPA lair in the province.



In another occasion, a female minor NPA member, alias Ka Trese, surrendered to the military and police authorities in Bontoc, Mt. Province in the midnight of April 28, 2018. She fell victim for three (3) years to the terrorist group's deception strategy, headed by Commander Joshua in the town of Paracelis, when recruited as a child warrior since 14 years old.



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

Ka Trese was immediately rushed by the troops to Bontoc General Hospital for treatment upon being seen exhausted and confused, and later collapsed. She later turned-over the subversive documents, cellular phones and ammunitions. Ka Trese also revealed that she was a red fighter of the New People's Army (NPA), but eventually opted to surrender after experiencing sexual and physical abuses from his comrades from the Leonardo Pagsi Command.

NOLCOM hardly condemns these unlawful and terroristic acts against humanity. These are manifestations of the terrorist group's disregard to people's right, as well as the exploitation and abuse of minors. Also, the NPA atrocities and illegal recruitment clearly shows the violation of Comprehensive Agreement on the Respect to Human Rights and International Law (CARHRIL). **NOLCOM / MCAG**



www.inquirer.net

Armed men torch payloader at Ecija flood-control site

By: **Armand Galang** - @inquirerdotnet

Inquirer Central Luzon / 04:26 PM May 03, 2018

BONGABON, NUEVA ECIIJA – Three armed men, who identified themselves as communist rebels, set fire to a payloader that has been used for a flood-control project in Barangay (village) Labi here on Wednesday night (May 2).

Equipment operator Lorenzo Soria, 54, told the police that he was awakened by the men at 11:30 p.m. and was ordered to lie face down on the other side of the road by the suspects.

“Naamoy ko na lang na amoy gasoline at may mga putok ng baril (I started to smell gasoline then heard guns being fired),” said Soria, who works for the Cabanatuan City-based Front Nine Construction Company.

The armed men walked away after torching the heavy equipment, said Chief Insp. George Caluag, Jr.

The firm informed the police that it has been receiving demands from the New People’s Army to pay a “progressive tax.”

Authorities placed the damage at over P4 million.

