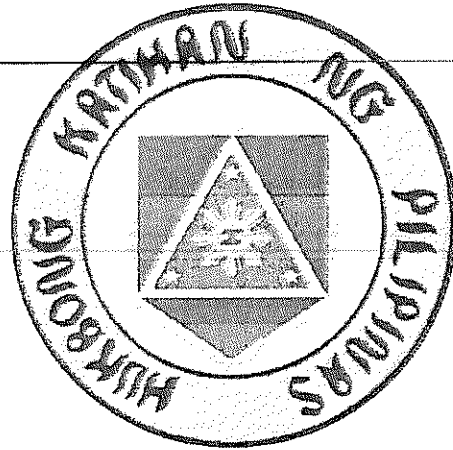


By 2028, a world-class Army that is a source of national pride.



TEAM ARMY

Serving the people. Securing the land.

oacpa.army2012@gmail.com
OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

NEWS CLIPPINGS

16 May 2018

Wednesday

PGS

PROFESSIONALIZED
2011



2015



2016

Honor. Patriotism. Duty

TABLE OF CONTENTS

16 MAY 2018

Weather Forecast- http://pagasa.dost.gov.ph/weather/daily-weather-forecast		
PAGE NR.	TITLE	SOURCE
NATIONAL NEWS		
1-2	Rody orders 2 assistant secretaries to resign	Phil Star p.1
3-4	Show proof of vote buying , DILG Presses	PDI p.A1
5-6	Phi not giving up sea rights – Rody	Phil Star p.1
7	Trillanes, Pangilinan say President travelled to wrong sea	PDI p.A6
8-10	PH Rise now protected area	Mla Times p.a1
11	Duterte visits PH Rise; jet ski plan dropped	Malaya p.B1
12	Jetski ride to Rise: Baste subs for Rody	Mla Standard p.A2
13-14	Rody visits Philippine Rise, sends off Pinoy scientists to study the region	Daily Tribune p.1
AFP/ SECURITY RELATED NEWS		
15-16	'Name names in electioneering'	Phil. Star p.1
17	Rody skips b'gay voting to stay neutral	Phi Star p.12
18	DFA tells Pinoys in Surabaya to be vigilant; PH safe – AFP	Mla Bulletin p.2
19	FB watchdogs failed to spot this fake news	Malaya p.B2
20	No coup plot vs Digong – AFP	Ngayon p.B2
21	Group pleads for release of NPA leader nabbed in hospital	PDI p.A4
22	Soldier slain in clash vs NPA rebels	Phil Star p.15
23	Army sarge killed in clash with NPAs	Mla Bulletin p.5
24	Military vs NPA: Sundalo dedo, 2 huli	Ngayon p.9
25	Severed finger found among firearms left behind by fleeing NPAs	Mla Bulletin p.11
26	Aid for returnees	Mla Bulletin p.11
27	NPA violates self-imposed truce for barangay , SK polls	Malaya p.B2
28	House joint panels approve BBL	Phil Star p.2
29	Committee report on BBL approved	Mla Bulletin p.2
30	House panels endorse by BL for plenary approval	Malaya p.B6
31	Gov't forces, armed men clash in Bohol	Mla Bulletin p.7
32	MILF members nabbed	Mla Bulletin p.11
33	Maute- ISIS recruitment still going on, say AFP	Malaya p.B1
EDITORIAL/OPINION/COMMENTARY		
34	Dealing with a problematic neighbor	PDI p.A12
35-36	West Philippine Sea	Mla Times p.A5
37	Sovereignty	Malaya p.B5
38	Philippine Rise	Malaya p.B4
39	Duterte's achievement	Malaya p.B4

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

ONLINE NEWS

40	No Marawi-like siege anytime soon — AFP chief	www.inquirer.net
42	Duterte declares Philippine Rise as marine protected area	www.inquirer.net
43-44	Duterte fails to reach Philippine Rise	www.inquirer.net

Rody orders 2 assistant secretaries to resign

By ALEXIS ROMERO

President Duterte has asked two assistant secretaries accused of corruption – Moslemen Macarambon Sr. of the Department of Justice (DOJ) and Tingagun Umpa of the Department of Public Works and Highways – to resign or be dismissed from service.

“The President has advised the two assistant secretaries to tender their resignations or face termination for corruption,” presidential spokesman Harry Roque said at a press briefing yesterday.

Roque said an investigation by the Presidential Anti-Corruption Commission (PACC) revealed that Macarambon has been intervening on behalf of suspected smugglers of gold and other precious jewelry at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport.

Umpa, on the other hand, was accused of committing grave abuse of power and acts of corruption for allegedly asking contractors in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao for a cut from



Umpa



Macarambon

projects. Umpa is in charge of projects in the ARMM.

Roque made the announcement a week after former tourism secretary Wanda Teo quit over a controversial deal that placed P60 million in Department of Tourism advertisements to a media outlet owned by her brother Ben Tulfo. Teo and Tulfo have maintained there was nothing irregular

Turn to Page 12

Rody

From Page 1

about the advertising contract.

Roque said it would be up to the Office of the Ombudsman to decide whether to file cases against Macarambon and Umpa.

"The DOJ and the PACC already conducted an investigation that the ombudsman can use for its investigation," he said.

Roque said the PACC is looking into about 400 complaints involving officials tagged in irregularities.

The PACC was created through Executive Order No. 43 signed by Duterte last year. The commission was mandated "to directly assist the President in investigating and/or hearing administrative cases primarily involving graft and/or corruption against all presidential appointees."

The PACC has the power to hear, investigate, receive, gather and evaluate evidence, intelligence reports and information in administrative cases against presidential appointees and submit recommendations to the Office of the President.

Roque said the PACC also investigates complaints transmitted by the Office of the Deputy Executive Secretary for Legal Affairs.

Sacked

Following the advice from Malacañang, Justice Secretary Menardo Guevarra yesterday confirmed that Macarambon has been terminated.

"The President has appointed someone to replace Asec. Macarambon. So that is effectively a termination," he told reporters without naming the replacement.

Macarambon had earlier filed a courtesy resignation.

"It's a matter of trust and confidence. It's the President who has the authority to terminate such appointment," Guevarra stressed.

Asked if the DOJ would conduct an investigation on Macarambon's alleged involvement in such activities, Guevarra said he "would gather more facts before initiating a probe."

Macarambon has denied the

charges, but has confirmed he dealt with Bureau of Customs officials last November.

"I only asked the Bureau of Customs to recompute the taxes paid by the in-laws of my daughter. They initially computed P6 million when it should be only P1.38 million," he recalled in a phone interview.

"I don't think it was inappropriate because I only requested for recomputation for the proper payment of taxes," he lamented.

Last month, Guevarra asked all DOJ undersecretaries and assistant secretaries to tender their resignations to give him a free hand to perform his mandate.

Guevarra, however, said then that until any action is taken by Malacañang on the courtesy resignations, all these officials should continue to report for work and perform their usual rules and responsibilities.

Guevarra took the top DOJ post after the resignation of Vitaliano Aguirre II last March.

- With Edu Punay

SHOW PROOF OF VOTE BUYING, DILG PRESSED

STORY BY DJ YAP, VINCE F. NONATO AND MELVIN GASCON

Senate President Pimentel and opposition lawmakers have urged Local Government Undersecretary Diño to provide evidence against congressmen and other officials whom he accused of electioneering and bribing voters. **A6**



FROM A1

By DJ Yap,
Vince F. Nonato
and Melvin Gascon
@Team_Inquirer

The ruling Partido Demokratiko Pilipino-Lakas ng Bayan (PDP-Laban) will investigate its members who committed electioneering and other violations of the election law during the barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) polls on Monday.

But the party president, Senate President Aquilino Pimentel III, said the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) must provide evidence against the officials.

"If the DILG gives us the evidence, [we will investigate]. We have no feedback as of now," Pimentel told reporters on Tuesday.

Opposition lawmakers in the House of Representatives also challenged the DILG to substantiate the claim of Undersecretary Martin Diño that congressmen had engaged in vote buying.

Rampant

Vote buying was rampant in the barangay and SK elections, with reports of crisp P20 to P1,000 bills changing hands in many villages across the country.

The Omnibus Election Code prohibits vote buying by candidates, with violators facing prison terms of one to six years



Martin Diño



ROADSIDE TALLY Votes are counted manually at one of the roadside precincts in Monday's barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan elections on Boni Serrano Avenue at Barangay Valencia, Quezon City. —GRIG C. MONTEGRANDE

and disqualification from holding public office.

Pimentel challenged the DILG to gather evidence and press charges against barangay chairs and 100 House members who, according to Diño, intervened in village elections by trying to influence their constituents to vote for their favored candidates.

Diño was quoted in news reports as saying his department had received reports that "some of the congressmen gave money, while others invited candidates."

He claimed that the congressmen, as well as around 1,000 local government officials and thousands of barangay officials, resorted to vote buying to secure turfs "in preparation for the 2019 elections."

Nonpartisan

"If they control the barangay captains, of course, they control the entire barangay," the DILG official said in a television interview on Monday night.

The May 14 barangay and SK elections were supposed to be nonpartisan.

Pimentel said the DILG should take action if it had evidence.

"It's better that we make examples of these people, so that in the election next year, the same thing won't happen again," he said.

"Whether a party member or not, it doesn't matter. The question is what is the evidence, whether it's vote buying or other violations of [the] election law, in which case, cases must be filed," said Pimentel, who will seek reelection in the 2019 midterm elections.

Makabayan bloc

He noted that the distribution of sample ballots at polling precincts was a violation of election law.

Gabriela Rep. Emerenciana de Jesus of the Makabayan bloc said Diño should identify the congressmen.

"Diño should let his hands do the talking not his mouth by filing cases against those who violated election laws in the recent barangay polls," said Akbayan Rep. Tomasito Villarín of the "Magnificent Seven" independent bloc.

Federalism campaign

A fellow bloc member, Ifugao Rep. Teddy Baguilat Jr., said he would be "fully supportive" of the DILG if it was "really serious in filing cases."

But Baguilat called on Diño to address the concern to the PDP-Laban.

"Barangay officials have become highly politicized because of PDP-Laban's federalism campaign," Baguilat said,

as the officials of the country's smallest political units were made to pledge support for the administration's push to amend the Constitution.

"It's no wonder why many of them now approach solons and local executives asking for cash support during elections because [they] consider themselves party mates and ward leaders of the politicians," he said.

'Stop blaming poor'

On Tuesday, an urban poor group said election officials should stop blaming the poor in the wake of reports of rampant vote buying.

"We need to cleanse our government from corrupt politicians who are known to surely make up for their expenses when they win in elections," said Gloria Arellano, chair of Kalipunan ng Damayang Mahihirap (Kadamay).

Patronage politics

Kadamay said vote buying was part of patronage politics in the country. It persists because the electorate is not being provided basic services and their living standards have hardly improved, the group said.

The National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC) described the problem as "one symptom of a deeper social malaise."

"Poverty, lack of economic opportunities and the absence of universal and comprehensive social protection make millions of Filipinos more vulnerable to patronage politics," said Jennifer Padilla, NAPC information officer. INQ

Phl not giving up sea rights – Rody

By CHRISTINA MENDEZ

The Philippines has not given up its sovereignty rights over certain areas in the disputed South China Sea, President Duterte insisted yesterday.

Duterte made the claim

even after he had discussed the matter in the past with Chinese President Xi Jinping.

"We are not giving up our rights in the West Philippine Sea. As a matter of fact, we are still insisting until now to the

Turn to Page 7

Phl not From Page 1

point that they are now willing..." he said during his trip off the coast of Aurora.

The President boarded BRP Davao del Sur where he led the program marking the first year of the declaration of Benham Rise as Philippine Rise.

Duterte also declared some portions of the Philippine Rise as a marine protected area.

The President scrapped his plan to ride a jet ski around Philippine Rise.

Duterte's son Sebastian and special assistant Bong Go represented him instead.

He said Xi gave his word that the South China Sea row would be solved in a non-confrontational manner.

"We would always find a solution to any problem," Duterte quoted Xi as saying.

"China is offering a joint exploration and development. Xi Jinping said, 'maybe we will have a bigger share.' Let's see," the President added.

Duterte admitted that the Philippines has no capability to fight China, noting that a Navy ship like the BRP Davao del Sur will just sink once hit by a cruise missile from China.

Instead of fighting Beijing, Duterte said he would make the best out of it for the country – referring to the joint exploration with China.

Maritime science research

The President sent off yesterday a 50-man team of Filipino scientists to the Philippine Rise for a month-long maritime science research.

Defense and military officials led by Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana joined the President in boarding the Navy's landing dock ship, BRP Davao del Sur, anchored off Casiguran Bay.

Critics questioned Duterte's presence

at Philippine Rise Bank as the area is not contested like the West Philippine Sea.

In his speech, the President said, "China claims the entire South China Sea as theirs. I can't do anything about it anymore."

Duterte said commercial fishing would be allowed at Philippine Rise in accordance with the laws on the preservation of marine life.

Lt. Col. Isagani Nato, Northern Luzon Command spokesman, said members of NOLCOM's Area Task Force North would sail to the shallowest portion of Philippine Rise to set up a maritime marker in the area.

The Navy is deploying its landing dock ship, BRP Tarlac, to the region for the buoy's casting.

The floating maritime marker would be located right over the underwater Philippine flag placed by military and civilian divers last year.

Nato said the buoy casting would immediately follow after the singing of the Philippine national anthem on the flight deck of BRP Tarlac.

A US State Department official met with Philippine counterparts yesterday to discuss claims in the South China Sea.

Acting Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for East Asia and the Pacific W. Patrick Murphy and Foreign Affairs Undersecretary Enrique Manalo discussed recent events in the South China Sea as well as the ties between the Philippines and US.

Presidential spokesman Harry Roque Jr. said the Philippines has not surrendered its rights over Spratly Island and other areas within the country's exclusive economic zone despite China's deployment of its first entirely home-built aircraft

Turn to Page 12

Phl not From Page 7

carrier in the area.

"We have always been putting down our feet. We have not surrendered our title, we have not relinquished our title, we maintain we have title," Roque said.

He defended the President's presence at Philippine Rise in Aurora when the disputes are actually in the South China Sea.

"While we may not be able to do anything as far as their military maneuvers are concerned, we continue to resort to diplomatic initiatives and I assure you that while we are not noisy at it, any development that happens in the South China Sea is accompanied by diplomatic steps from the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA)," Roque said.

Roque disputed insinuations that the Duterte administration has put under the rug the country's rights over the

West Philippine Sea, owing to Duterte's shift of foreign policy toward China.

"No. We are not doing anything, I dispute that. We are resorting to diplomatic initiatives, but this is the exemption to freedom of information. Let's leave it to the DFA," he said.

On Sunday, China deployed its first home-built aircraft carrier in the northern port of Dalian "to test the reliability and stability of its repulsion and other system."

Reports said China has deployed its Navy assets to enforce its claim to the entire South China Sea.

Since Duterte assumed office, he has maintained a non-confrontational approach in dealing with the issue of the South China Sea.

He said many times in public that the Philippines could not afford to declare war against China because of lack

of defense capability.

The President also said he is holding onto the words of Xi that no more developments will be done in the disputed areas.

Duterte bared that he has confronted Xi about the Chinese markers for sea features in the Philippine Sea.

China asked permission from the International Hydrographic Organization-Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission General Bathymetric Chart of the Oceans Sub-Committee on Undersea Feature Names and the markers were in Chinese because they knew no other language, Duterte said, quoting his conversation with Xi when they met at the Boao Forum last month.

The sea features include a seamount China wants to call Jujio in Philippine Rise and other parts of the Philippine Sea. — **With Jaime Laude, Pia Lee-Brago**

PHILIPPINE RISE SEND-OFF CEREMONY

TRILLANES, PANGILINAN SAY PRESIDENT TRAVELED

TO WRONG SEA

By Leila B. Salaverria @LeilasINQ

President Duterte went to the wrong sea, senators said on Tuesday.

Mr. Duterte traveled to Casiguran, Aurora province, to send off a team of Filipino scientists on the country's first research mission to Philippine Rise, a vast, resource-rich underwater plateau off the coun-

try's east coast.

"Our sovereign rights over [Philippine Rise] are undisputed, so Duterte's visit there is just a propaganda stunt," Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV said in a text message.

"He should ride his jet ski to the Spratlys as he promised during the campaign," Trillanes said.

Sen. Francis Pangilinan also said no other country was lay-

ing claim to Philippine Rise, but China had deployed antiship cruise missiles and surface-to-air missile systems on three Philippine-claimed reefs in the Spratly archipelago.

Good idea

"On the western side of the country, our sovereignty is clearly violated, our security is threatened, and leadership is badly needed," Pangilinan said

in a statement.

Sen. Panfilo Lacson, however, said Mr. Duterte's trip to Philippine Rise was a good idea, in case anyone had designs on the seamount.

Lacson said Mr. Duterte did not have to do the same in the South China Sea, and much had been made of his campaign joke about riding a jet ski to the Spratlys to assert Philippine sovereignty over the country's

territory there.

Mr. Duterte did not ride a jet ski to Philippine Rise. Presidential special assistant Christopher "Bong" Go told reporters aboard the BRP Davao del Sur that he and the President's son Sebastian would ride jet skis to the rise.

Mr. Duterte traveled to the seamount also to celebrate the first anniversary of his renaming it from Benham Rise to

Philippine Rise.

He also signed a proclamation designating certain portions of the seamount as marine protected areas.

The military's Task Force North planned to cast a buoy and plant a Philippine flag at the shallowest portion of the rise to officially stake the country's claim to the territory.

—WITH REPORTS FROM JEANNETTE I. ANDRADE AND NESTOR CORRALES INQ

DUTERTE DROPS VISIT TO UNDERWATER
REGION

PH Rise now protected area

BY CATHERINE S. VALENTE

ONBOARD *BRP DAVAO DEL SUR*: President Rodrigo Duterte has declared portions of Philippine Rise (Benham Rise) and Eastern Kalayaan as protected areas.

Duterte signed the proclamation on board *BRP Davao del Sur* to mark the first anniversary of his renaming the underwater land mass to signify the country's sovereign rights over the resource-rich region.

►ProtectedA2

PH Rise

In his speech, Duterte announced his formal declaration of parts of the Philippine Rise undersea feature as a Marine Resource Reserve.

"Around 50,000 hectares of the Philippine Rise shall become a Strict Protection Zone limited to scientific studies – at this time only Filipinos. I do not want (foreigners). Only Filipinos," Duterte said.

"While more than (300,000) hectares shall be designated as a Special Fisheries Management Area," he added.

The President also led the launching of the country's first scientific exploration of the resource-rich underwater plateau located off the coast of Aurora province.

"Today, we send off our team of talented and competent Filipino scientists who will undertake the Coordinated National Marine Scientific Research Initiatives and Related Activities or Conmira in the waters above the Philippine Rise," Duterte said.

"I join the Filipino people in wishing you all the best as you embark on your mission to conduct mapping, surveys, biological investigations and

assessment of the coral reef and fisheries stock in the area until November," he added.

Palace spokesman Harry Roque Jr. had earlier said that 50 Filipino scientists would carry out the study.

Visit dropped

Duterte however decided not to push through with the visit to the underwater land mass.

The President was supposed to sail toward the Philippine Rise to lead the celebration of the first anniversary of his renaming of the area. The President only reached the Casiguran Bay.

Speaking to reporters, Roque explained that Duterte only planned to send off the team of Filipino scientists that would undertake marine scientific research in the area. "E kasi medyo malayo (It's a little bit far). Its 120 nautical miles away. That's logistic nightmare. So this is symbolic. We're sending off the scientists, but the scientists will proceed. *Yun lang talaga* (That's it)," Roque said. "The Philippine Rise is beyond the 200 nautical miles EEZ (exclusive economic zone) so you have to go beyond 200 nautical miles. So the beginning of the 20 miles is only the beginning of the Philippine Rise,"

he added.

The Palace official also explained that the undersea region could only be seen by diving into it.

"*Ginagawa natin ngayon dito ay symbolic na inaangkin natin ang atin at sinasabi ng Presidente na ang tanging yaman dito sa area na ito ay sa Pilipino lamang.*" Roque said.

Faith in PH scientists

According to the President, scientific activities would be vital in the protection and management of the Philippine Rise and its vast resources.

"I have complete faith in the capabilities of our world class scientists and I recognize the need to provide them with the necessary means to fulfill your mandate. Indeed, these developments would not have been possible without the efforts of our dedicated public servants, scientists and legal experts who worked together to bolster our claim over the Philippine Rise," he said.

"When the United Nations Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf approved our claim to the Philippine Rise a few years ago, we were not just granted access to the vast resources. We were also entrusted with the responsibility to protect it from abuse and misuse," he added.

Duterte then told the Filipino scientists to "explore this (new frontier) fully aware of our responsibility to (properly manage) and conserve its natural resources for the benefit of present and future generations of Filipinos."

"As send off our experts to explore and discover what our seas have to offer, may we all have a renewed sense of commitment to promote the welfare of our people, safeguard our national interest, (and) assert our sovereign rights over our waters and all other areas within our jurisdiction," the President said.

Extended continental shelf

The President signed the declaration following calls from an environmental group to declare a portion of the biodiversity-rich undersea region as a marine protected area.

Gloria Ramos, vice president of the Philippine chapter of international ocean conservation nonprofit Oceana, said that a petition was sent to the Palace in July 2017, which sought the proclamation of Philippine Rise as a protected area and of Benham Bank, the shallowest portion of the Philippine Rise, as a no-take zone.

The group said that the Philippine Rise was declared as an "Ecologically and Biologically Significant Area" by 196 countries in the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity in 2016.

The 24 million-hectare region—13 million hectares of which is an extended continental shelf that the Philippines was awarded sovereign rights in 2012—sits east of Luzon.

Sen. Edgardo Angara Jr. and Muntinlupa Rep. Ruffy Biazon have filed separate bills seeking the creation of a body in charge of studying, developing, and conserving the area.

Duterte renamed Benham Rise to Philippine Rise in May 2017, after Chinese vessels were discovered to be surveying the area.

Apart from having a "100-percent coral cover," Benham Rise is also the breeding area of the Pacific bluefin tuna, one of the world's most expensive fish.

A 2014 research cruise by scientists from the University of the Philippines Marine Science Institute, UP Los Baños, and the Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources at Benham Bank revealed at least 11 reef-building, two solitary coral, and 62 fish species, which makes it an "important area for fisheries."

Duterte visits PH Rise; jet ski plan dropped

BY JOCELYN MONTEMAYOR

PRESIDENT Duterte yesterday declared portions of the Philippine Rise as marine protected areas.

He also sent off an all-Filipino marine scientist team that will conduct research, mapping, surveys, biological investigations and assessments of the coral reef and fisheries stock in the Philippine Rise area until November.

"Last year, I issued Executive Order No. 25 which renamed the erstwhile Benham Rise to the Philippine Rise. Today, I am issuing a presidential proclamation formally declaring parts of this undersea feature as a marine resource reserve," Duterte said at the Casiguran Bay in Aurora during commemoration rites of the one-year anniversary of the naming of the Philippine Rise.

He said that about 50,000 hectares of the Philippine Rise would become a "strict protection zone" that will be limited to the conduct of scientific studies of Filipinos "at this time," while about 300,000 hectares shall be designated as a special fisheries management area.

The President reiterated that at this time, research activities in the

area would be limited to Filipinos.

Duterte recalled that in previous years, Chinese scientists had been allowed to conduct scientific research at the Philippine Rise and ended "marking" some fixtures.

The United Nations Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (UNCLOS) on April 12, 2012 declared that the 13-million hectare undersea plateau off Aurora province, which is believed to be rich in gas, minerals and marine life, is within the Philippines' 200-nautical-mile exclusive economic zone.

The President last year ordered the renaming of the Benham Rise after some Chinese research vessels were seen in the area.

He has repeatedly said that only Filipinos have the right to explore and exploit the resources in the Philippine Rise and even ordered a Marine battalion to patrol the area.

The President said the group of Filipino scientists is expected to conduct their studies above the waters of the Philippine Rise until November.

"These activities will be vital [in] the protection and management of

See DUTERTE > Page B3

• FROM PAGE B1 •

DUTERTE

the Philippine Rise and its vast resources. I have complete faith in the capabilities of our world-class scientists and I recognize the need to provide them with the necessary means to fulfill your mandate... These developments would not have been possible without the efforts of our dedicated public servants, scientists and legal experts who worked together to bolster our claim over the Philippine Rise," he added.

Dr. Doralyn Dalisay, a marine scientist at the University of San Agustin, said the research

would help the country competently manage and sustain the resources in the area.

After the event, Special Assistant to the President Christopher "Bong" Go, National Security Adviser Hermogenes Esperon Jr. and presidential son Sebastian Duterte jet-skied around the bay.

The initial plan was for the President to ride a jet ski around the Philippine Rise.

Presidential spokesman Harry Roque said if the President proceeded with the plan, he would unlikely see anything, except water, because the intercontinental shelf is under water.

Jetski ride to Rise: Baste subs for Rody

By Vito Barcelo

PRESIDENT Rodrigo Duterte skipped the jet ski ride to Benham Rise or Philippine Rise on Tuesday, but presidential son Sebastian Duterte and Special Assistant to the President Christopher Go did, the Palace said Tuesday.

Go said he and Sebastian "represented" the President by doing the jet ski ride.

Presidential Spokesman Harry Roque said Duterte's trip to Philippine Rise to send off Filipino scientists who will conduct maritime research was both "symbolic" and "assertive."

He made his remarks as Duterte was set to lead the sendoff to commemorate the 2012 United Nations declaration that the undersea feature was part of the Philippines' exclusive economic zone and extended continental shelf.

Although Duterte did not show up during the trip to the Philippine Rise, Roque said the visit of Sebastian and Go was part of Duterte's simple ceremonial sendoff for the team to begin the country's first scientific research in the vast undersea plateau off Aurora province.

Duterte said Philippine Rise was part of Philippine territory and warned he would declare war against any foreign country going there without the Philippine government's permission.

Philippine Rise is an offshore frontier facing the Pacific Ocean that is about 24 million hectares and is in the Philippines' exclusive economic zone.

Philippine security officials raised concern about intrusions when a Chinese ship was monitored criss-crossing the waters early last year, drawing public attention to the territory that some believe could be harboring gas and oil deposits aside from its rich fishing areas.

Roque said Duterte will send some 50 Filipino re-

searchers who will study the resource-rich area.

China has converted three reefs in the disputed West Philippine Sea into artificial islands into military posts, but Roque said the Philippines did not relinquish any

claim to any disputed region.

"We have always been putting down our feet. We have not surrendered our title, we have not relinquished our title, we maintain we have title," Roque said.

Rody visits Philippine Rise, sends off Pinoy scientists to study the region

By Mario J. Mallari

President Duterte yesterday started his visit to Philippine Rise, formerly Benham Rise, amid his government's effort to assert country's sovereign rights over the area.

Duterte's chopper landed at 3:45 p.m. on *BRP Davao del Sur*, which ferried him to the area above the underwater plateau east of Isabela.

Duterte was accompanied by Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana, National Security Adviser Hermogenes Esperon Jr., Armed Forces chief of staff Gen. Carlito Galvez, and other military and government officials during the visit.

Duterte is also set to sign a proclamation declaring some portions of Philippine Rise as a marine protected area.

Also, government authorities are expected today, May 16, to cast the first buoy in the Philippine Rise where Duterte yesterday led the sendoff of an all-Filipino contingent that will conduct a month-long maritime research at the former Benham Rise.

The casting of buoy will be initiated by the Area Task Force North (ATF-North), headed by Northern Luzon Command (Nolcom) chief Lt. Gen. Emmanuel Salamat.

ATF-North is an inter-agency coordinating body which

Turn to page 2

Rody visits Philippine Rise, sends off Pinoy scientists to study the region

From page 1

plans and executes programs in relation to maritime domain awareness, security patrols and maritime presence over the Bajo de Masinloc in the West Philippine Sea, Luzon Strait in Batanes and the Philippine Rise east of Aurora.

"This undertaking simply reveals to our fellowmen that in unity, we are strong, and that we are passionate in defense and protection of our sovereignty," Salamat said.

"With the grace of Almighty God, we are blessed as a maritime nation, our country the Philippines, and the whole Filipino nation," he further said.

Lt. Col. Isagani Nato, NOLCOM spokesman, said that the casting of buoy and the laying of flag markers in the Philippine Rise are part of the activities scheduled to commemorate the United Nations awarding of the territory to the Philippines.

According to Nato, the buoy was designed and fabricated by the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources based on international standards.

Nato said that a flag-raising ceremony will be conducted onboard *BRP Tariac* (LD601) with all the stakeholders, local government units and NOLCOM personnel, simultaneous with the laying of a flag marker by volunteer Filipino divers at the shallowest point of Benham Ban while waving their Philippine flags underwater.

He said a fly-by of aircraft from different agencies conducting the Maritime Air Patrol (Marapat) will be done twice in timing with the singing of national anthem and after the program proper concluded.

"All activities form part of commemorating the awarding of the Philippine Rise by the UN Tribunal to the Philippines being an integral part of its Exclusive Economic Zone and Extended Continental Shelf," Nato said.

'Symbolic and assertive'

For Malacañang, this Philippine Rise trip is both "symbolic" and "assertive" as the send-off ceremony also falls on the first anniversary of renaming the undersea feature from Benham Rise to Philippine Rise.

"This trip is symbolic at the same time assertive," Roque said.

"Symbolic, because the Philippine Rise is land and stones underneath the sea, we can't make it there, we'll only stay above the continental shelf," he added.

He said that it was "assertive" because it shows the government's policy to prohibit foreign scientific research and prioritize only Filipino scientists to carry out research in the Philippine Rise.

"But this also shows the policy of the government which shows that

we won't share research efforts with foreigners," he added.

In February, Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) Undersecretary Joel Montales confirmed that "all research had already been concluded in the area (Philippine Rise)."

Montales is also the chairman of the inter-agency technical working group responsible for the grant of licenses to conduct scientific research in the Philippine Rise, believed to have oil and minerals aside from being rich fishing ground.

Roque added that following this development, the President has ordered the revocation of all licenses given to foreign researchers.

He clarified that this does not mean that foreign researchers were totally banned from conducting research in the Philippine Rise.

"It's not really a ban, I guess it's just a directive that we want Filipinos to do it as much as possible. That we're reserving it for Filipinos," Roque said in an earlier briefing.

"He (Duterte) just said because our sovereign rights in Philippine Rise are unquestioned, we do not need to share it with anyone as of now," he added.

Lacson backs Rody's trip

Sen. Panfilo Lacson expressed support to Duterte's visit to the Philippine Rise, saying the President's action not only "clearly" asserts the country's sovereignty over the undersea feature but would also deter future intrusions in the vast resource-rich area.

"The problem is in the West Philippine Sea. There is no problem with the Philippine Rise. So it is better symbolically that he went there to assert our sovereignty that's truly ours," he said in an ambush interview at the Senate.

"We could not foresee maybe there are still intrusions. So it's good that he went there," Lacson said.

Lacson said he also supports the ceremonial send-off for some 50 Filipino scientists who will undertake research on the region.

"I think it's good that the President himself went there and brought along researchers to really assert very clearly that 'hey, this is really ours. Don't touch it!'" Lacson added.

Duterte's visit to the Philippine Rise came two weeks after he vowed to wage war on any foreign nation that tries to seize control of Philippine territory.

The United Nations Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf ruled on April 12, 2012 that the Philippine Rise is part of the Philippines' continental shelf.

The ruling granted the Philippines the sole rights to explore and exploit resources in the undersea plateau. **With PNA**

'Name names in electioneering'

By **DELON PORCALLA**

Members of the House of Representatives challenged yesterday Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) Undersecretary

Martin Diño to identify the 100 congressmen who allegedly engaged in electioneering during last Monday's barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) elections.

"I think Diño should let his

hands do the talking, not his mouth, by filing cases against those who violated election laws in the recent barangay polls," said Rep. Tom Villarin of party-list Akbayan.

Turn to Page 8

"The DILG should know better and be prepared to prevent or even mitigate these things from happening prior to the elections through a vigorous information drive about the non-partisan nature of barangay elections," he said.

Another militant lawmaker, Rep. Emmi de Jesus of women's group Gabriela, said it would be unfair if Diño would not support his statement with concrete action because this suggests that all members of the House are suspects.

"Better for Martin to name names of (those) involved in these mentioned election anomalies. (Trapo or traditional politicians are at) work again," she said, implying that these politicians have succeeded once again in corrupting and influencing the outcome of the polls.

Senate President Aquilino Pimentel III asked yesterday the DILG to go after candidates allegedly involved in vote-buying and other election-related violations.

Pimentel said the DILG should not tarry by conducting investigations but just undertake "immediate action" based on the evidence it has against the alleged violators.

He said it would be best if the DILG filed charges to set an example to candidates in the coming elections and "teach them a lesson."

"Whether partymate or not, it doesn't matter. If there are violations of election law, file cases," Pimentel said.

Diño, for his part, said he would first gather more evidence before naming the lawmakers allegedly involved in vote-buying and other illegal activities.

The DILG official admitted that while he has received text messages from concerned citizens claiming that at least 100 lawmakers were involved in vote-buying and other illegal activities during the election season, these should be substantiated by concrete evidence before they are named.

"Otherwise, it would be unfair to (these lawmakers)," he said in a phone interview yesterday.

Diño said he has entertained all complaints sent to his office, adding that they are in the process of gathering evidence.

As far as Magdalo Rep. Gary Alejano is concerned, President Duterte should have set an example "by participating in political processes," in apparent reference to the Chief Executive's decision to skip voting because all of the candidates were his friends.

"It might not be his intention, but the decision not to vote in the barangay and SK elections sends a message of undermining the significance

of the basic democratic practice - suffrage," he said.

As this developed, two reelectionist barangay chairmen in Cagayan are facing investigations before the Comelec for allegedly buying votes in the towns of Gonzaga and Aparri.

Philippine National Police (PNP) Region 2 director Chief Supt. Mario Espino said Arturo Alvarez and Nemesio Furagganan of Sta. Cruz, Gonzaga and Dodan, Aparri, respectively, were accused of distributing P300 to P500 on the eve and early morning hours of election day.

The candidates won the election, but Espino claimed that cases for violation of the Omnibus Election Code have been filed against them.

Meanwhile, eight incidents of vote buying in Western Visayas are now subject of an investigation by the Commission on Elections (Comelec) and the PNP.

Peaceful polls, good turnout

The DILG yesterday lauded over 1,000 police officers who served as board of election tellers (BETs) in the elections.

"The courage and selflessness of the PNP personnel who served as BET members across the country are admirable and worthy of commendation," DILG officer-in-charge Eduardo Año said in a statement.

Año said 1,104 police officers served as BETs in Mindanao, Cordillera Administrative Region and Calabarzon, when the assigned teachers failed to report or backed out because of security problems.

Quezon City Rep. Alfred Vargas, meantime, congratulated all the winners of the barangay and SK elections.

"Remember that (you) were chosen by your constituents based on your platform of government and upholding democracy in the 42,000 barangays in the country," he said.

For its part, the Comelec yesterday described the voter turnout in last Monday's elections as "good."

But Comelec acting chairman AJ Parreño could not provide figures, claiming that they were still collating data from

15

held offices as of press time.

"I don't want to give numbers unless we have validated them," he said in a press conference late last Monday.

For his part, Comelec commissioner Sheriff Abas suspected a possible failure of elections in a polling precinct in Northern Samar. The poll body, however, added that they are waiting for reports from its field officers.

The proclamation of winning candidates was slightly slower than expected, an of-

ficial of the Comelec revealed yesterday.

"We were optimistic with our projections that a majority of proclamations would be done within (election day) but then again, it's still within the time frame of up to 32 hours after the elections," Comelec spokesman James Jimenez told reporters.

The Comelec was expecting that by 8 p.m. last night, all of the winning candidates shall have been proclaimed.

While the barangay and SK polls were generally peaceful, the PNP has recorded 57 violent incidents believed related to the elections since April 14.

But PNP chief Director General Oscar Albayalde said election day was successful with the security coverage they provided at the polling precincts.

"We can say now that it was a really big success. Our countrymen were able to vote properly without threats to them," he said in a news briefing at Camp Crame yesterday.

"I'm personally satisfied with the outcome of all election security operations by PNP units despite the long duty hours that commenced last May

11 when we placed the entire PNP under full alert to assume election duties," he added.

Albayalde said they would continue to perform their duties as deputies of the Comelec until the end of the election period on May 21.

Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) spokesman Col. Edgard Arevalo agreed with Albayalde, declaring that the conduct of elections was peaceful.

Arevalo added that "no major incident had transpired that could have disrupted the election process."

The AFP Northern Luzon Command (Nolcom) confirmed Arevalo's assessment yesterday, saying the polls in all regions north of Metro Manila were "generally peaceful."

In a statement, Nolcom added that its forces were "deployed in strategic locations as deputized by the (Comelec) and in coordination with other concerned agencies, to ensure the security of polling places and safety of voters."

In the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), the DILG said it would only issue certificates of recognition to elected barangay and SK officials who test negative for drugs.

Kirby Abdullah, regional secretary of the DILG-ARMM, yesterday said winners also need to submit their statements of assets, liabilities and net worth, personal data sheets and copies of certificate of poll canvass authenticated by election officials in their provinces.

- With Paolo Romero, Sheila Crisostomo, Ding Cervantes, Raymund Catindig, John Unson, Ramon Lazaro, Emmanuel Tupas, Jennifer Rendon

Rody skips b'gay voting to stay neutral

By EDITH REGALADO

DAVAO CITY – Not wanting to offend any of those vying for barangay chairman who are all his friends and supporters, President Duterte decided to skip Monday's elections.

"To erase suspicion in the minds of the voters who really helped me, so I did not vote. Almost all were my supporters during the last elections and they would never believe that I voted for them and not for others. I think the better option would be to skip the voting. I don't want them to suspect me (of favoring one over the other)," he told reporters on the sidelines of his visit to the wake of former Senate president Edgardo Angara before dawn yesterday.

The post for barangay captain in Barangay 74-A Matina Crossing, where Duterte is a registered voter, was contested by former chairman Joel Santes and incumbent village chief Cindy Colina-Sy. The President is listed under Cluster 889 of Precinct 1245-A at the Daniel Aguinardo National High School.

Santes won over Sy, who

took the post only last year after former chairman Angela Trinidad was appointed labor attaché of the Philippine embassy in Washington.

Although he did not vote, Duterte was quick to point out that he was also busy monitoring the barangay elections – the first one under his administration – all over the country "using so many gadgets."

Speaker Pantaleon Alvarez said there is no criminal or even administrative sanction for the President's failure to cast his vote in Monday's elections.

"It is not a problem at all. Voting is your sovereign right and privilege and it is up to you to exercise it or not," Alvarez told **The STAR**.

He also said it does not matter if one is a public official as it is neither mandatory nor an obligation for them.

"So what if you are a public official? It is not an obligation for every public official. So what if they would not vote?" Alvarez added.

Alvarez said there are justifiable causes for one not to vote, including sickness.

Meanwhile, Malacañang greeted the winners of the

barangay and SK polls and praised agencies and private groups who worked to ensure the peaceful conduct of the elections.

"The Palace wishes to congratulate all the duly elected barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan officials. This is the first democratic electoral exercise under the Duterte administration. We thank everyone for the full cooperation in ensuring that the 2018 elections... would be peaceful and orderly in all regions of the country," presidential spokesman Harry Roque said at a press briefing.

Citing data from the National Election Monitoring Action Center, Roque said there were 47 cases of violence since the election period started on April 14. Of that number, seven were confirmed to be election-related.

"There were no serious threats monitored by the Armed Forces of the Philippines in regard to the conduct of elections. Nonetheless, the contingency measures were laid out, including the deployment of sufficient number of specially trained and equipped AFP personnel in Comelec-identified threat areas," Roque added. – **With Alexis Romero**

DFA tells Pinoys in Surabaya to be vigilant; PH safe – AFP

By ROY C. HABASA

The Philippine government advised yesterday the more than 250 Filipinos who are situated in Surabaya to remain vigilant following the series of deadly suicide bombings that rocked Indonesia's second largest city early this week.

The Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) said the Philippine Embassy in Jakarta is in touch with members of the Filipino community in Surabaya urging them to "limit their movement until the situation normalizes."

While it has not received any information from the Embassy that would indicate any Filipino casualties in the bombings, the foreign affairs office said it will continue to monitor the situation in Surabaya, a port city and capital of East Java province.

As of January 2017, there are more than 8,000 Filipinos in Indonesia, mostly working under the managerial, professional and technical categories.

Reports showed that on Monday morning, one family brought its 8-year-old daughter to conduct a suicide bombing on Surabaya's police station.

While the girl miraculously survived, four police officers and six civilians were reportedly killed in the attack.

Meanwhile, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Tuesday said that it is exerting all efforts to ensure that the terrorist attacks in Indonesia will not happen here in the country.

AFP Spokesman Marine Colonel Edgard Arevalo made the remark following an interview. (With a report from Francis T. Wakefield)

FB watchdogs failed to spot this fake news?

BY VICTOR REYES

ARMED Forces chief Gen. Carlito Galvez said a recent manifesto, supposedly issued by disgruntled soldiers, probably came from a civilian propagandist to destabilize the Duterte administration.

"Most of those people who want to destabilize or criticize the government will do everything, even deception. They will deceive the people so that they can gain some (support)," said Galvez.

"What is the intention of that? It's really to deceive people so that they will feel that the soldiers are discontented... We believe it came from a propagandist who is a civilian," added Galvez.

The manifesto was posted on the Facebook page of one Steve Dissident on May 7. The manifesto purportedly came from officers and soldiers of the Southern Command or Southcom.

The AFP's Southern Command, based in Zamboanga City, was actually dissolved in 2006, paving the way for the establishment of the Western Mindanao Command that took over the headquarters of Southern Command and Eastern Mindanao Command in Davao City.

The officers and soldiers of Southern Command said they have withdrawn their support from "this fake governance of Mister Duterte." They called on other units of the AFP to join them and heed the call of the people.

Galvez said the soldiers' morale is high, noting the President has shown he really cared for the soldiers.

No coup plot vs Digong - AFP

Tinlyak ni AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Carlito Galvez na mananatiling tapat sa liderato ni Pangulong Duterte ang 125,000 malakas na puwersa ng Armed Forces of the Philippines.

Ito'y sa gitna na rin ng kumalat na balita sa Facebook post mula umano sa mga sundalo ng "Southern Command" na dismayado sa pamamalakad ni Pangulong Duterte na umano'y kakalas na ng suporta.

"Its fake, its fake because there is no SouthCom that exist and at the same time the current conditions or the morale of the Filipino soldiers is much different," ani Galvez sa mediamen.

Sinabi ni Galvez na walang dahilan para kumalas sila ng suporta sa Commander-in-Chief dahil kinakalinga nito at pinagmamalasakitan ang kapakanan ng mga sundalo, una na rito ang mataas na umento sa suweldo.

"The President has a good relationship with soldiers, especially those who are wounded and staying in hospitals. He (even) stayed for 10 minutes talking with the soldiers. He also gives benefits to our soldiers," ani Galvez.

Bukod dito ay patuloy ang pagpapatupad ni Pangulong Duterte ng modernisasyon ng AFP partikular na sa kanilang mga armas at iba pang kagamitang pandigma. (Joy Cantos)

GENEVA CONVENTION CITED

GROUP PLEADS FOR RELEASE OF NPA LEADER NABBED IN HOSPITAL

DAVAO CITY—A group supporting peace talks between the government and communist rebels pleaded for the release on humanitarian grounds of a rebel leader captured while he was getting treatment for gunshot wounds in a hospital in Bukidnon.

In a statement, Exodus for Justice and Peace (EJP) said releasing Zaldy Cañete, alias Ka Jinggoy, would “help build the track of peace talks.”

Aglipayan Bishop Hamuel Tequies, one of the leaders of EJP, said EJP members saw pictures of Cañete that showed the rebel leader to be critically wounded.

Cañete, reports said, was wounded in a clash with government soldiers in Kitaotao, Bukidnon province, last week and was taken to a hospital in Don Carlos town, also in Bukidnon.

Geneva Convention

Tequies said the Geneva Convention and International Humanitarian Law (IHL) protect “wounded combatants from attacks as they are incapable of engaging in combat.”

Those wounded in combat, Tequies said, should be “accorded rights to medical care.”

Capturing Cañete “would constitute a serious breach” of the Geneva Convention, which governs the conduct of opponents in war, and IHL, an international law, Tequies said.



WOUNDED REBEL Zaldy Cañete, alias Ka Jinggoy, during the 48th founding anniversary of Communist Party of the Philippines on Dec. 26, 2016—BARRY OHAYLAN

Tequies said his group believed that if the military released Cañete, the effort to “humanize the dire impact of civil war on human lives and, more importantly, to bring forth confidence in the peace talks” would be one step closer to reality.

General’s order

But Maj. Ezra Balagtey, spokesperson for the military’s Eastern Mindanao Command (Eastmincom) based here, said Cañete was not being held in prison.

“Was he deprived of medical attention?” said Balagtey.

He said Lt. Gen. Benjamin

Madrigal Jr., Eastmincom chief, had given a directive for the military to help Cañete get medical treatment.

The rebel leader, who replaced the late New People’s Army (NPA) commander Leoncio Pitao, alias Commander Parago, has not been removed from the hospital, Balagtey said.

“He is not being incarcerated,” the military spokesperson added.

In a separate statement, NPA in Southern Mindanao questioned the arrest of Cañete.

Rigoberto Sanchez, NPA regional spokesperson, said the

capture of Cañete while the rebel leader sought treatment at a hospital was “treacherous.”

The military considered Cañete as a major catch since he succeeded Pitao, who was killed in a clash in Paquibato District here in 2015, as head of NPA’s Pulang Bagani Company 1.

String of attacks

The NPA unit operates in Bukidnon and Davao del Norte provinces and Davao City.

Balagtey said Cañete faced a string of murder and arson charges due to his group’s attacks on government forces, civilians and businesses in Davao City, particularly the spate of attacks against Lapan-day Foods Corp. last year that resulted in over P1 billion in losses and the death of fish vendor Larry Buenafe.

The Compostela Valley native was first arrested in 2010 after getting wounded in a clash with the 3rd Scout Rangers Battalion in Laak town, Compostela Valley.

Three of his followers died in that fighting.

“However, he was able to jump bail sometime in 2013 and went back to the terror group,” Balagtey said.

“The arrest of Jinggoy and his eventual prosecution will now give justice to the victims of his many atrocities,” Madrigal said.—ALLANAWAL INQ

Soldier slain in clash with NPA rebels

A soldier was killed in an encounter with suspected New People's Army (NPA) rebels in General Nakar, Quezon on Monday.

The fatality was identified as Sgt. Jun Ray Samillano. Two rebels, who yielded two shotguns, were arrested following the clash.

Gen. Arnulfo Burgos, 202nd Infantry Division commander, said the clash occurred when soldiers of the 2nd Jungle Fighter Company were deployed in Barangay Umiray after receiving reports on the sighting of communist rebels.

— Ed Amoroso, Michelle Zoleta

16

5

Army sarge killed in clash with NPAs

By **DANNY J. ESTACIO** and **FRANCIS T. WAKEFIELD**

GENERAL NAKAR, Quezon — An army sergeant was killed in a 30-minute gunbattle with New People's Army (NPA) guerrillas in this town last Monday afternoon.

The Southern Luzon Command (SOLCOM) reported the death of one "Sergeant Samilano" who was part of the 2nd Jungle Fighter Company — a platoon from the army's 80th Infantry of the Battalion — that encountered about 15 armed NPA terrorists at 3:45 p.m. Monday.

The troopers, led by 2nd Lieutenant Candog, engaged the Communist NPA Terrorists (CNTs) in a between Sitio

Libutan and Sitio Panagsaan in Barangay Umiray, here, while on a mission to verify civilian reports of NPA forces converging in the village.

"The exchange of gunfire lasted for 30 minutes that resulted to the death of one of the troops, while (there are) undetermined number of casualties on the scampering enemies based on the traces of bloodstains," said Brigadier General Arnulfo Marcelo Burgos the Commander of the Army's 202nd Brigade.

Burgos said two guerrillas were captured following the encounter.]

Militar vs NPA: Sundalo dedo, 2 huli

Isang sundalo ang napaslang habang dalawang miyembro ng New People's Army (NPA) ang nadakip sa bakbakan sa pagitan ng tropa ng pamahalaan at ng komunistang grupo sa Brgy. Umiray, General Nakar, Quezon sa mismong araw ng eleksyong pambarangay kamakalawa. Ayon kay Captain Patrick Jay Retumban, spokesman ng 2nd Infantry Division (ID) ng Phi Army, bandang alas-3:45 ng hapon nang magsimula ang 30 minutong bakbakan sa nasabing lugar. Sa ulat ni Brig. Gen. Amulfo Marcelo Burgos, Commander ng Army's 202nd Infantry Brigade, kasalukuyang nagsasagawa ng combat operation ang tropa ng mga sundalo sa liblib na lugar nang masabat ang 15 terrorists mula sa Guerilla Front Cesar ng NPA. Samantala, bandang alas-5 ng hapon nang magkaroon muli ng palitan ng putok ang magkabilang panig bagama't wala namang nasugatan sa insidente. Narekober sa lugar ang dalawang shotgun, back packs at mga subersibong dokumento. (*Joy Santos/Tony Sandoval*)

Severed finger found among firearms left behind by fleeing NPAs

By **YAS D. OCAMPO**
and **MIKE U. CRISMUNDO**

DAVAO CITY – Troops recovered a severed index finger among the cache of arms left behind by retreating New People's Army (NPA) terrorists, whose attack on a militia patrol base was repulsed by the military in Sinacungan, Esperanza, Agusan del Sur, early Monday.

According to Brig. Gen. Franco Nemesio Gacal, Commander of

402nd Infantry Brigade, troops recovered the index finger, believed to be from a wounded terrorist, alongside an M16 rifle and an M203 grenade launcher during the clearing operations two hours later.

The incident threatened to delay the Barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan elections in the area, until troops arrived to thwart the NPA threat.

There were no government casualties.

Troops were able to recover

one M16 rifle and one M203 grenade launcher with an index finger believed to be that of a wounded NPA.

The military was also able to scuttle an attempt by the NPA to burn construction equipment in Sitio Miaray, Barangay Mandahican in Cabanglasan, Bukidnon, according to Lt. Tere Ingente, chief of the Public Affairs Office (PAO) of the Northeastern and Northern Mindanao Fourth Infantry (Diamond) Division (5th ID)

yesterday.

Ingente told The Manila Bulletin that troops of the Eighth Infantry Battalion (8th IB) engaged an undetermined number of Communist terrorists, who were about to set ablaze some construction equipment in Miaway area.

"From the information revealed by the locals, the NPA terrorists threatened to burn the equipment belonging to Ulticon Builders Incorporated (UBI) in the area," stressed the 4th ID PAO officer.

16

May 2018

Page: 11

• **Aid for returnees**

ISULAN, Sultan Kudarat (PNA) – Livelihood is not the only assistance waiting for rebel returnees, but also safety and security guarantees as well. Sultan Kudarat Gov. Pax Mangudadatu gave this assurance to four communist rebels presented to the provincial government by the military Sunday, where the former New People's Army (NPA) members also turned over four firearms. Lt. Colonel Lauro Oliveros, the commander of the First Mechanized Infantry Battalion, said the NPA rebel returnees belonged to the NPA Guerilla Front 73. Oliveros said the rebels decided to turn themselves in after experiencing difficulties in running away from government forces.

26

NPA violates self-imposed truce for barangay, SK polls

BY VICTOR REYES

NEW People's Army rebels violated the ceasefire they declared for the barangay and Sanguniang Kabataan elections in Eastern Mindanao by attacking an Army detachment in Esperanza town in Agusan del Sur during the voting on Monday.

No one was killed or injured in the attack but it delayed the election in barangay Sinacungan, said Maj. Ezra Balagtey, spokesman of the military's Eastern Mindanao Command based in Davao City.

Balagtey said an undetermined number of rebels attacked the detachment, manned by Cagfu forces, around 4 a.m. Monday. He said the two sides traded fire for two hours, until the insurgents withdrew.

Balagtey said the attack "caused the delay of the voting but the troops immediately restored normalcy and allowed the start of elections in the area a little bit late than the supposed time of opening."

During clearing operations, Balagtey said

soldiers recovered at the encounter site an M16 rifle and one M203 grenade launcher with an index finger believed to be that of a wounded NPA rebel.

Before the election, NPA-Northern Eastern Mindanao Region spokesman Ariel Montero said they observed ceasefire in the region from May 14 up to 18 "in deference to the people's right to vote freely."

Eastmincom chief Lt. Gen. Benjamin Madrigal lashed at the NPA for violating their own truce.

In Quezon, a soldier was killed following a clash with NPA rebels who were said to be planning to sabotage the elections in Barangay Umiray in General Nakar town around 3:45 p.m. Monday.

Capt. Patrick Jay Retumban, spokesman of the Army's 2nd Infantry Division in Rizal, said troops from the 202nd Brigade were deployed to conduct operations after receiving reports that a group of rebels was planning to sabotage the election in the barangay.

Retumban said soldiers caught up with about 15 rebels, leading to a 30-minute firefight. He said the rebels withdrew but were again engaged by soldiers in a five-minute clash about an hour later.

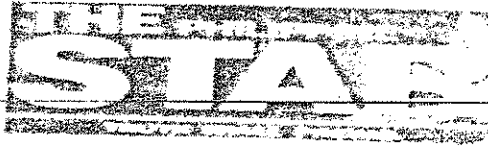
A soldier died in the first firefight. The military declined to name the soldier, pending the notification of his family.

On the NPA side, Retumban said two of the rebels were captured during the first encounter. Soldiers also recovered two shotguns, backpacks and rebel documents.

Retumban said other rebels may have been killed or injured "based on traces of blood."

He said the election process in the barangay proceeded as scheduled despite the clash.

In Maguindanao, AFP spokesman Col. Edgard Arevalo said two M203 grenade explosions occurred in Datu Unsay and Paglat towns before noon and before 3 p.m. Monday, respectively, delaying the elections.



House joint panels approve BBL

By DELON PORCALLA

A joint committee of the House of Representatives yesterday approved the proposed Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL) that will provide an autonomous and separate Islamic state in Mindanao.

The House committee on local government voted 32-3 while two more panels – the committee on Muslim affairs and the special panel on peace, reconciliation and unity – voted 27-3 each in favor of House Bill 6475 which abolishes the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM).

It has been stated that the ARMM is a failed experiment of the administration of the late president and democracy icon Cory Aquino.

Deputy Majority Leader Juan Pablo Bondoc, who is also with the House rules committee, assured Reps. Celso Lobregat of Zamboanga and Abdullah Khalid Dimaporo and his son Mohamad, both of Lanao del Norte, that

amendments would be allowed in the bill.

“There will be no attempt to muzzle you. Amendments will be allowed at the proper time, in the caucuses and in plenary. Otherwise, it would be very messy,” Bondoc said.

AnakMindanao Rep. Amihilda Sangcopan – chair of the House committee on peace, reconciliation and unity – expressed hope that President Duterte would certify the BBL as urgent and sign it into law before Congress adjourns on June 1.

“This will be a best gift for us as we celebrate the Holy Muslim month of Ramadan,” Sangcopan said.

Camarines Sur Rep. LRay Villafuerte said both the Senate and the House should conduct “marathon sessions” to speed up passage of the BBL.

Villafuerte said fast-tracking the approval of BBL would pave the way for Duterte’s vision for the long, elusive peace in Mindanao and rapid economic development,

especially in the region’s poorest provinces.

Duterte said the passage of the BBL should be prioritized as he is getting tired of trying to solve the longstanding conflict in Mindanao.

The BBL is meant to implement the 2014 Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro, the peace deal signed between the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

Both the MILF and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) have peace deals with the government, although military operations continue against extremist groups like the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters and the Abu Sayyaf bandit group.

The proposed BBL seeks to create a new Bangsamoro political entity with enhanced autonomy.

Duterte has warned that failure to enact the measure would worsen the problem in Mindanao and provide terrorists an excuse to recruit members. 2

Committee report on BBL approved

By ELLSON A. QUISMORIO

A House joint panel approved yesterday the committee report on Speaker Pantaleon Alvarez's proposed Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL), thus paving the way for the landmark measure's approval before the plenary.

The measure, designated as House Bill (HB) No. 6475, was adopted by the three-committee joint panel via separate voting (2-1) last April 16.

The panels, which met again Tuesday or during the resumption of sessions right after the summer break, are the House Committees on Local Government, Muslim Affairs, and the Special Committee on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity.

Quezon City 6th District Rep. Jose Christopher Belmonte—after some discussion by his colleagues—motioned for the approval of the committee report, leading to another per committee voting.

In the end, the Local Government,

Muslim Affairs, and the Peace, Reconciliation and Unity panels all gave their nod to the committee report via individual vote tallies of 32-3 (yes-no), 27-3, and 27-3, respectively.

"The committee report is now approved by the three committees (3-0)," declared Local Government panel chairman, South Cotabato 1st district

Rep. Pedro Acharon Jr., who presided over the joint hearing.

It can be recalled that during the April 16 voting of the joint body, the Muslim Affairs and the Peace, Reconciliation and Unity panels favored the adoption of HB No. 6475, while the Local Government panel rejected it.

House panels endorse BBL for plenary approval

BY WENDELL VIGILIA

A JOINT committee of the House of Representatives yesterday endorsed for plenary approval the proposed Bangsamoro Basic Law, which seeks to replace the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao with a new autonomous region.

The House joint committees on local government, on Muslim affairs and the special panel on peace, reconciliation and unity voted to adopt its committee report on House Bill No. 6475 principally authored by Speaker Pantaleon Alvarez.

The local government panel voted 32-3 in favor of the measure while the House committee on Muslim affairs and the House special panel on peace, reconciliation and unity both voted 27-3 in favor of the committee report.

Last April 16, the joint panel voted 2-1 to approve the bill, a priority measure of the Duterte administration.

House majority leader Rodolfo Fariñas said the House of Representatives will approve the measure by the end of the month, before Congress adjourns sine die.

Fariñas said a caucus will be held next week not only to allow congressmen to air their opposition to some provisions of the bill but also to find a "common ground" before the bill reaches plenary deliberations.

In the hearing, deputy majority leader Juan Pablo Bondoc assured Reps. Celso Lobregat (LDP, Zamboanga) and Reps. Abdullah Dimaporo and son Mohamad Khalid Dimaporo

(PDP-Laban, Lanao del Norte) that they will be allowed to proposed amendments when the bill reaches the plenary.

"Don't worry, there will be no attempt to muzzle or estoppel you. We will not seek to muzzle you. Amendments will definitely be allowed at the proper time - in the caucuses and in plenary. Because otherwise, it would be very messy," the Pampanga congressman said.

Rep. Amihilda Sangcopan (PL, Anak Mindanao) said the bill's passage will be the "best gift for us as we celebrate the Holy Muslim month of Ramadan.

"We are grateful about the assurance and support for the swift passage of the peace measure," Sangcopan added.

Rep. Luis Raymond Villafuerte (NP, Camarines Sur) said the measure's enactment "would clear the way for President Duterte's vision to achieve peace in Mindanao and rapid economic development, especially in the island's poorest provinces."

Last September, Alvarez led the filing of HB No. 6475 based on the Bangsamoro Transition Commission's (BTC) version of the bill.

The measure seeks to provide for the BBL and abolish the ARMM by repealing Republic Act 9054, entitled "An Act to Strengthen and Expand the Organic Act for the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao" and RA 6374 entitled "An Act Providing for an Organic Act for the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao."

The proposal provides for the retention of the central government's power and control

over defense and external security.

"The purpose of this Basic Law is to establish a political entity, provide for its basic structure of government in recognition of the justice and legitimacy of the cause of the Bangsamoro people and their aspiration to chart their political future through a democratic process that will secure their identity and posterity and allow for meaningful governance," the bill said.

The bill prescribes the design "for the continuation and improvement of vital reforms introduced by the current government of the ARMM."

"This restructured entity will enhance existing systems and procedures, as well as establish a new set of institutional arrangements and modalities between the central government and the autonomous government with respect to the sharing of wealth and revenues, transitional aspects, and normalization," it said.

It was Deputy Speaker Bai Sandra Sema who raised the omnibus motion seeking to approve the Speaker's version of the bill even if it meant that the working draft, which was the product of the committee's nationwide consultations, was already scrapped.

The sub-committee, chaired by Rep. Wilter Wee Palma II (PDP-Laban, Zamboanga Sibugay) and represented by at least three members each from the three committees, came up with a working draft bill based on House Bill 6475, 92, 6121 and 6263 authored by Alvarez, Sema, Rep. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo (PDP-Laban, Pampanga) and Rep. Muhamad Khalid Dimaporo (NPC, Lanao del Norte), respectively.

Gov't forces, armed men clash in Bohol

By CALVIN D. CORDOVA

CEBU CITY—Government forces are pursuing a group of armed men following a fire-fight early Tuesday morning in Barangay Campagao, Bilar, Bohol.

Members of the 47th Infantry Battalion (IB) were patrolling in Campagao around 5 a.m. when they chanced upon at least 14 armed men, triggering a firefight, said Brig. Gen. Francisco Delfin in a press conference yesterday at the Police Regional Office (PRO)-Central Visayas Headquarters.

The firefight lasted for about 30 minutes before the armed men retreated, said Delfin, assistant commander of 3rd IB.

No casualties were reported during the encounter but two government troopers sustained minor gunshot wounds.

A certain Corporal Campilanos was hit in the right cheek, while one PFC Valota was wounded in the fingers, Delfin said.

A magazine for AK-47 and an Uzi sub-machine gun were recovered in the area.

"We are still identifying the affiliation of the armed group. Bohol has been declared as insurgency-free but we will still check if they are members

of the New People's Army or private armed group. But according to our initial investigation, it is certain that they are not Abu Sayyaf bandits," said Delfin.

The encounter did not affect the elections in the barangay as winners were proclaimed as early as 2 a.m. yesterday, Delfin added.

Chief Supt. Robert Quenery, director of PRO-7, police will help in the investigation to help identify the armed or what group they are affiliated.

"We will put up a joint command post with the AFP. We will have more checkpoints to intercept the fleeing men or prevent spillovers," said Quenery.

• **MILF members nabbed**

ISULAN, Sultan Kudarat – Security forces arrested two members of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), including a minor, who tried to disrupt the canvassing of votes at the municipal hall in Paglat, Maguindanao Monday night. Lt. Col. Harold Cabunoc, 33rd Infantry Battalion commander, said the suspects were accosted by security forces while milling among the crowd outside the municipal hall of Paglat town where the canvassing of votes for Barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan election were held. He identified the suspects as Bong Kanakan and Jeffrey Talusan, who both yielded unlicensed .45 caliber pistols when frisked by policemen and soldiers who were deployed in the area. Cabunoc said the suspects were out to intervene in the poll canvassing in favor of the candidates they were supporting. (Joseph Jubelag)

Maute-ISIS recruitment still going on, says AFP

BY VICTOR REYES

THE Armed Forces yesterday said the Maute-ISIS group continues to recruit and regroup, nearly a year after they laid siege to Marawi City, leaving over a thousand people dead.

"The information that we have is they are in the process. They are doing that. What we are saying is we have such reports and we are bent on ensuring that they will not succeed," said AFP spokesman Col. Edgard Arevalo.

After the liberation of Marawi on October 23, the military said the group is recruiting and regrouping, one of the reasons cited for the continued imposition of martial law in Mindanao.

"We are not surprised by those reports because we know they have suffered great loss, great setback. With their intent, as the chief of staff (Gen. Carlito Galvez) was saying that they want

to get back and pursue their evil plan, they're going to regroup and recruit," said Arevalo.

Arevalo said the Maute-ISIS failed to recruit a "desired number" of members to stage a similar attack.

"We expect that that will continue so they can regroup and put up another attempt as mentioned by the chief of staff. But what we are saying is we are going to exert efforts to ensure that they will stay as they have failed," he said.

The Maute-ISIS group laid siege to the city on May 23, forcing President Duterte to place Mindanao under martial law. The five-month conflict brought massive destruction to properties and left 974 terrorists, 168 soldiers and policemen, and 47 civilians dead.

On Monday afternoon, Galvez said the military is not letting its guard down against the Maute-

See MAUTE-ISIS > Page B6

FROM PAGE B1

MAUTE-ISIS

ISIS Group. "I believe it would take years for Marawi incident to happen again," said Galvez.

"They have been weakened, greatly weakened with the success that we had in Marawi. The enemy has been weakened (but) we can-

not stay complacent," Galvez said, adding the military is "very confident" with its current counter-terrorism efforts.

On the series of ISIS-inspired bombings in Indonesia on Sunday and Monday that left 13 people dead, Arevalo said those attacks are "something that civilized nations would condemn."

Arevalo said the Philippine military is expressing its condolences and sympathies to the victims of the attacks, which targeted churches.

"On our part in the AFP, we are implementing, not only because of this incident, our own measures, efforts to ensure that no terrorist attack or activity, similar to that in Indonesia, will happen here," said Arevalo.

DEALING WITH A PROBLEMATIC NEIGHBOR

Dear President Duterte,
God knows what China will do next. Penetrate and sabotage our economy? Own our inlands and territorial waters? Eat our gizzards?

Despite its "declaration" recognizing our sovereign rights over the West Philippine Sea and its "promise" of desistance in transforming and militarizing our other territories, China is now doing the exact opposite. Recently, it has installed anti-ship cruise missiles and surface-to-air missile systems on three out of the seven Philippine-claimed reefs that form part of the disputed Spratly Islands. It also continues to transform and militarize the Kagitingan, Calderon, Burgos, Mabini, Panganiban,

Zamora, and McKennan reefs, which comprise our Kalayaan Group of Islands.

When will you come to your senses?
When will you stop entertaining and be-friending China?

I know that being head of state is not an easy feat. But the Filipino people put you where you are not to make a mess, but to make sure that you are taking good care of them, their progenies, and the patrimony this young yet promising country has.

Please, do not let China suck the blood out of us until the very last drop.

REYNALDO PINYOL
reynaldopinyol.60@gmail.com

West Philippine Sea

Part 1 - A discordant foreign policy

"If rape is inevitable, you might as well enjoy it." This just about sums up our foreign policy with regard to the West Philippine Sea (WPS). But the inevitable has happened. We are already being raped by China. And our leadership has decided to struggle and complain only half-heartedly. In fact, our leadership has gone out of its way to convince us that: a) we can't



LITO MONICO C. LORENZANA

do anything about it; and b) we might as well make the most of the situation.

Others will probably contradict me and say, this is not rape. This is plain and simple prostitution, a degree of perversion that is much, much lower. We are therefore reduced to defin-

ing our relationship with China as either rape or prostitution.

During P. Noy's watch, the Philippines formally brought an arbitration case against China's territorial claims, based on the so-called 'nine-dash line' encompassing almost the whole of the South China Sea, turning the SCS into in effect a Chinese lake, transgressing territories of several countries: Vietnam, Brunei, Malaysia, Taiwan and the Philippines. Our country went to seek relief from the Perma-

nent Court of Arbitration (PCA) at The Hague as any civilized country would do. On July 12, 2016, at the start of President Duterte's term, the tribunal decided in the Philippines' favor, saying that China's claims exceed the limits of maritime entitlements permitted under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

In short, China's claim to "historical rights" has no legal basis whatsoever and that China

45 ➤ LorenzanaA6

West Philippine Sea

has violated the Philippines' sovereign rights. China did not participate in the proceedings and rejected the ruling declaring. According to UNCLOS, nations have sovereignty over waters extending 12 nautical miles from its land and "exclusive control" over economic activities in an exclusive economic zone (EEZ) 200 nautical miles out.

The disputed territories include Pag-asa (Scarborough Shoal) in Luzon and the bigger Kalayaan island group off Palawan in the southwestern Philippines. For decades, these islands, islets, keys and reefs were haven for fishermen from different nationalities containing no large settlements, until one country after another countries laying claim on these territories, either by including them in their national maps or occupying the place physically and declaring ownership outright. The Philippines was not entirely innocent in this matter as a Filipino lawyer Tomas Cloma declared the "Free Territory of Freedomland" in 1956. This declaration triggered unfriendly actions from other countries, notably China.

But we did go to the Hague and the PCA decided in our favor. The ruling placed the Philippines on a moral high ground. This helped enhance Philippine credibility when the government executed a pivot to China away from America in 2016 signaling "an independent foreign policy." This was regarded as a wise move as this acknowledged the formidable economic behemoth with almost 1.4 billion people as a trading partner and the emerging superpower. The Deegong's gesture endeared him to China and she gladly reciprocated with economic incentives the Philippine badly needed, impelling the 'build, build, build' protocols. It was also made clear to America that our century's old special relations must undergo changes that must respond to the ever-changing geopolitical realities. But the close family ties will not be broken.

But the Deegong, armed with the righteousness of the arbitral ruling and his pre-eminence as head of the Asean for the year we hosted the summits, failed to rally the other countries fretting over China's 9-dash line claims. He instead declared expansively that the Philippines, China and Russia now formed the new triumvirate—whatever that means. This naivetè may just have emboldened China, a bully in the playground, to read very well the actuations of a neophyte in geopolitics. A stern warning that China will not recognize the arbitral ruling and will not back down on the 9-dash line claims, risking war on one hand but appeasing the

Philippines with large amounts of economic incentives, on the other, sealed the fate of the conflict territories. Thus, China embarked on a massive build-up of its occupied territories in the Kalayaan island group.

DU30, now deep into his bromance with Xi Jinping and protecting his role as a partner to China and the promise of economic goodies has been profuse in his praise and admiration for the China strong man.

From the time the arbitral question was decided in our favor, China has strengthened its hold on the Kalayaan group in the Spratlys, Fiery Cross, Subi Reef and Mischief Reef, expanding their areas by several thousand meters, Hangars along airstrips; underground structures for munitions and essential materiel; hardened missile platforms and radar and communication facilities were installed. Satellite photos from the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) show short-range missiles in place and aircraft flying in and out ferrying personnel and materiel. There is no doubt of China's ongoing militarization of the islands that the Philippines lay claim to.

But what has been the Philippines' response? They range from the pathetic to the bizarre. Duterte said the Philippines cannot stop China from building on (the islands), adding that he cannot let soldiers die in a war that the country is certain to lose. (Rappler, March 20, 2017)

The President is unable to or refuses to see options other than of a "butangero" in the streets is inured to. Reduce the alternatives into a fist fight or flee." (*Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 16 November 2017).

And the bizarre.

"Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque even said that the time will come that the Philippines will thank China for the artificial island they've built 'if we can ask China to leave the islands.'" (PDI, 8 February 2018)

In the assessment of one expert, Gregory Poling, director of the Washington-based Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative, the DU30 administration's WPS policy as seeking to avoid war with China and wanting Filipino fishermen to be able to fish is "... well-intentioned but naive. I don't think that's practicality. I think that's defeatist. But the only options here are not surrender or war. There is a whole spectrum of ways to impose costs on the Chinese for being bullies and outlaws, that we haven't yet tried. It's a little early to fly the white flag and surrender now." (*Rappler*, March 20, 2017)

Sovereignty

DAHLI ASPILLERA



'The world actually needs more Dutertes—leaders with empathy, leaders who listen to their people, and leaders who are ready to sacrifice their lives to protect their people.'

RECALL when the Agence France Presse (AFP) published that the UN human rights chief Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein announced that PRRD needs "psychiatric evaluation"? Zeid wants PRRD to change his behavior. Zeid is also appalled to learn from erroneous reports of AFP that "Philippine police had killed more than 4,100 drug suspects...." AFP's fake news.

The 4000, if there are those, were not killed by the PNP. Credit is due to the drug dealers, drug users, drug distributors, drug runners who, in the course of being in this business, end up killing each other including over unpaid debts. Buy-Busts also leave a lot of illegal drug dealers dead. Also, drug traders want to hide their identities. If a customer or distributor of illegal drugs feels that one of his addict/customer is going in for rehab, with the authorities, and being with the authorities may reveal him as the addict's former supplier, the addict has to be silenced. The police has nothing to do in such killings. Fake news from AFP that "the Philippine police killed 4,100 drug suspects."

Zeid also referred to the U.N.'s special rapporteur, Victoria Tauli-Corpuz. This Filipino was charged by the Philippine justice department in a regional court with terrorism, not because of her position as U.N. special rapporteur on the rights of indigenous people, but because of her links with the Ilocos-Cordillera Regional Committee (ICRC) of the CPP-NPA. If human rights chief Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein is not aware, CPP-NPA is in the foreign terrorist organizations lists of both the United States and the European Union.

Secretary of Foreign Affairs Alan Peter Cayetano states his President's position: The Philip-

ippines is a sovereign state with a fully functioning democracy led by a legitimately elected government that is getting things done for the Filipino people.

While we note that the United States and other entities such as the European Parliament have their own reporting mechanisms, the Philippines has its own internal processes and mechanisms to ensure that the human rights of all our people are protected and respected. We assure the international community that in the conduct of our campaign, we will remain guided by the rule of law embodied in our Constitution, which also enshrines the country's long-standing tradition of upholding human rights. We do not need others who think they know better than us Filipinos to tell us what to do. As a sovereign nation, the Philippines deserves the same kind of respect we have been extending to our friends in the international community.

The Philippines takes grave exception to the irresponsible and disrespectful comments of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights that cast untoward aspersions regarding the President of the Republic of the Philippines. The comments

of the High Commissioner bring great dishonor to the Human Rights Council and its noble endeavors. There is no reason whatsoever for such an unmeasured outburst directed against President Rodrigo Roa Duterte and it should not be repeated.

The Philippines is perturbed over the manner in which a ranking UN human rights official can overstep his mandate and insult leaders of member-states without first giving them due process. This could set a dangerous precedent that the Council would have to immediately address as otherwise member-states could also fall victim to those who seek to politicize and weaponize human rights to undermine legitimate governments.

The Philippines finds it unfortunate that the High Commissioner made such a statement without first ascertaining the facts surrounding the inclusion of Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, in the petition filed by the Department of Justice against the CPP-NPA.

Contrary to the impression of the High Commissioner, Ms. Victoria Tauli-Corpuz was included in the list not because of her posi-

tion as Special Rapporteur but because of her alleged links with the Ilocos-Cordillera Regional Committee (ICRC) of the CPP-NPA, which, if the High Commissioner is not aware of, is in the list of foreign terrorist organizations of both the United States and the European Union.

The High Commissioner may wish to know that the petition for proscription filed by the Department of Justice is a civil case that seeks to declare the CPP-NPA as a terrorist organization for its continuing terrorist activities in the Philippines. This action is in accordance with Republic Act 9372 or the Human Security Act of 2007 of the Philippines and is intended to protect the Filipino people.

Ms. Tauli-Corpuz and the other individuals mentioned in the petition are there because of their membership in or association with the CPP-NPA as reported over the years by the Philippine National Police and the Armed Forces of the Philippines. If indeed Ms. Tauli-Corpuz and the others named in the petition are innocent as they claim they are, they should see this as an opportunity to clear their names and prove in court that they have never been members of or associated with the group.

The High Commissioner may not be aware of it. He is being used in a well-orchestrated effort to destabilize a legitimate government that is being undertaken by parties with self-serving agendas and who stand to benefit the most by unseating President Duterte. The world actually needs more Dutertes—leaders with empathy; leaders who listen to their people; and leaders who are ready to sacrifice their lives to protect their people.

Dahliaspillera@yahoo.com

37

Philippine Rise

AN all-Filipino team of scientists has embarked on a historical research project in the Philippine Rise, formerly referred to as Benham Rise, and President Duterte sent them off with instructions to survey, study, and gather relevant data on this vast undersea plateau off Aurora province, which is clearly Philippine territory.

Duterte can claim the honor of being the first Filipino President to take a keen interest in the Philippine Rise, a 13-million hectare territory that is considered part of the country's extended continental shelf.

'President Duterte's trip to the Philippine Rise and other actions are commendable as these are evidence that the Philippines is not remiss in this basic duty to defend its officially designated rights.'

While the Philippines does not exercise sovereignty over the Philippine Rise-- only sovereign rights -- the fact that the place is potentially a rich source of natural gas and other resources such as heavy metals, not to mention its current status as a mother-load of rich fishing harvests, this piece of the ocean is significant for the nation.

The send-off program commemorates the United Nations declaration in 2012 that the submerged plateau is part of the Philippines'

extended continental shelf over which the country exercises sovereign rights.

Under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), the continental shelf comprises the seabed and subsoil of the submarine areas 200 nautical miles (NM) or 370 kilometers, from a state's baselines or "edges." The UN Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (UNCLCS) declared in 2012 that the place was part of the Philippine continental shelf, and so it became the country's first successful validated claim under UNCLOS.

The government, according to National Security Adviser Hermogenes Esperon, has stopped processing foreign applications for scientific research in Philippine Rise. This move is twinned with the official policy of encouraging Filipino scientists to carry out studies of the resource-rich seamount.

Because of incursions by Chinese research vessels in the area, the Philippine government took several measures to defend its sovereign rights over the Philippine rise. Last June 12, the Armed Forces Northern Luzon Command planted a metallic Philippine flag there. The soldiers also placed a marker 21 meters below the surface to assert the nation's rights over the plateau.

President Duterte's trip to the Philippine Rise and the various official actions his government has taken there are commendable as they are evidence that the Philippines is not remiss in this basic duty to defend its officially designated rights.

14

Duterte's achievements

WHEN Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque announced last week that President Duterte's State of the Nation address on July 23 will follow a new format where he will be talking to the people on matters close to his heart.

He will not be enumerating his achievements, Roque said, adding that that would be done at a separate occasion.

"So iyong mga achievement, siguro may mga ibang pagkakataon nang isa-isahin iyan," he said.

Critics of Duterte immediately retorted on social media: "What achievements?"

Aba, marami. Plenty, plenty.

On top of the list is the killing of 20,000 Filipinos in his brutal war against drugs.

This is in the Philippine National Police accomplishment report: 3,967 drug personalities killed after allegedly resisting arrest during police operations between July 1, 2016 and November 27, 2017.

ELLEN TORDESILLAS



For a president of a country to take pride in the assurance of the president of another country on his stay in power is pathetic.

There are 16,355 drug-related homicide cases "under investigation" from July 1, 2016 to September 30, 2017, the PNP report also said.

Another high on the list is the destruction of democratic institutions. In what many respected lawyers described as a blatant violation of the Constitution, eight justices of the Supreme Court

granted Duterte's wish of ousting Chief Justice Ma Lourdes Sereno, whom he has tagged as "enemy" via the quo warrant petition of Solicitor General Jose Calida.

With the ouster of Sereno by quo warranto, all members of the Supreme Court, whose independence is protected by the Constitution with the provision that they can only be removed by impeach-

ment are now at the mercy of the President. Goodbye check and balance which is essential in a democracy.

Duterte proudly said Tuesday that Chinese President Xi Jinping assured him that he will not want him to be ousted.

For a president of a country to take pride in the assurance of the president of another country on his stay in power is pathetic.

That's another achievement of Duterte: surrendering to China without a whimper parts of the South China Sea which the Philippines claims.

Then there's the record-breaking inflation caused by his tax reforms that greatly reduced the value of the peso. P1,000 these days can hardly last a day.

There are many more achievements by Duterte. You are welcome to add to this list.

Blog: www.ellentordesillas.com
Email: ellentordesillas@gmail.com

ONLINE NEWS

16 MAY 2018

www.inquirer.net

No Marawi-like siege anytime soon — AFP chief

By: **Frances Mangosing** - Reporter / [@FMangosingINQ](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 10:02 PM May 15, 2018

While there were reports of ongoing recruitment of ISIS-linked fighters in Mindanao, it would take years before another crisis like the Marawi siege will happen again in the country, Armed Forces chief Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr. said.

"It would take years for [the] Marawi incident to happen again, that's why... we are breaking the generational link or generational process so that we can counter yung (the) ISIS narrative," he told reporters at Camp Aguinaldo.

Galvez was the commander of the Western Mindanao Command when the five-month Marawi crisis happened last year. It was the biggest security challenge to the military in recent years.

He said they believe that the strength of the Maute forces has "greatly weakened" after the five-month gun battle ended last October.

The AFP chief said more than 2,000 firearms have been surrendered by the people and the town mayors to the government.

The Marawi siege, however, prompted the government to declare a year-long extension of martial law in Mindanao.

"The implementation of martial law hastened the arrest and also the neutralization of many threat groups... Yung magandang (The good) impact is we gained so much support from the people," he added.

Galvez could not say, however, if martial law would be extended anew when it ends later this year.

"I cannot predict. It's a political decision. For us, it has a very good significant impact in terms of countering terrorism in Mindanao. And not only terrorism but also criminalities," he said. /ee

www.inquirer.net

Duterte declares Philippine Rise as marine protected area

By: **Nestor Corrales** - Reporter / [@NCorralesINQ](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 09:34 PM May 15, 2018

Published: 4:34 p.m., March 15, 2018 | Updated: 9:34 p.m., March 15, 2018

ABOARD BRP DAVAO DEL SUR — President Rodrigo Duterte signed on Tuesday a presidential proclamation declaring parts of the Philippine Rise as a marine protected area during his visit to the resource-rich continental shelf.

Duterte signed the proclamation here during a send-off ceremony for 50 Filipino scientists bound to the Philippine Rise to conduct research there.

“Around 50,000 hectares of the Philippine Rise shall become a Strict Protection Zone limited to scientific studies – at this time only Filipinos,” he said in his speech.

“While more than 300,000 hectares shall be designated as a special fisheries management area.”

In 2012, the United Nations ruled that the Philippine Rise was part of the country’s exclusive economic zone, which gave the Philippines “sovereign rights” to explore and exploit the resources in the area. /je /atm

www.inquirer.net

Duterte fails to reach Philippine Rise

By: **Nestor Corrales** - Reporter / [@NCorralesINQ](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 05:21 PM May 15, 2018

ONBOARD BRP DAVAO DEL SUR – After much anticipation and hype, President Rodrigo Duterte failed to reach the Philippine Rise on Tuesday.

The Presidential chopper landed at the hangar of the BRP Davao del Sur at 3:45 p.m., almost two hours late from his scheduled arrival.

President Duterte was accompanied by Special Assistant to the President Christopher “Bong” Go as they alighted from the chopper under fair weather and calm seas.

Top military officials and government executives welcomed the President in a ceremony held to send-off 50 Filipino scientists who would conduct scientific research in the 13 million hectare resource-rich Philippine Rise.

The officials and personalities present were Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana, National Security Adviser Hermogenes Esperon Jr., Transportation Secretary Arthur Tugade, Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu, Energy Secretary Alfonso Cusi, Presidential Adviser on Political Affairs Francis Tolentino, Sen. Win Gatchalian, and actor Robin Padilla.

Still symbolic

Despite his failure to reach Philippine Rise, Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque said the presence of President Duterte during the send-off of Filipino scientists remained “symbolic.”

The President first announced his visit to the Philippine Rise on the last week of April.

It was Roque who announced in a Palace briefing that the Chief Executive would visit the continental shelf on May 15 to 16.

“This is symbolic because this is the trip to Philippine Rise and we are here to send-off the Filipino scientists,” Roque said in an interview after the send-off.

Pressed why the President did not go through with his trip to the Philippine Rise, Roque said it was too far and it was not feasible for the President to visit there.

“It’s a little bit far. It’s 120 nautical miles away. And it’s a logistic nightmare. So this is symbolic,” he said.

“Tsaka ang Philippine Rise is actually nasa ilalim ng dagat so ang ginagawa natin ngayon dito ay symbolic na inaangkin natin ang atin at sinasabi ng Presidente na ang tanging yaman dito sa area na ito ay sa Pilipino lamang,” he added.

(And the Philippine Rise is actually under the sea so what we’re doing here today is a symbolic gesture claiming what is ours and the President said that the resources in this area are for the Filipinos only.)

But during his speech, the President was under the impression that he was already in Philippine Rise as he mentioned that foreign ships used to freely do research in the area.

PH Rise is for Filipinos

The Palace official believed that President Duterte was able to send his message to the world.

“Tingin ko napadala naman niya ang mensahe niya sa buong daigdig na tanging Pilipino lamang ang makikinabang sa Philippine Rise,” he said.

(I believe that he was able to send the message to the whole world that only the Filipinos will benefit from the Philippine Rise.)

“So sa akin sapat naman itong ginawa ni President Duterte at ipahayag ang posisyon na ang tanging yaman ng Philippine Rise ay para sa mga Pilipino,” he added.

(So for me, what the President has done is enough in declaring that the resources of the Philippine Rise is for the Filipinos.)

The presidential chopper left here at 5:50 p.m. / vvp, je