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NEWS CLIPPINGS

28 October 2018

Sunday



Honor. Patriotism. Duty

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PAGASA: 'ROSITA' PACKS 'OMPONG'-LIKE PUNCH

STORY BY JAYMEE T. GAMIL

With maximum sustained winds of over 180 kilometers per hour, gusts of 220 kph and a west-northwest track approximating the deadly howler that ravaged northern Luzon and the Cordilleras in mid-September, the new Category 4 storm is expected to make landfall in the Cagayan-Isabela area on Tuesday morning, according to weather forecasters.

A18

FROM A1

By Jaymee T. Gamil
@JamilINQ

Less than four days after ravaging the US territory of Northern Marianas, Typhoon "Rosita" (international name: Yutu) threatens to cut a deadly path across northern Luzon as the powerful storm gathers strength ahead of its expected landfall on Tuesday.

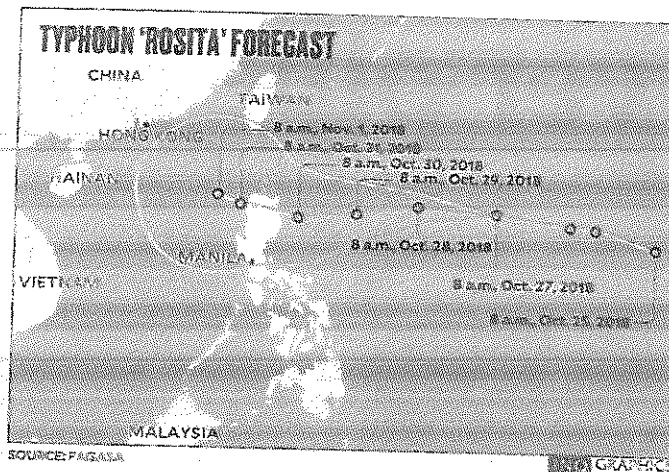
Weathermen warned on Saturday that Rosita could approximate the ferocity of Typhoon "Ompong" (international name: Mangkhut), which devastated the northern parts of the country in mid-September with sustained Category 4 winds of more than 220 kilometers per hour.

Classes in schools in Cagayan and Isabela, the two provinces directly in the path of Rosita, are expected to be called off by the regional offices of the education department as early as Monday, when rains are forecast to saturate eastern and northern Luzon.

At a press briefing at noon on Saturday, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) said Metro Manila may be placed under storm signal No. 1 on Monday night.

As of 4 p.m. on Saturday, Pagasa said the eye of the storm was located 1,214 km east of Aparri, Cagayan, well inside the Philippine area of responsibility, moving westward at a speed of 25 kph.

Rosita is expected to bring heavy rains and strong winds over northern and central Lu-



zon on Monday and Tuesday, although storm signals may be hoisted as early as Sunday night over the eastern section of central and northern Luzon, the weather bureau said.

Forecasters estimated storm surges of up to 5 meters in the northeastern areas facing the Pacific Ocean in the next four to five days that could force the suspension of sea travel in the country's eastern seaboard as far south as Samar Island.

Pagasa hoisted gale warnings over the same areas, expecting rough seas starting early on Sunday morning.

"Fishing boats and other small seacraft are advised not to venture out into the sea while larger sea vessels are alerted against big waves," the bureau said.

When last tracked by weathermen on Saturday afternoon, Rosita packed maximum sustained winds of 200 kph near the center and gusts of up to 245 kph.

Pagasa said the storm's strength and track almost

matched those of Ompong, the Category 4 howler that triggered fatal landslides in the Cordilleras.

"[Rosita] is almost as strong as Ompong. When it hits land, it would be a destructive typhoon," warned assistant weather services chief Renito Paciente. "It can possibly cause floods (in low-lying areas) and landslides, especially in mountainous areas."

Paciente said Rosita had a 400-km radius and would bring light to heavy rains to all areas of Luzon.

The worst rainfall is expected on Tuesday, when the storm could dump up to 200 millimeters of rain in one day, said weather division chief Esperanza Cayanan.

She reminded people living near mountainous and hilly areas that the threshold for landslides was 100 mm of rainfall a day.

As at the height of Ompong's onslaught, the San Roque and Magat dams may release water anew and cause flooding in low-

lying areas, Pagasa warned.

Because Rosita is expected to cross land quicker than Ompong, according to the bureau, rains may already ease by All Saints' Day on Nov. 1, except in western Luzon.

"Expect the winds and rain by Monday night. Plan travels in northern Luzon accordingly so you don't get stranded or get caught in the storm," Cayanan said, addressing the public.

"Agricultural damage is also expected, so if you can harvest crops by Sunday, that would be better. Also fortify your houses now," she added.

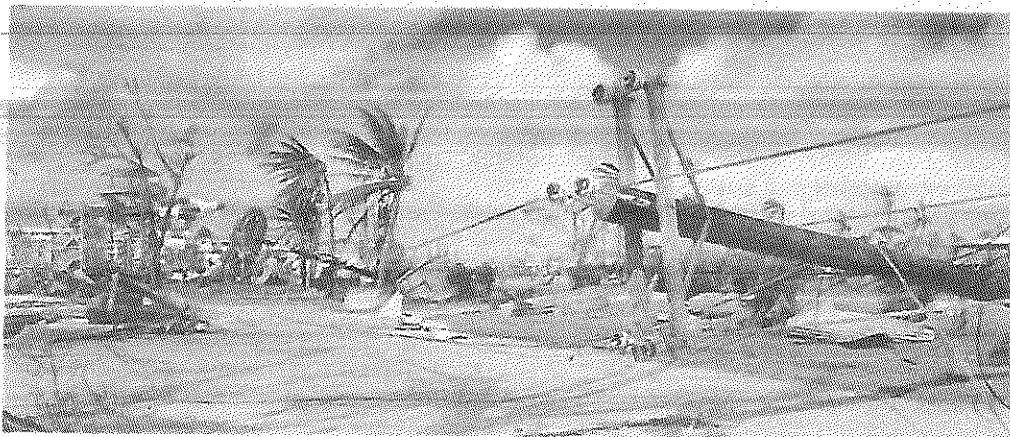
The typhoon weakened a bit on Saturday after ravaging Taipan and Tinian on Thursday with maximum sustained winds of 290 kph.

The Category 5 storm, the strongest to hit US territories in the Pacific this year overturned cars, crushed small planes, destroyed houses, toppled power poles and caused landslides, according to the US Federal Emergency Management Agency.

—WITH REPORTS FROM AP AND FAYE ORELLANA INQ



HINT OF THINGS TO COME? Supertyphoon "Yutu," later to be renamed Typhoon "Rosita" after entering the Philippine area of responsibility, smashed cars, toppled utility poles and communication towers, and destroyed houses and buildings after sweeping through the US territory of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands last Thursday. —AP



Mail bomb suspect in US claims Phil ties

PLANTATION - FBI agents used DNA and a fingerprint to identify the Florida man suspected of sending at least 14 bombs to critics of US President Donald Trump days ahead of congressional elections.

Cesar Sayoc, born to a Filipino father and Italian mother in Brooklyn, New York in 1962, has been charged with five federal crimes including threats against former presidents and faces up to 48 years in prison if found guilty, US Attorney General Jeff Sessions said.

He earlier said the suspect could face 58 years. "We will not tolerate such lawlessness, especially political violence," he said.

Sayoc's father, born in the Philippines on May 14, 1932, immigrated to the US and was naturalized in 1970. From New York, the younger Sayoc moved to Florida where he was involved in a series of crimes.

Sayoc has been accused of mailing over a dozen IEDs (improvised explosive devices) to prominent Democrats, including former president Barack Obama, former secretary of state Hillary Clinton and billionaire George Soros.

Authorities are still investigating whether other people were involved and did not rule out the possibility of further arrests or more explosive devices

Turn to Page 4

Mail From Page 1

in the mail.

FBI agents arrested Sayoc, 56, in Plantation, Florida and also hauled away a white van plastered with pro-Trump stickers, the slogan "CNN SUCKS" and images of Democratic figures with red cross-hairs over their faces.

FBI director Christopher Wray told a news conference that fingerprints on a package sent to Rep. Maxine Waters belonged to Sayoc.

Announcing the arrest by the FBI to a cheering audience at the White House, Trump said such "terrorizing acts" were despicable and had no place in the United States.

"We must never allow political violence to take root in America - cannot let it happen," Trump said. "And I'm committed to doing everything in my power as president to stop it and to stop it now."

Sayoc's home address was listed in public records as an upscale gated apartment complex in the seaside town of Aventura, Florida.

According to the records, he is a registered Republican with a lengthy criminal past - including once making a

bomb threat - and a history of posting inflammatory broadsides on social media against Trump's political foes.

Four more suspicious packages were found on Friday, according to officials and media reports, bringing the total to 14. None of the devices has detonated, and no injuries have been reported.

The intended recipients of packages discovered on Friday included Democratic US Senator Cory Booker of New Jersey, former US Director of National Intelligence James Clapper, Democratic US Sen. Kamala Harris of California and Democratic donor Tom Steyer.

When TV networks flashed the name Cesar Sayoc as the suspect who mailed pipe bombs to prominent Democrats, the Filipino-American community held its collective breath and hoped he was not one of their own.

But as the story trickled out on live TV, newspaper websites and social media, it became apparent that Sayoc is indeed one of them.

The Filipino community in the Washington metropolitan area cringed when Sayoc's ancestry was disclosed.

Filipino-Americans have a good reputation in the United States as law-abiding, hard workers and any scandal that tends to stain that record is considered a "loss of face" by the nearly four-million Filipino community.

Asian cultures put a great degree of emphasis on "face," a peculiarity difficult to describe but simplistically relates to shame and embarrassment.

Community leader Eric Lachica said he had mixed feelings when he heard news about the suspected bomber. He was glad Sayoc was arrested before anyone was injured or killed but worried about the impact on the community.

"I'm shocked and relieved. Phew! Glad Sayoc was caught. One less terrorist to worry about," he said in a text to **The STAR**.

Hours after a federal law enforcement official said the investigation's focus on Florida had intensified, police closed roads around the parking lot of an AutoZone store in Plantation where Sayoc was arrested, and helicopters flew overhead.

Investigators covered Sayoc's van with a blue tarp before removing it on a truck.

Trump's critics charged

that his inflammatory rhetoric against Democrats and the press created a climate for politically motivated violence. Tensions are running high ahead of Nov. 6 elections that could shift the balance of power in Congress, which is currently controlled by Trump's fellow Republicans.

"If we don't stop this political mania, this fervor, rancor, hatred, you'll see this again and again and again," New York Governor Andrew Cuomo told *MSNBC*. "We have to get to the genesis, and the genesis is an overheated, vitriolic political division in this country and it starts with the leaders, and it starts with the President."

Trump's supporters accused Democrats of unfairly suggesting the President was to blame for the bomb scare.

After first calling for unity at the White House event, Trump lamented attacks against him and again pointed at the media.

"I get attacked all the time. I can do the greatest thing for our country, and on the networks and on different things it will show bad," he told the crowd, acknowledging an attendee who shouted "fake news." — Jose Katigbak, *Reuters*

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THE PHILIPPINE STAR

A2

Locsin, Chinese FM to sign bilateral deals

BY NEIL JAYSON N. SERVALLOS

FOREIGN Affairs Secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr. on Saturday said he was looking forward to welcoming Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi when he arrives in President Rodrigo Duterte's hometown of Davao City today, Sunday, to sign bilateral documents regarding the government's infrastructure, law enforcement and humanitarian assistance programs.

The Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) said Wang would meet with Duterte's economic managers regarding the government's massive infrastructure program at the Marco Polo Hotel in Davao on Monday.

After the meetings, bilateral documents will then be signed by Wang, Locsin and Duterte's economic managers.

Wang's visit comes amid negotiations for a proposed energy explora-

tion deal between the two countries in the disputed West Philippine Sea (South China Sea), which was the initial agenda on the scheduled visit last September 16 to 18.

The visit was cancelled due to the onslaught of Typhoon "Ompong."

The DFA, however, did not say if the proposed joint exploration deal would be included in the bilateral documents.

Former foreign secretary Alan Peter Cayetano, who resigned to run for a House seat, previously said government was seeking to have the framework agreement, which would allow the two countries to undertake energy exploration, signed this year.

"The two sides are also expected to continue discussions on oil and gas cooperation, with the view of coming up with a framework of cooperation that conforms to respective rules and regulations and international laws," the DFA previously said.

Cayetano had assured the public that any planned energy exploration deal with rival claimant China would not violate any provisions of the Philippines' 1987 Constitution and international laws.

Wang's visit will also be an opportunity for the two governments to prepare for the Philippine visit of Chinese President Xi Jinping in November. *h2*

AFP chief welcomes Rody's trust

By ROEL PAREÑO

ZAMBOANGA CITY - Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) chief Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr. said President Duterte was merely expressing his trust and confidence in the military when the Chief Executive said the military blew the chances for bringing about real change in the Philippines when the AFP handed back power to civilian authorities after several successful coups in the past.

Galvez, who was guest speaker of the Mindanao Press Independent Council in Davao City on Friday, said the President's statement proved his belief in the military as a catalyst for change in the society.

Duterte in a statement on Wednesday said the military blew its chances of creating real change by returning the power to the politicians after helping oust former presidents Ferdinand Marcos and

Joseph Estrada.

"Meaning, he (Duterte) manifests his respect and predisposition to military offices because he knows the integrity of the military and also service orientation of the military - which is to work for the common good and for the good of the country," Galvez said.

"I'm so gratified because it only shows the trust and confidence of the President in the military," Galvez said.

Col. Noel Detoyato, AFP public affairs chief, said the message of the President was not a warning of another military plot but mostly showing his trust towards the integrity of the military.

"It was his trust and confidence to the military said in another form," Detoyato said.

The AFP could not yet state its position on whether to again extend the implementation of martial law in Mindanao, which will end this year.

Galvez said they are still working with the local government units and local officials to get their stand on the proposed martial law extension.

Martial law was imposed at the height of the Marawi City siege perpetrated by the Maute terror group last year. It was extended until Dec 31 this year.

Galvez said the discussion and assessment will be coursed through the Regional Peace and Order Council (RPOC) and the Provincial Peace and Order Council (PPOC) to have the common stand of the Mindanao people.

"We are still assessing and we will work with the different mayors and governors so that we could have their position and their formal take on martial law," Galvez said on the sidelines of the safety training conducted by the Mindanao Independent Press Council held on Friday at Eden's Nature Park in Davao City.

- With Delon Porcalla

7

Soldiers can be deployed to Customs — Lorenzana

By JAIME LAUDE

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana yesterday said he is open to the proposal to temporarily detail soldiers to the Bureau of Customs (BOC) to help run the bureau.

However, Lorenzana pointed out that sending active military personnel to BOC will only be temporary and serve as a stop gap measure while newly installed BOC chief Ray Leonardo Guerrero is still in the process forming his own trusted civilian team who will be working with him in the bureau.

"It's OK with me. But it will not be on a permanent basis," Lorenzana said on possible deployment of soldiers to BOC if Guerrero will request for warm bodies from the military.

President Duterte had transferred former Customs chief Isidro Lapeña and put the other

BOC commissioners on floating status to give Guerrero blanket authority to appoint his own trusted people, including bringing in soldiers, who will be working with him.

In giving Guerrero a free hand in overhauling BOC personnel, Lorenzana said the President wants him (Guerrero) to really have a fresh start in leading the bureau.

"He was given blanket authority to reshuffle and change people as the President wants him to have a fresh start in dismantling well-entrenched syndicates inside the bureau," Lorenzana said.

Brig. Gen. Edgard Arevalo, AFP spokesman, meanwhile, said the military is willing to provide Guerrero with warm bodies from the military if he requests for it.

"Yes, the AFP will support the BOC-designated Commis-

sioner Rey Leonardo Guerrero when he so asks. We want him to succeed as such will redound to the benefit of the nation and our people," Arevalo said.

President Duterte is expecting the new Customs leadership to curb corruption in the bureau and to work closely with the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) to stop illegal drugs smuggling.

Presidential spokesman Salvador Panelo said narcotics managed to slip past Philippine ports because of corrupt personnel.

"(The President issued) the same directive — get rid of the corruption there. In fact, that's the reason why he fired the heads (of customs units)," Panelo told radio station dzMM last Friday when asked about the President's marching orders to Guerrero.

"They will be working hand-in-hand in eradicating the drug menace in the country. That is

the marching order of the President," he added.

Bureau of Customs Employees Association (BOCEA) president Remedios Princesa yesterday said that she hopes that Guerrero, a retired Armed Forces of the Philippines chief, does not have the perception that all the officials and employees of the bureau are corrupt.

Guerrero's two previous predecessors, former Marine captain Nicanor Faeldon and retired police general and former PDEA director general Lapeña, were both removed by President Duterte from the BOC after large shipments of shabu were allegedly smuggled in and not detected by BOC personnel during their watch.

Princesa, who leads the estimated 3,000 BOCEA members, admitted that while it was true that there were "bad eggs" in the bureau, she insisted that their

numbers are few.

"There are still a lot of good people here at the BOC, there are still a lot of dedicated civil servants working at the bureau. It is just that the public does not see how hardworking we are in our job, such as working beyond office hours even if there is no overtime pay," Princesa said.

"I just hope that the new commissioner does not have any preconceived opinion that everyone at the BOC is corrupt," she added.

Lapeña earlier said that he advised Guerrero to improve his counter-intelligence measures because some Customs employees are engaged in illegal activities and would block the reforms the Duterte administration would want to implement.

Princesa said that they appealed to Guerrero to provide a housing program for the employees since many of them still

do not have their own homes.

She hopes that they would be able to have a low-monthly, low-interest housing program that would allow them to pay off the loan in several years.

"We are ready to welcome the new leadership because during the time of commissioner Lapeña he did not honor our Collective Negotiation Agreement (CNA) with former commissioner Alberto Lina wherein for three consecutive years from 2016 to 2018, each employee would be receiving P25,000 every year," she said.

She said that Faeldon honored the CNA but Lapeña did not implement their CNA for 2017 reportedly because there were no savings "but we are able to turn over surplus collection to the Bureau of Treasury" and that he was not the commissioner who approved the CNA. — With Alexis Romero, Evelyn Macairan

AFP warns of mail bombs

By CNN Philippines Staff

MANILA (CNN Philippines) Mail bombs may also be used by terrorists in the country, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) warned Thursday.

"Possible yun. Kasi yung tinatawag nating 'letter bomb' has been... Based on my studies on terrorism, has been there maybe 10 years ago pa. Ginagamit na nila yun," AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Carlito Galvez said in a Malacabang press briefing. He made this statement

following reports in the U.S. that explosive devices were mailed to former President Barack Obama, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, and to the building housing CNN's offices in New York.

Galvez called for vigilance, directing all concerned government agencies to be alert for similar attacks.

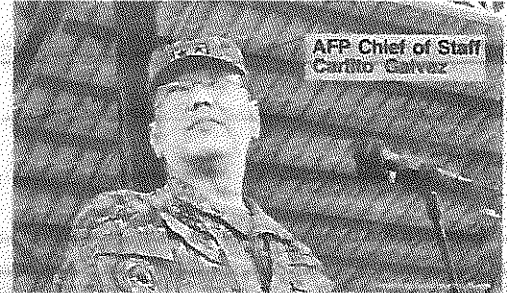
"We have to be vigilant, really be very vigilant especially the different agencies like the Postmaster General, and also yung sa ating Customs, sa BI (Bureau of

Immigration), etc." Galvez said.

The Philippine National Police (PNP) said the incident in the U.S. should be an "eye-opener" for the Philippines.

"Lalo na sa atin na medyo, unang una, we lack the technology... Wala pa siguro tayong mga technical equipment para tingnan yung sulat na yon," PNP Chief Oscar Albayalde told reporters on Thursday.

Some believe U.S. President Donald Trump's public tirades against Democrats and the media may



AFP Chief of Staff Carlito Galvez

be promoting hate toward these subjects.

Despite this development, Malacabang said President Rodrigo Duterte, who is also known for his tough talk against critics and human rights advocates, will not change his ways.

"For one, he's been in office for the last two years and we have not known of any incident similar to what is happening in the States," Presidential Spokesperson Salvador Panelo said in a press briefing. "I think the President will never change his style."



AFF ASSURES MEDIA FREEDOM, PROTECTION AMID MARTIAL LAW IN MINDANAO

THE Armed Forces of the Philippines yesterday assured media practitioners that it will uphold press freedom amid the implementation of Martial Law in Mindanao.

AFF chief of staff Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr. made the assurance during the Mindanao Media Safety and Security Summit organized by the Mindanao Independent Press Council Inc. (MIPI) in Toril, Davao City.

"We have strictly ensured that our soldiers implementing martial

law adhere to the rule of law. We are very pleased to note that many of our stakeholders have observed that our soldiers are very professional and respectful of the local leaders and incumbent officials," Galvez said.

The event was held as a venue for discussions on the challenges faced by media personnel and organizations in Mindanao and to promote safety and security for journalists covering conflicts.

The two-day summit, which started on Thurs-

day, was attended by top government officials, including Peace Secretary Jesus Dureza and Special Adviser to the President Bong Go. Dureza discussed on peace, culture, and the Mindanao peace process.

"The AFP commits itself in forging partnerships anchored in effective coverage and media safety and security not only in conflict situations but more importantly in environments where threats — physical and political—are abound," Galvez said.

"We value media coverage but there are greater considerations that come to play, especially in cases where high levels of confidentiality are warranted, thus limiting the access and coverage of the media," he said.

"Should there be a need for media practitioners to research and gather materials, especially in critical areas here in Mindanao or if there are threats to your lives or safety, please do not hesitate to tell us," Galvez added.

Zaida delos Reyes

Cadets not exempted from Anti-Hazing Law - Lacson

By MARLON PURIFICACION

SENATOR Panfilo "Ping" Lacson claimed yesterday that the cadets from the Philippine National Police Academy (PNPA) are not exempted from the amended Anti-Hazing Law and those involved in the oral sex controversy maybe the first to be penalized.

Although still young, Lacson admitted that the law which they recently amended will be harsh on

the offending cadet because of the increased penalties.

"Capital offense yan, ang hazing. At hindi exempted, kasi although ang AFP and PNP may mga circumstances na pwede sila ma-exempt pero pag-ka-ganyang gawain na hazing, kulong sila habambuhay at makukulong sila nang no bail habang dininig ng korte," Lacson said in an interview over DWIZ radio.

The Anti-Hazing Law was amended by Congress after the Atio Castillo haz-

ing controversy.

"Ang prime ng buhay nila dahil bata pa ito, sira katulad ng involved kay Atio Castillo. Kulong sila held without bail so yan din ang sasapit ng upperclassmen na ito," Lacson pointed out.

The oral sex controversy erupted after news broke out that two PNP cadets with their parents filed a complaint with the local Silang, Cavite PNP against one of their upperclassmen. They claimed that they were forced to perform oral sex while two upperclassmen

watched and did nothing to stop the act.

Names of the cadets were withheld since the fathers of two cadets involved are star-ranked officers of the PNP and the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP).

But Lacson insisted that it doesn't matter if the father of the cadet is a general of the PNP.

He added that the cadets who are involved in the oral sex controversy cannot justify that they are not aware of the law.

"Well-publicized ang



Lacson hearing kay Atio Castillo noon pati ang pagsasabatas o pag-amyenda ng anti-hazing law. Dapat alam nala ang consequences niyan," Lacson added.

ACROSS THE COUNTRY

NPA leader, 4 recruits nabbed in Negros

BACOLOD CITY - A suspected New People's Army (NPA) leader and four of her recruits were arrested in Barangay 9, Kabankalan, Negros Occidental on Thursday.

Mary Grace Delicano, secretary of the Central Negros Front, and his recruits Richard Serapio, Arnold Villenas, Wildie Adal and Eric James Rurino were in a Toyota Innova when pulled over at a checkpoint, Capt. Allen Mark Tacorda of the 62nd Infantry Battalion civil military operations office said.

Tacorda said that Delicano has a pending warrant of arrest for murder.

A Macbook, two USB flash drives, an external hard drive, medical supplies and subversive documents were among those reportedly recovered from the rebels.

- Gilbert Bayoran, Jaime Laude

'Pinoys safe from rebel atrocities'

By Kristina Marañon

Malacanang on Saturday vowed no letup from government security forces in ensuring communities and citizens are kept safe from "deplorable crimes" by insurgents.

Reacting to Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) founder Jose Maria Sison's recent claim that the Duterte administration is behind human rights abuses, presidential spokesman Salvador Panelo said it very clear "to us and to our people who the adversaries of this nation are."

"This administration is firmly devoted to protecting the security of all Filipinos and ensuring peace and order in our communities. If someone should be blamed for promoting violence in the country, perhaps the CPP-NPA (New People's Army) should point the finger at themselves," he stated.

Panelo added the communist rebels are "inflicting violence across the country and threatening the safety of people." 3

Leftist groups are demanding President Rodrigo Duterte's resignation. Panelo stressed this is another part of the propaganda waged by Sison and the CPP "proving their insincerity in wanting to end insurgency in the country."

13

Murder raps filed vs Sagay massacre suspects

By GILBERT BAYORAN and EMMANUEL TUPAS

BACOLOD CITY - Multiple murder charges were filed on Friday against nine people in connection with the killing of nine persons in Negros Occidental last week.

Charged were Rene Manlangit, alias Boy, and Rogelio Arquillo Jr., who allegedly recruited the victims to join the National Federation of Sugar Workers (NFSW) and seven other John Does.

Chief Superintendent John Bulalacao, Western Visayas police director, said Manlangit and Arquillo conspired with

an armed group in planning the attack.

Bulalacao said the victims were manipulated by the Communist Party of the Philippines and New People's Army into occupying a private property as part of its Oplan Bungkalan and Okupasyon.

"Upon examination

of the statements of the witnesses, the recruiters deceived the victims and enticed them to join (NFSW) by promising them a parcel of land once their cause succeed," Bulalacao said.

He said probes relied on the testimonies of eight witnesses, including a minor who survived the attack.

The victims were resting in a tent at privately owned sugarcane plantation in Barangay Bulanon, Sagay City when about 10 gunmen opened fire. Four survived the attack.

Senior Superintendent

Rodolfo Castil, Negros Occidental police director, yesterday questioned the motive of militant groups who wanted to take custody of the minor witness.

Negros Occidental Gov. Alfredo Maranon Jr. said he ordered the creation of a task force to ensure a thorough and impartial investigation of the incident.

The Negros Occidental and Sagay city governments have offered a reward of P500,000 for information leading to the arrest of the assailants.

- With Emmanuel Tupas

14

Sagay massacre: Victims' pals charged

By **Carla P. Gomez**
and **Jaymee T. Gamil**
@Team_Inquirer

BACOLOD CITY--The Sagay City police filed on Friday murder charges against nine suspects in the killing of nine farmers in Hacienda Nene in Sagay City, Negros Occidental province, on Oct. 20.

Chief Supt. John Bulalacao, Western Visayas police director, said the charges were filed against National Federation of Sugar Workers (NFSW) local leaders Rene Manlangit and Ro-

gelio Arquillo, and seven other unidentified men.

The NFSW leaders were charged for supposedly recruiting the victims into the activist group and later directing them to occupy the land where they were killed.

"The recruiters deceived the victims," Bulalacao said.

Dumbfounded

In a statement, NFSW expressed outrage at the filing of charges against its members.

John Milton Lozande, NFSW secretary general, said the

group was "dumbfounded" at the charges.

He said police ignored information that it was a lessee of the land, Allan Simbingco, a relative of the Maranon clan, who consented to the farm workers' plan to occupy part of Hacienda Nene.

Bulalacao said the victims were used for communist rebels' campaign to occupy land and take over farms.

Chief Insp. Roberto Mansueto, Sagay City police chief, said the charges were filed on Friday, the same day leftist groups

released initial findings of their own investigation.

Left's finding

The groups--Karapatan, Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas, Unyon ng mga Manggagawa sa Agrikultura and National Union of Peoples' Lawyers (NUPL)--said the nine farmers were slain by former communist rebels who were now working for a prominent political clan. NUPL president Edre Olalia was incredulous at the criminal complaints filed by the police. **INQ**

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2 suspects charged over death of 9 farmers

POLICE have filed a multiple-murder case against two members of a sugar workers' group for the death of nine sugarcane workers in Sagay City, Negros Occidental, last week.

In a statement, the Sagay City Police Station said it slapped Rene Manlangit and Rogelio Arquillo, both members of the National Federation of Sugar Workers (NSFW), and John Does with multiple-murder charges over the mass killing.

It described Manlangit and Arquillo as recruiters.

According to the Sagay police, they

► Farmers A2

FARMERS FROM A1

2 suspects charged

gathered statements from complainant-witnesses, including a minor who survived the incident.

Based on examination of the statements, police said they found that the two recruiters "deceived the victims and enticed them" to join the NSFW by promising them a parcel of land once the sugar federation's supposed cause succeeds.

They added that they also found in their investigation that the nine farmers used to be members of the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army (CPP-NPA) and were part of Oplan Bungkalan and Okupasyon.

Philippine National Police (PNP) chief Oscar Albayalde defined the operation plan as a "grand design to occupy private and government property using their (CPP-NPA) mass base and to create untoward incident then blame it on the government."

"Let this incident be an eye-opener to everyone not to be persuaded by the promises of these groups claiming that they want to help the people when all have only their selfish and ill motives to put down the government," the statement read.

The police slammed some human rights groups for "hampering" their investigation.

"What puzzles us are the human rights groups who, instead of joining the PNP in pursuing justice for the victims, they hamper our investigation by taking away our witnesses and discouraging other family members from cooperating in the filing of the case," they said.

The police assured the families of the victims that justice will be served to them and they will not stop until all the assailants are identified and arrested.

Albayalde previously claimed in a radio interview that the NSFW is a "legal front" of the NPA.

He said the nine victims were not legitimate tillers and they were just recruited by the same federation.

The NSFW slammed Albayalde's tag on them and said his statements made it look like the victims deserved their deaths.

Chief Sup. John Bulalacao, police regional director of Western Visayas, said they were also looking at other angles in the death of the nine farmers.

ROY D.R. NARRA

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NEGROS LGU CREATES TASK FORCE ON SAGAY

BACOLOD CITY—Negros Occidental Gov. Alfredo Marañon Jr. has formed Special Task Force "Hustisya" (Justice) to ensure an in-depth and unbiased investigation on the killing of nine farmers in his hometown of Sagay City.

The governor announced the move in a press statement released Friday night, almost a week after the massacre took place at Hacienda Nene, Purok Firetree in Barangay Bulanon, which the victims occupied on Oct. 20.

"The special task force [will] ensure a thorough and impartial investigation on the Sagay 9 incident so that the real truth and proper justice shall be served to the families of the victims at the soonest time possible," Marañon said.

The task force will consist of representatives of respective Social Action Centers of the dioceses of San Carlos and Bacolod, Public Attorney's Office in Negros Occidental, and Provincial Agrarian Reform Office, in close cooperation with the national offices of the departments of justice and agrarian reform, and the National Bureau of Investigation.

"I will resolutely work that justice will be served and no amount of intimidation or threat can prevent me from bringing before the bar of justice those who are responsible and involved in the Sagay 9 incident," he said.

Marañon said that he, his family, and the entire people of the province grieve over "such a very unfortunate incident, which victimized the poor farmers and sugarcane workers."

"So therefore, we are in solidarity with the families of the victims to demand justice with urgency and decisiveness," he said.

The governor added the task force would "make sure that those responsible as the criminal perpetrators of the Sagay 9 killings shall be brought before the bar of justice together with those who planned, organized, agitated and manipulated the poor farmers and sugar workers."

Earlier on Friday, Marañon and his son, Sagay City Mayor Alfredo Marañon III, joined Agriculture Secretary Emmanuel Piñol in a meeting with the families of the victims at the wake in the city gymnasium.

Piñol turned over financial assistance from the Department of Agriculture to the families.

Meanwhile, in a statement on Saturday morning, the Negros Occidental Police Provincial Office, headed by Senior Supt. Rodolfo Castil Jr., urged the public to avoid making conclusions on the Sagay 9 massacre. PNA

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AS DUTERTE ORDERS PROBE

DA aids 'Sagay 9'

families

Government tagged NPA rebels as behind the massacre but other sources claimed it was the result of a land ownership dispute

By Kuhlín Leslie García

As government vowed to serve justice to the victims of the Sagay massacre in Negros Occidental, the Department of Agriculture (DA) yesterday assured financial and livelihood assistance to their grieving families.

Nine plantation workers were killed on 20 October while sharing dinner in a plot they cultivated for root crop farming in between sugarcane season.

They were strafed with bullets from high-powered firearms by no less than six men as they were under a tent where they also stayed the nights prior to the massacre.

I emphasized that I only came to provide assistance on behalf of the Duterte administration.

They were also doused with gasoline before they were burned by the perpetrators of the crime with some of them still alive when they were torched, according to reports.

The nine farmers were newly signed members of the Negros Federation of Sugar Workers (NFSW).

an above-ground organization being linked by the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) to the Maoist Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army (CPP-NPA).

Those killed were Eglicerio Cambannga Villegas, 36; Angeliffa Dumaguit Arsenal, 47; Paterno Baroy, 48; Rene Laurencio Sr.; Morena Mendoza, 48; Marcelina Dumaguit; Rommel Bantigue, 41; Jonarie Oghayon, 16, and Marchtel Sumicad, 17, all of Sagay.

There were 11 farmers at the tent at that time. Only five of them managed to escape by crawling in the field and hiding behind stacks of sacks as the attack took place.

Government tagged NPA rebels as behind the massacre but other sources claimed it was the result of a land ownership dispute. The farm, now known as Hacienda Nene (also referred to as Hacienda Barbara), is reportedly being leased to a businesswoman by its owners, said to be a family of politicians.

Malacañang condemned the "dastardly act" and assured families of the victims the government will conduct a "thorough and impartial" investigation of the killings.

Agriculture Secretary Emmanuel Piñol said President Rodrigo Duterte wants support extended to the families of the victims.

Piñol met with the victims' families recently and ensured government's intervention in their plight.

"In my conversation with the victims' families, I emphasized that I only came to provide assistance on behalf of the Duterte Administration," Piñol said.

Piñol said President Duterte would like to see that justice is served to the victims. He relayed that the Chief Executive had vowed to punish those behind the killings.

According to Piñol, Sagay City Mayor Alfredo Maranon II also assured the families of the victims there will be no letup in police investigation on the matter. Maranon said all angles are being looked into aside from the earlier AFP and Philippine National Police (PNP) pronouncements as possible motives of the killings.

Government agencies and other independent parties are conducting different probes on the incident.

But the Department of Justice is observing closely the developments in what is now collectively known as the "Sagay 9."

Justice Secretary Menardo Guevarra said the agency will not wait for the results of the police investigation if there is a need to dig deeper into the case.

"We'll not wait for the results of the PNP investigation. If we think that the circumstances require our immediate participation, we shall conduct our own investigation," Guevarra said.

There were 14 farmers at the tent at that time. Only five of them managed to escape by crawling in the field and hiding behind stacks of sacks as the attack took place.

The NSFW condemned the killings. The Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) denied the farm was under land reform program as claimed by the NSFW.

Presidential spokesman Salvador Panelo, meanwhile, said the massacre of the workers would affect efforts to resume peace talks with the communists.

"It will have a factor in consideration of the future peace talks," Panelo said.

He added initial claims by the surviving victims pointed to the armed men who sprayed them with bullets were members of the CPP-NPA.

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Col. Noel Detoyato, AFP Public Affairs Office chief, also claimed the Sagay massacre was under Oplan "Bungkalan" and "Okupasyon" — the CPP-NPA's own agrarian program designed to occupy private farm lands.

Rebel returnee's assailant could be former comrades

By AARON B. RECUENCO

Former Communist insurgent Rymart Dagohoy's dreams of leading a normal life came to an abrupt end, Friday, after gunmen, believed to be his former comrades in the New People's Army (NPA), shot and killed him at Purok 3, Barangay San Antonio in Himamaylan City, Negros Occidental.

A report reaching Camp Crame in Quezon City disclosed that Dagohoy was about to have breakfast with his father and co-workers at a sugar plantation when about 20 Communist terrorists attacked them.

But it was apparent from the assault that Dagohoy was the only target.

"The victim was shot hit first at the stomach and was shot again while he was running away from his attackers," the police report read.

The report added the sudden attack sent Dagohoy's co-workers scampering for cover, leaving only his father Renato beside him.

"One of the male gunmen approached the wounded victim and shot him in close range with the use of M16 rifle three times. The victim was hit on the head," it added.

Renato told the police investigators that he saw two women armed with handguns and four male companions armed with high-powered guns during the attack on his son.

Police later identified the six gunmen as a certain Lande Lantada, also known as Ka Chua; Eustaque Manait, alias Ka Choi; Ka Greg; Ka Joey; Ka Karpol and Ka Lara.

Before leaving, the gunmen fired their guns while shouting, "Long Live the NPA" in the local dialect.

Joma denies plotting Plaza Miranda bombing

EXILED Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) founder Jose Maria "Joma" Sison on Saturday denied Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana's claim that he was the mastermind behind the 1971 Plaza Miranda bombing.

In a statement, Sison said he was not involved in the bombing that claimed nine lives as he was already absolved of the "false charge" of multiple murders over the incident.

"I have reposted the definitive interview I made on video regarding the Plaza Miranda 'bombing' and the documents of the reactionary government which finally absolved me of the false charge of multiple murders in the Plaza Miranda 'bombing,'" he added.

Sison explained that a 1994 resolution of the prosecutor's office under the Manila Regional Trial Court dismissed such accusations against him.

He said the 1998 certification from the Department of Justice declared the case dismissed and he has no pending criminal cases related to the incident.

"In the Mafia-like government of [President Rodrigo] Duterte, the swell-headed gangsters and criminals in power are engaged in libel and slander in trying to shift the blame for the Plaza Miranda 'bombing' from [then-President Ferdinand] Marcos to me," Sison said.

Lorenzana earlier said in a news conference that Sison was the one who orchestrated the Plaza Miranda bombing.

At the time, the Liberal Party was holding a political rally at Plaza Miranda in Quiapo, Manila.

Lorenzana said Sison has already killed hundreds of New People's Army (NPA) members

suspected as government agents in the past 50 years.

In response, the CPP founder said this was just another "squid tactics" of the government to cover up their involvement in murdering nine sugarcane workers in Negros Occidental last week.

"The Sagay massacre is obviously the collaborative work of the AFP (Armed Forces of the Philippines), PNP (Philippine National Police) and their paramilitary auxiliary RPA (Revolutionary Proletarian Army). The squid tactics of Duterte, AFP and PNP is to link up the Sagay massacre to the already thoroughly discredited 'Red October' yarn against the CPP and the NPA," he added.

The NPA is the CPP's armed wing. The AFP previously said the killing of nine sugarcane workers was part of the communist groups' "Red October" plot to oust Duterte.

Sison slammed Duterte and Malacañang spokesman Salvador Panelo for saying the CPP and the NPA promote violence in society and said that they are still open to peace negotiations.

"The assertion of Duterte and his spokesman Panelo that the CPP and the NPA promote violence and imply that they are the source of violence is utterly wrong. The NDFP (National Democratic Front of the Philippines), in representation of the CPP and NPA and other revolutionary forces, has been open to peace negotiations with any reactionary government willing to engage in peace negotiations," he said.

In June, Sison announced that they are not pursuing peace talks anymore as they are planning to oust Duterte instead.

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ROY D.R. NARRA

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Army arrests NPA leader

By PAUL M. GUTIERREZ

A RANKING official of the communist New People's Army (NPA) who previously helped organized sugar workers in Negros island thru the National Federation of Sugar Workers (NFSW) and accused of murder has been arrested by authorities on Friday.

Philippine Army colonel, Alberto Desoyo, chief of the 303rd Brigade Third Infantry Division identified the

suspect as, Mary Grace Delicano, purportedly head of the Negros Regional Command of the NPA and member of guerrillas' education and instruction group at the time of her arrest.

Delicano, who also goes by the aliases, "Tingting," "Cleo" and "Keryle," was the subject of an arrest warrant, issued on Dec. 11, 2012, by Judge Fernando Elumba of Branch 6 of the Kabankalan Regional Trial Court for murder.

Desoyo said combined police and military elements nabbed Delicano in

Bgy 9, Kabakankalan City and considers her arrest "a big blow" to the communist movement in the region.

The military said Delicano started her career in the underground movement as an organizer for the NFSW.

The military and the police are now accusing the NFSW of "setting up for murder" by the NPA, nine of the eleven peasants it just recruited to occupy lands in the town of Sagay on October 20.

Militant groups, howev-

er, claim the massacre was perpetrated by the military.

Desoyo averred the likes of Delicano has been giving the government "a bad name," while conducting training programs for the NPA and its recruits.

"People like Delicano," the military official said, had been "pointing only to supposedly what's wrong with the government (while) ignoring reforms resulting from state development initiatives."

The suspect is now under detention at the police station in Kabankalan.

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Rebels shot dead ex-comrade

By Zaida Delos Reyes

SIX armed men including two female warriors shot dead a former comrade who decided to return to the fold of the law the other day in Himamaylan City, Negros Occidental.

The victim was identified as Raymart Dagohoy, 22, single, laborer, former NPA and resident of Sitio Abuf, Barangay San Antonio, Himamaylan City.

Reports reaching Camp Crane showed the incident occurred at around 6:30 a.m. in a sugarcane plantation a few meters away from the victim's house.

Accordingly, the victim together with his father identified as Renato and other sugarcane workers

were having breakfast when the suspects appeared from the sugarcane.

Renato managed to run away after seeing his son shot repeatedly by the suspects.

He later identified the suspects as Lanso Llamada, alias Ka Chua a cer-

tain Ka Greg and a certain Ka Joey, Eustaque Manait alias Ka Chat, Ka Lara, wife of Ka Dodong and a certain Ka Kompol.

During Renato said the two female warriors shot his son with a short firearm.

The victim tried to run

but was also shot at close range by one male suspect using M16 rifle.

The suspects even fired their guns upwards several times while shouting "Mabuhay ang NPA".

Authorities are now conducting a follow-up investigation.

NPAs kill ex-comrade

By AARON RECUENCO

Raymart Dagohoy dreamed of going back to a normal life as a sugarcane plantation worker and spend time with his family after leaving the communist movement.

But on Friday at around 6:30 a.m. while the 22-year-old Dagohoy was about to have breakfast with his father and other co-workers in Purok 3, barangay San Antonio in Himamaylan City, Negros Occidental, a group of communist rebels arrived and peppered him with bullets.

A police report reaching Camp Crame in Quezon City said that prior to the shooting of Dagohoy, some 20 communist rebels were seen looking for the victim in the sugarcane plantation site where he was working. They were Dagohoy's former comrades in the New People's Army.

The police report said Dagohoy has been working as sugarcane cutter for several months already

after he was convinced to surrender to the government.

Renato Dagohoy's father, said two gunshots were first heard from the approaching rebels, which prompted his companions to run away.

"The victim was shot hit first at the stomach and was shot again while he was running away from his attackers," the police report read.

"One the male gunmen approached the wounded victim and shot him at close range with an M16 rifle three times on the head," it added.

Renato told the police investigators that he saw two women armed with handguns and four male companions armed with high-powered guns when he went to the area where his son was killed.

Police later identified the six gunmen as a certain Lando Liamada, also known as Ka Chua; Eustaque Manait, alias Ka Choi; Ka Greg, Ka Joey, Ka Kumpul and

Ka Lara.

The gunmen reportedly fired their guns while shouting "Long Live NPA" in the local dialect before they left.

The attack on Dagohoy happened while the government is encouraging communist rebels to surrender amid the cancellation of peace talks with the communist rebels. It is being done through localized peace talks.

President Duterte earlier promised to give livelihood projects and houses to communist rebels who would surrender on top of the money being given to the rebels in exchange for the weapons they would surrender.

But police said the security of communist rebels who would surrender is always a challenge as their former comrades would hunt them down especially if they surrender their guns and provide vital information about the movement and their colleagues to the military.

BIFF detonates 2 IEDs as 9 members surrender

CAMP STONGCO, Awang, Datu Odin Sinsuat, Maguindanao: Two improvised explosive devices (IEDs) believed to be owned by Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) exploded in separate locations in Ampatuan, Maguindanao on Friday.

The explosions happened as nine BIFF members surrendered to security forces in General Salipada K. Pendatun, also in Maguindanao, on the same day.

Maj. John Arvin Encinas, spokesman for the 6th Infantry Division (6ID) on Saturday said the first explosion happened at about 8:40 a.m., some 400 meters away from the troops of the Philippine Army's 2nd Mechanized Infantry Battalion who visited Barangay Poblacion to conduct an activity for the community.

Encinas said that when the troops were about to respond to the blast site, another IED exploded about 100 meters away, 15 minutes after the first explosion.

The troops immediately secured the blast sites and conducted road clearing to secure motorists passing along the highway as the 32nd Explosive Ordnance Disposal Team (32EOD) conducted safety procedures and assessment.

The 32EOD found that the first IED was made of 81mm unexploded mortar ordnance while the second was made of black powder placed in a can.

Initial investigation and reports from civilians in the area pointed to Samad

Simpai, a BIFF commander, as perpetrator of the twin explosions.

"The BIFF's recent IED attacks are manifestations of their being desperate and weak already. They could no longer fight face to face with the government forces that secure the Filipino people," said Maj. Gen. Cirilito Sobejana, 6ID commander.

Sobejana also said that Simpai was responsible for the series of harassments of military troops and detachments.

Meanwhile, nine BIFF members, including a commander, surrendered in General Salipada K. Pendatun town after their families convinced them to return to the fold of law.

They surrendered to Lt. Col. Harold Cabunoc, commander of the 33rd Infantry Battalion, with a certain commander Banog who arranged a meeting to formalize their surrender.

"Commander Banog said his family members were instrumental in convincing him to finally surface in the name of peace," Cabunoc said.

The BIFF members handed over two .50-caliber sniper rifles, three anti-tank rocket launchers, two rifles and two grenade launchers.

A total of 39 BIFF militants have already surrendered to the 6th ID since April 2013.

**JULMUNIR I. JANNARAL,
AL JACINTO AND
ROY D.R. NARRA**

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9 BIFF members yield

NINE members of the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) have decided surrendered the other day in General Salipada K. Pendatun, Maguindanao.

The rebels led by Commander Banog, a prominent BIFF field commander in the area gave up to the 33rd Infantry Battalion.

Commander Banog arranged a meeting with 33rd

IB Commander Lt. Col. Harold M. Cabunoc a week ago to formalize their surrender to the government.

The latest surrender was made possible through the effort of 33rd IB, 2nd Mechanized Infantry Battalion, Criminal Investigation and Detection Group of Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (CIDG-ARMM) and 4th Special Action Battalion.

The surrenderers turned over nine high-powered firearms including two Cal. 50 sniper rifles, three rocket propelled grenade launchers, one Cal 5.56mm M653 assault rifle, one Cal 7.62mm M14 rifle, and two 40mm M79 grenade launchers.

It can be recalled that the same military and police units also netted four high-powered firearms and arrested four BIFF suspects in a raid against Commander Banog's group in Lumabao village last October 17.

Col. Robert Dauz, Commander of the 1st Mechanized Infantry Brigade, welcomed the new batch of BIFF surrenderers at his camp in Kalandagan village, Tacurong City. (i)

Zaida Delos Reyes

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9 BIFF members surrender in Maguindanao

NINE members of the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) on Friday returned to the fold of the law in General Salipada K. Pendatun (GKSP), Maguindanao.

The rebels who surrendered to the 33rd Infantry Battalion was led by Kumander Banog, a prominent BIFF field commander in GKSP.

Banog last week arranged a meeting with 33rd IB commander Lt. Col Harold Cabunoc to formalize their surrender to the government.

The group also turned over nine high-powered firearms, including two cal. 50 sniper rifles, three rocket-propelled grenade launchers, one cal 5.56mm M653 assault rifle, one cal 7.62mm M14 rifle, and two 40mm M79 grenade launchers.

Zaida Dolos Reyes

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The 'Red-baiting' of the innocent

THE branding and marking of church workers, religious sisters and priests today as "communists and Marxists" is a propaganda tactic that stems from the repressive Marcos era of martial law. Marcos and his cronies who ruled with fear and death had their own fears. They were frightened of that power that is greater than their militia and military.

That power is the power of love of neighbor and respect and service for the poor. It is the powerful commitment and dedication of Christians and moderate good Muslims that work for justice and freedom from oppression. It is a force for good that cannot be defeated, wiped out, extinguished or subdued. It is not materialistic; it is a spiritual power that can transform the world.

When some speak to power and demand that the rulers stop their evil and cruel oppression, to turn from greed and selfish ambition and transform their rule or step down, they do so out of love of justice and neighbor. These are people of integrity, risking their lives as they seek a peaceful path to social justice and true economic freedom for the poor.

They courageously speak out for human dignity and teach the rights of all to be free from domination of persons in power. But then the powerful strike back. They attack the person, the messenger of the Gospel values, with vilification and false charges.

The most absurd slander is that the true Christian working for peace and justice is an enemy of the state and is a communist or Marxist. Today, those who speak against oppression and work for rights are dubbed as "terror-



REFLECTIONS

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CULLEN, SSC

ists. "This brings an odious and unjust slander on the good people working for justice. This is a contradiction in terms. The true Christian seeks and works for a life of dignity for the poor and the oppressed through peaceful non-violent dialogue and reconciliation. Anyone criticizing or opposing the unjust regime, however, is marked and branded.

The murder of nine poor sugar workers in Negros recently, most likely by the goons and guns of the rich landowner, shows this insidious propaganda at work. The impoverished farm workers were demanding that the land under the government land reform program be distributed to them so they could feed their families. They were only asking that the law be implemented. They set up a small canvas shelter in a sugar field near Sagay City in Negros Occidental, and they were murdered by 10 armed men. Four others escaped.

To cover up the atrocity, they too are branded as communists. What did they know of communist ideology or Marxism? They knew only of hunger, empty stomachs, crying sick children and life in a hovel. They wanted justice and land that was their right. Their detractors even suggested that they might have had weapons and fired back and that they might even be members of the communist New People's Army (NPA). This

tactic is called "red-baiting." Despite the name-calling of the victims, the national outcry has been heard. The presidential spokesperson said: "Families of the victims of this extremely cruel act can count on the government that it will enforce the full wrath of the law against its perpetrators."

Wanting justice for the poor and the marginalized, the hungry and the downtrodden is to be in solidarity with the poor and the exploited. These are spiritual, non-materialistic values that motivate many people to act justly and build dignity in communities.

Communists have taken up arms for a violent struggle, dividing a nation into classes of people and waging a war of "class struggle." It's an atheistic ideology that shuns religious values and eventually becomes as repressive as the corrupt government and system it replaces. The gulags and concentration camps of communist countries are evidences of this.

Communists do not believe in gradual social transformation by the power of justice, compassion, education and economic justice. They work for a violent revolution. The Christian or the good moderate Muslim believes not in exclusion but in inclusion: society is for everyone and government reform is possible when good people, men and women, motivated by religious and spiritual values, are brought to power by the people through the democratic process.

The Christian or moderate Muslim approach is spiritual evolution rather than violent revolution. True Christianity and true Islam promote the value of human dignity and the rights of the individual

person. Communism espouses the predominance of the state over the individual. The person ought not own property; only the state can.

The tagging or name-calling of Christians working for gospel values as atheistic communists is a contradiction in terms. The unjust, corrupt dynastic regimes must be challenged in a non-violent way. Their rule is imposed by force, intimidation and violence and trying to silence them and conditioning society by branding them as evil people is to foreshadow their assassination or murder.

The nine farmers killed in Hacienda Nene in Barangay Bulanon were called communist rebels or subversives after they were killed. Christian and Muslim human rights workers have also been targeted, and they too have been killed. Speaking the truth, standing for the rights of the poor and the exploited is a dangerous way to live.

As we have written, even Archbishop Oscar Romero, now a martyr and saint, was shot dead because he spoke out and challenged the brutal regime killing thousands of innocent people. He stood with the poor and oppressed people of El Salvador and was wrongly called a communist. Jesus of Nazareth was himself falsely accused, marked and executed as a rebel and part of a plot to make himself king. So, what's new in the Philippines where the innocents are always blamed for the crimes of the powerful?

For more about life in a hacienda, read Ricky and Julie at <http://amzn.com/B07DXKX4SV>.

www.preda.org



**Alisin lahat, from top to bottom
ang mga opisyal sa Customs**

Marami nang naging Customs commissioner pero wala pa ring pagbabago sa tanggapaning ito at lalo pang naging talamak ang korapsiyon. Ngayon, hindi lamang bigas, prutas, sibuyas, cell phone at gadget ang ipinupuslit dito kundi shabu na. Wala nang takot ang drug syndicates at sa mismong sa Manila International Container pa idinadaan ang shabu. Alam ng sindikato na makakalusot sapagkat marami silang kakutsabang mga corrupt na opisyal at empleyado ng Customs.

Kayang-kaya silang tapalan ng pera kaya madaling nakakalusot ang shabu.

Gaya ng nangyaring pagpuslit ng apat na magnetic lifters sa MICT noong Agosto na nalabas at nalibyahe sa GMA, Cavite. May lamang shabu ang magnetic lifters na nagkakahalaga ng P6.8 bilyon. Pero bago nadiskubre ng PDEA ang kontrabando, nasimot na ang laman. Sa kasalukuyan, nakakalat na ang shabu sa maraming panig ng bansa.

Inalis na ni President Duterte si dating Customs commissioner Isidro Lapeña at nilipat sa TESDA. Si dating AFP chief of Staff at kasalukuyang MARINA administrator Rey Leonardo Guerrero ang ipinalit kay Lapeña.

Masusubok ang husay ni Guerrero sa Customs at sana ay magsagawa siya ng mga reporma. Mas maganda kung magsasagawa siya ng total revamp. Alisin niya from top to bottom ang mga opisyal at empleyado ng Customs. Kailangang mawala ang mga corrupt para maging malinis ang Customs.

--ALEX BALLAREN, Project 6, Quezon City

ONLINE NEWS

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27 Filipino war veterans awarded US Congressional medal



GOLD MEDAL AWARDEE. World War II veteran Corporal Cato Pulac, who turned 100 years old in March 2018, is one of the recipients of the United States Congressional gold medal from Ambassador Sung Kim in a ceremony held at the Philippine Military Academy on Saturday (October 27, 2018). (Photo by Pamela Mariz Geminiano)

FORT DEL PILAR, Baguio City -- The United States government has given the Congressional gold medal award to 27 Filipino veterans for their loyalty, valor and sacrifices in the defense of freedom and justice during World War II (WW2).

"The congressional gold medal is given to the Filipino war veterans in recognition of their dedicated service, and selfless sacrifice during the war," said US Ambassador to the Philippines Sung Kim, in a ceremony at the Philippine Military Academy (PMA) here on Saturday.

"This declaration is awarded to an individual or unit who performed outstanding deed or act of service to the security, prosperity, and national interest of the United States.," he told veterans and their families and witnessed by hundreds of PMA cadets and members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

The US ambassador added that the Congressional gold medal is also the highest expression of national appreciation from the US Congress for the distinguished achievement and contribution of veterans.

Shared experience fighting the Japanese during the World War II and defeating a post-war communist rebellion further cemented the "special relationship" between the two countries, Kim said.

Santiago Busa Jr., a Filipino-American graduate at West Point and a PMA professor of Internal Relations, said the recognition will not stop in just giving medals, education component is perhaps the most important.

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

"Americans and Filipinos shall be taught about the sacrifice of both nations, which the medal symbolizes that is proof of the involvement of the Filipinos in WWII" he said.

The medal will serve as a reminder that this history will not be forgotten and will be forever passed on to succeeding generations, he added.

Busa is a member of a "lobby" group belonging to the Philippine Veterans Recognition and Education project that went to all the 314 Congressmen and 70 Senators of the United States to get their support for the passage of Public Act 114-265, entitled "Filipino Veterans of World War II Congressional Gold Medal Act Of 2016."

"Public Act 114 is the law that grants the congressional medal to the Filipino veterans of World War II," Busa said on the sidelines of the awarding ceremony.

The medal does not have an accompanying benefit. No health care or a visa or an education, but only a recognition of the WW II veteran's sacrifice. "These guys didn't fight for that, they fought for themselves, they fought for the country, they fought for each other but it's also good to give them recognition," he said.

Even if the award was given 76 years after, Busa said "now they feel that they are being appreciated after all these years."

The veterans who received the Congressional gold medal is led by centenarian Corporal (CPL) Cato Pulac of La Trinidad; CPL Rizalino Alingbas, 95 of La Trinidad Benguet; Sergeant Angelo Andrada, 92 of Baguio City; Private Camilo Atas, 94 of Buguias, Benguet; Private First Class Mateo Bakian, 92 of Atok Benguet; Private Cosme Baltazar, 94 of Kayapa Nueva Vizcaya; Private First Class Tuacan Barian, 97 of Kapangan Benguet; Private First Class Timoteo Boado, 90 of Baguio City; Private Alberto Bugtong, 93 of Itogon Benguet; Private Camilo Bugtong, 93 of Itogon Benguet; Private First Class Graciano Clavano Jr., 89 of Central Baguio City; Private Pio Doro, 92 of Kapangan Benguet; 2nd Lieutenant Wilfredo Estandian, 96 of La Trinidad Benguet; Private Pedro Hipol, 91 of Bauang La Union; Private Magno Lamsis, 94 of La Trinidad Benguet; Private Vicente Madarang, 92 of Rosario, La Union; Private Ernesto Luis, 91; Private Enrique Sobrepena Jr. of Carmona Cavite; Major Jaime Tabernero, 97 of Rosario La Union; Corporal Jose Tadifa, San Fernando City, La Union; Sergeant Jose Tiangao, 93 of Itogon Benguet; Private Garcia Wakit, 92 of Sablan Benguet and Private Salvador Yapyapan, 93 of Balaoan, La Union.

Posthumous awards were also given and received by the families of General Vicente Lim; LTC Pastor Martelino, 1Lt. Francisco Paraan and 3Lt. Jose San Juan.

The awarding, the second in a series, is just the start of the giving of the Congressional gold medal. Busa said the first batch was given to 13 veterans in a ceremony at the US Embassy in Manila and the next will be on November 13 in Lingayen, Pangasinan, then to each province in the country where the veterans are located.

"What better place to have this ceremony than the PMA where the ideals of the nation converge- the ideals of the beauty of the country- honor, integrity and courage are part of their daily existence," Busa said.

He urged the cadets to recall history, the reason for their continued existence. *(PNA)*