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NEWS CLIPPINGS

18 September 2018

Tuesday



Honor. Patriotism. Duty

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LIFE IMPRISONMENT FOR PALPARAN HAILED

STORY BY CARMELA REYES-ESTROPE, ALLAN MACATUNO AND MARICAR CINCO

The retired general, known as 'The Butcher,' insists he's not guilty and vows to appeal the decision. Human rights groups and lawmakers say his conviction is a warning to other abusive officials that 'impunity is not forever.'

FROM A1

By Carmela Reyes-Estrope,
Allan Macatuno
and Maricar Cinco
@InqNational

CITY OF MALOLOS—"You're a coward, Judge! You're a big coward! You'll carry this in your conscience!" Jovito Palparan Jr. yelled at the judge as justice caught up with him on Monday morning.

Judge Alexander Tamayo of the Bulacan Regional Trial Court (RTC) Branch 15 warned him of contempt.

"It doesn't matter anymore, we're going to prison anyway!" Palparan retorted.

He turned on Senior Assistant State Prosecutor Juan Pedro Navera and roared: "You're so stupid!"

Navera shrugged.

"We are used to accused abusing us verbally. As prosecutors, we are not popular with convicts," he said.

Reclusion perpetua

Tamayo sentenced former Army Major General Palparan, called "The Butcher" by human rights activists, former Army Lt. Col. Felipe Anotado Jr. and former Army S/Sgt. Edgardo Osorio to *reclusion perpetua*—20 years and one day to 40 years in prison—for the kidnapping and serious illegal detention of University of the Philippines students Karen Empeño and Sherlyn Cadapan in 2006.

The judge also ordered the three to pay the victims' families P100,000 in civil indemnity and P200,000 in moral damages for

each count, and their transfer to New Bilibid Prison, the national penitentiary, in Muntinlupa City.

The court issued a warrant for the arrest of another accused, Army M/Sgt. Rizal Hilario, who remains at large.

Palparan said he and his codefendants would challenge the decision in the Court of Appeals.

'We are not guilty'

Before the promulgation, he told the Inquirer that he was at peace.

"After this, we walk as free men. We are not guilty," Palparan said. "What evidence have they shown that would keep us in jail? We have lost seven years of our lives."

But when the decision came down, it was Erlinda Cadapan, the mother of Sherlyn, and Concepcion Empeño, the mother of Karen, who wept for joy.

"We waited for this for more than a decade. We are joyful and thankful for the fair decision rendered by the judge," Empeño said after leaving the court.

"This battle is not yet over. I want to skin [him] alive," Cadapan said, blaming Palparan for the killings of activists wherever he was assigned.

"Our victory is not yet complete. We want to embrace the warm bodies of our daughters. They (the military) should return all the missing people they abducted because their families are anxiously waiting for them," she said.

Cadapan traveled from Laguna early on Monday to attend the promulgation. She said her daughter would have been 42 today.

Later, in a phone interview, Cadapan said that now that Pal-



CONVICTED Former Army Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan Jr. (in handcuffs) is led to court amid heavy military protection on Monday. Judge Alexander Tamayo sentenced him to at most 40 years in prison for kidnaping two University of the Philippines students in 2006. —NINO JESUS ORBETA

paran had been convicted, it was time the troops who had served under him speak up.

"[To] the soldiers who may know something, tell us what really happened to our daughters," she said.

'Macabre silence'

The promulgation took no more than 10 minutes.

"Crucial in determining the culpability and conspiratorial liability of General Palparan is the unassailable fact that he knew all too well of the forcible abduction and detention of Karen and Sherlyn by those under his command, as he had seen these two women at Camp Tecson but he not only acquiesced to their unlawful captivi-

ty but also gave his imprimatur to their inhumane treatment at the hands of his men, and, in effect, fomented the same by not lifting a finger to halt the abuses against them," Judge Tamayo said in his decision.

"Clearly, he (Palparan) was one... in the desire to stamp out the enemies of the state, like Karen and Sherlyn, who they believed deserved to be erased from the face of the earth at any cost," he added.

"Karen and Sherlyn, in fact, have not been seen again, despite the many years of continuing search for them. His silence and inaction were the signals of approval for his men to commit atrocities against these hapless women."

Tamayo said it was through his "macabre silence" that Palparan "loudly expressed his assent to, approval of and community of purpose in the crimes that he became a coconspirator of in these cases."

Palparan is currently detained at Fort Bonifacio's Army Custodial Center in Taguig City for his alleged role in the abduction and illegal detention of the two student activists.

His lawyer, Arturo Cabides, asked the court to allow him to stay in military jail because he still had to be tried on kidnapping and serious physical injury charges brought by two farmers in 2006.

Unidentified men seized Empeño and Cadapan from a house at Barangay San Miguel.

Hagonoy town, Bulacan, on June 26, 2006.

Empeño, who was 22 at the time, and Cadapan, who was then 29 and reportedly pregnant, were never seen again.

Leftist groups tagged Palparan, then commander of the Army's 7th Infantry Division, as responsible for the disappearance of the two students, whom the military had described as sympathizers of the New People's Army, the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines.

Palparan was commander of the Army's 204th Brigade on Mindoro Island in the early 2000s, serving on the counterinsurgency program of then President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

Political killings

Activists in Southern Tagalog also blamed a spate of political killings in the region on Palparan's command.

Among those killed in 2003 were Karapatan regional coordinator Eden Marcellana and activist Eddie Gumanoy.

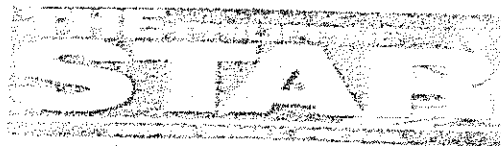
A year earlier, activist couple Expedito and Manuela Albarillo were killed, allegedly by troops from Palparan's command.

Palparan went into hiding after the Bulacan RTC issued a warrant for his arrest.

He was arrested in a house above a bakery in Santa Mesa, Manila, in 2014.

He was initially detained at the Bulacan provincial jail but due to concerns about his security, the court allowed his transfer to Fort Bonifacio. —WITH A REPORT FROM DARRYL JOHN ESGUERRA INQ

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Life term for 'The Butcher'

Palparan found guilty of kidnapping UP students

By RAMON EFREN LAZARO

MALolos – The retired Army major general dubbed “The Butcher” by human rights groups will spend the rest of his life in prison.

Jovito Palparan Jr. and his two co-accused soldiers were found guilty yesterday of kidnapping and serious illegal detention involving two University of the Philippines students who have been missing for 12 years.

The defendants were also ordered to indemnify the family of the missing with P100,000 in civil damages and P200,000 as moral damages.

As the verdict of Malolos Regional Trial Court (RTC) Branch 15 Judge Alexander Tamayo was read, Palparan shouted at the judge, “*Duwag ka* (You’re a coward)!” adding, “*Taranado! Gago!* (Jerk! Stupid!)”

His counsel and security soldiers tried to calm him

down as the judge warned Palparan of contempt of court.

The cases against Palparan and his co-accused – Lt. Col. Felipe Anotado and S/5gt. Edgardo Osorio – were filed by Erlinda Cadapan and Connie Empeño, mothers of missing UP student activists Sherlyn Cadapan and Karen Empeño, who were snatched in Barangay San Miguel, Hagonoy, Bulacan on June 26, 2006.

The complainants were supported by militant groups Desaparecidos, Karapatan, and End Impunity Alliance as well as by members of the National Union of People’s Lawyers.

Defense counsels said they would appeal the cases and

Turn to Page 6

Life term From Page 1

ask the judge to keep them under military custody, but Tamayo said the accused were now convicted and custody should be transferred to the Bureau of Prisons.

Palparan, Anotado and Osorio were heavily guarded by at least 10 Army soldiers inside the courtroom and at least six other soldiers outside the door of the Bulacan RTC Branch 15.

Members of militant groups held an indignation rally against the three convicts outside the RTC building while a phalanx of policemen was deployed against the demonstrators, who lined up on the pavement pictures of their missing relatives, friends and colleagues believed abducted during the time of when Palparan was still in active service.

Upon learning of the verdict, the bereaved kin welcomed the outcome and offered Tamayo a "*taas kamay na pagpupugay* (arms raised in salute)" for his decision.

Cadapan also appealed to the Army soldiers to produce the bodies of Sherlyn and Karen.

Palace, military respect ruling

Malacañang respects the court's ruling on Palparan's case and expressed hope that the victims' families will get justice.

"We respect the decision of the court and we would want justice to be done to the victims," presidential spokesman Harry Roque said at a press briefing in Benguet.

"As it has been and always will be, the position of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) is submission to

the majesty of the courts and respect for the rule of law," the military said in a statement issued yesterday after learning of the court ruling on Palparan's case.

AFP spokesman Col. Edgard Arevalo said the military "also respects whatever legal recourse are available to and will be availed (by those convicted) under the law and the Rules of Court."

He noted that the AFP has yet to receive and see a copy of the decision of the court on Palparan, Anotado and Osorio.

Warning to state forces

For senators, Palparan's conviction should serve as a warning to state security forces on violating human rights.

Sen. Francis Pangilinan said Palparan's conviction should send a strong signal to the AFP, the Philippine National Police (PNP) "and the rest of those in government that sooner or later, the law and our justice system will hold to account violators of human rights."

He also expressed hopes that the whereabouts of Cadapan and Empeño will be known.

Sen. Joseph Victor Ejercito welcomed the conviction even if he thought it was long overdue.

"Once the conviction becomes final, to be fair, he must be jailed at the New Bilibid Prison (NBP)," Ejercito said, referring to Palparan.

Sen. Risa Hontiveros said the verdict showed that the long arm of the law will eventually reach human rights violators.

"You may be able to tem-

porarily escape and hide from accountability; you may be able to bribe your way for temporary freedom; you may be able to hide behind those in power, but justice and history will catch up with you," Hontiveros said in Filipino.

'Long-overdue verdict'

The seven-man militant Makabayan bloc in the House of Representatives hailed the court decision.

"This is a long-overdue verdict for him. This then should be taken as a strong warning to other human rights violators, then and now, that reckoning day will eventually come," Bayan Muna party-list Rep. Carlos Isagani Zarate said.

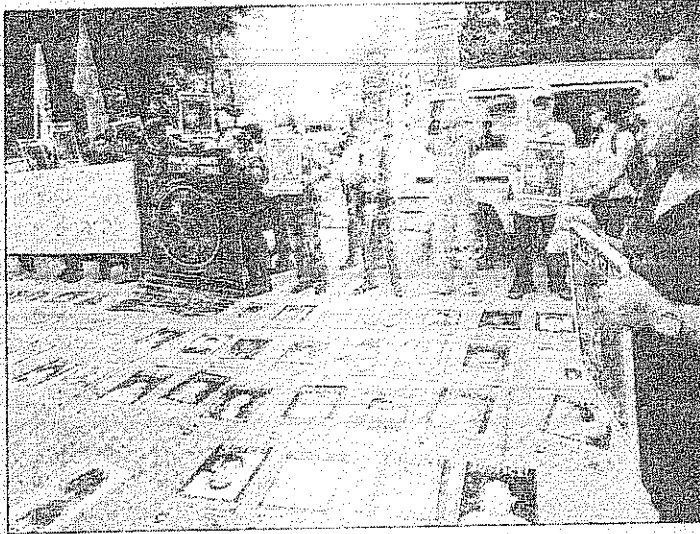
"Now that Palparan et al. have been found guilty, other human rights violators should be next," the progressive lawmaker said vaguely, without giving specifics but most likely referring to what they called the strongman administration of President Duterte.

"Our fight to call for justice for the victims does not end with this guilty verdict. We demand Karen Empeño and Sherlyn Cadapan and all the disappeared be surfaced. We must continue to fight and call justice for all the victims of violence," ACT Teachers party-list Rep. Antonio Tinio said.

"Accountability for these human rights violations is urgent, especially where the victims are children and their teachers and schools, national minorities, the Moro people and marginalized sectors," the legislator from party-list ACT Teachers added.

Anakpawis party-list Rep. Ariel Casilao called on other human rights victims to come out.

"May this serve as a warning



Militants hold a protest outside the Malolos City Regional Trial Court in Bulacan during the promulgation of the case against retired Army general Jovito Palparan yesterday. MICHAEL VARGAS

to military officials who are presently wreaking havoc on the lives of the people, especially in the martial ruled Mindanao, against the Lumad, farmers and other marginalized sectors," he said.

Casilao also demanded justice for another victim of enforced disappearance, Jonas Burgos who, in April 2007, was snatched by military men that allegedly involved then Army intelligence chief Eduardo Año, now acting secretary of the Department of the Interior and Local Government.

He said there were more than 1,200 victims of extrajudicial killings and thousands of other human rights abuses under the nine-year presidency of incumbent Speaker Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, which was touted as Oplan Bantay Laya counter-insurgency program.

'Justice still served'

Justice might have been

served late to Palparan, but the main point is that it was still served, Justice Secretary Menardo Guevarra said yesterday.

The Bulacan court issued a warrant of arrest for Palparan in 2011 but he went into hiding for three years. He was arrested in 2014.

Meanwhile, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines-National Secretariat for Social Action (NASSA) executive secretary Fr. Edu Gariguez said Palparan deserves to be given the guilty verdict because he committed a "monstrous crime of killing and torturing those who are in progressive movements working to defend the rights of the poor."

"I have personally investigated the spate of killings in Mindoro orchestrated by (Palparan). I was also targeted by him for liquidation. The guilty verdict is justice served. He should be made accountable

for his crime," Gariguez added.

Ordinary inmate

Palparan will be treated "just like any other ordinary inmate" once he is turned over to the NBP to serve his sentence.

"*Makikipagsiksikan siya sa RDC* (He will be crammed inside the Reception and Diagnostic Center)," Bureau of Corrections (Bucor) chief Ronald dela Rosa told reporters yesterday.

Palparan will be processed at the facility for 60 days, according to the former PNP chief.

"On his first five days, he will be in isolation... Medical, psychological and other check-up procedures will be administered to him," Dela Rosa said, adding Palparan would also be briefed about the rules inside the NBP.

In the next 55 days, Palparan will be assessed as to which facility he will be jailed at.

'Step forward for justice'

Rights groups welcomed the Bulacan court's verdict.

"This is a step forward for justice, though partial, for so long as Karen and Sherry remain missing and numerous other violations remain unresolved," Karapatan deputy secretary-general Roneo Clamor said.

"This case has dragged on for so long, adding to the pain of the victims' relatives and to the benefit of Palparan who is detained at Fort Bonifacio in Taguig City.

- With Alexis Romero, Michael Punongbayan, Paolo Romero, Delon Porcalla, Evelyn Macairan, Ghio Ong, Rhodina Villanueva, Ding Cervantes, Mayen Jaymalin

JAPANESE SUBMARINE JOINS WARSHIPS IN SOUTH CHINA SEA NAVAL DRILL

TOKYO—A Japanese submarine joined a naval drill in the South China Sea for the first time, the Ministry of Defense said on Monday, in an escalation of Japanese activity in the disputed waterway claimed by China and others.

The Maritime Self-Defense Force submarine Kuroshio conducted a naval exercise on Thursday with other Japanese warships in the South China Sea, including the Kaga helicopter carrier, which is on a two-month tour of Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean.

A Ministry of Defense spokesperson said it was the first time a Japanese submarine had conducted drills there, confirming an earlier report in the Asahi newspaper.

The exercise, which involved the submarine trying to evade detection, was conducted away from island bases constructed by China to push its claims in the strategic sea.

Could anger Beijing

However, it could still anger Beijing because submarines represent a greater potential

menace to shipping than surface vessels.

The drill came after a British Royal Navy amphibious assault ship, HMS Albion, sailed close to islands claimed by China in the South China Sea late last month to exercise "freedom of navigation" rights.

Strong protest

Britain's first such operation prompted a strong protest from China, which sent aircraft and a naval vessel to meet the British ship.

The US Navy has conducted

similar operations in the South China Sea. Washington has said it would like to see more countries challenge Beijing in the South China Sea, through which some \$3 trillion of shipborne trade passes each year.

Foreign aircraft and vessels in the region are routinely challenged by Chinese naval ships and monitoring stations on the fortified islands, sources have said previously.

Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam also have territorial claims in the area. —REUTERS

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PH seeks China help to find missing fisherman in WPS

The Philippines has asked for China's assistance to find a Filipino fisherman who went missing on Sept. 13 near Rizal (Commodore) Reef, one of the Philippine-controlled features in the West Philippine Sea (WPS), the waters in the South China Sea within the country's exclusive economic zone. Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Geng Shuang said Philippine authorities relayed the information that on the afternoon of Sept. 13, a Filipino fisherman "fell into the waters and went missing south of the Commodore Reef in the Nansha islands." Nansha is the Chinese name for the Spratly islands. "At the request of the Philippine side, China immediately dispatched vessels to that area. The search and rescue efforts are still under way," he said. --DONA Z. PAZZIBUGAN

Special envoy to UNICEF champions welfare of children

At the second regular session of the UNICEF Executive Board held on Sept. 12-14 at the UN headquarters in New York, UNICEF executive director Henrietta Fore, UNICEF executive board president Tore Hattrem and UNICEF regional director for East Asia and Pacific Karin Hulshof expressed their gratitude to the Philippine government for its continued support for the work of UNICEF in the country.

They welcomed the appointment of Monica Prieto-Teodoro as the President's special envoy to UNICEF as a reflection of the importance given by the Philippine government to children's rights and child welfare.

In delivering the national statement during the adoption of the UNICEF country program document for the Philippines for 2019-2023, Teodoro reaffirmed the Philippine government's commitment to protect the rights and promote the welfare of children.

She stated that "more than half of the 110 million Filipinos are under 25 years old. Child-focused interventions and policies are thus crucial. Children and the youth will be both drivers and beneficiaries of the country's growth."

The special envoy thanked UNI-

CEF for their constructive engagement with the Philippine government and recognized UNICEF's strategic intervention in support of government priorities, including addressing online violence against children and the situation of children in disasters and that of children in Mindanao.

She highlighted the military's role in protecting the welfare of the children in armed conflict.

Teodoro also shared her advocacies and concrete initiatives to ensure that no child is left behind.

These include the establishment of the Committee for the Welfare of

Children in Congress, the Golden Rooster Foundation and Amor Village in Region 3. She stated that, as special envoy of the President, it is her priority to strengthen measures to ensure the physical and mental well-being of Filipino children and to protect them against child pornography and child-trafficking.

Further, to ensure that no child is left behind in the country's path to sustainable development, she vowed to continue her work in protecting children with disabilities and children in conflict.

On the sidelines of the

UNICEF executive board meeting, Teodoro engaged and had meetings with Fore, Hulshof, Hattrem, UNICEF director for private fundraising and partnership Gary Stahl and UNICEF-Canada president David Morley. She also met with the Philippine Permanent Representative to the UN Teodoro Locsin Jr.

The discussions noted that this year commemorates 70 years of development partnership between UNICEF and the Philippines.

The partnership has, through

the years, facilitated the successful implementation of programs covering education, health and nutrition, disaster risk reduction and emergencies, HIV and AIDS prevention, child protection and rescue, communication, local policy and institutional development. 3

The executive board adopted the 8th UNICEF Country Program for the Philippines for 2019-2023. The document is fully aligned with the Philippine Development Plan 2017-2022 and Ambisyon Natin 2040.

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Japan conducts first submarine drill in disputed sea – reports

TOKYO (AFP) – Japan has carried out its first submarine drill in the South China Sea, a newspaper said Monday, a move that could provoke Beijing which claims most of the disputed waters.

Submarine Kuroshio on Thursday joined three Japanese warships in waters just southwest of the China-controlled Scarborough Shoal, the Asahi Shimbun said.

China claims most of the resource-rich South China Sea, through which \$5 trillion in shipping trade passes annually, despite competing claims from Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam.

Tensions have been high over the Scarborough Shoal since it was seized from Manila by Beijing in 2012.

The newspaper said the submarine exercises were Tokyo's first in the South China Sea.



Japan conducts first...



Japan's Maritime Self-Defense Force carried out a "practical" anti-submarine drill, including an exercise to spot enemy submarines with sonar devices, Asahi said, quoting unnamed Japanese government sources.

The sources said it was a legitimate naval exercise in neutral waters, with rights of access secured under international law.

Following the drill, the Japanese submarine plans to make a port call on Monday at Cam Ranh, central Vietnam, in a bid to display Tokyo's defense cooperation with Hanoi, Asahi said.

It will be the first call by a submarine at the strategically important port since the Second World War, it added.

The disputed South China Sea contains vital global shipping routes and what are believed to be significant oil and natural gas deposits.

China has engaged in years of land-reclamation efforts on reefs it controls in the region, and built both civilian and military facilities in the contested area.

Earlier this month, Beijing lashed out at Britain for sending a warship close to the disputed islands – one of a series of "freedom of navigation" operations carried out in recent times by the US and its allies as a signal to Beijing of their right to access the disputed waters.

Immediate confirmation of the Asahi Shimbun report was not available.

Enforce ban on pocket mining, Cimatu orders

By Kimberlie Quitasol and Kariston Lapniten @InqNational

LA TRINIDAD, BENGUET—Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu on Monday ordered the police and military to enforce a ban on pocket mining in Cordillera after landslides killed 35 small-scale miners and members of their families in Itogon town, Benguet province, at the height of Typhoon “Ompong” on Saturday.

President Duterte, speaking at a situation briefing here on Monday, repeated his call to shut down all mines in the country following the deadly landslides.

Cimatu gave the order after a massive landslide at Barangay Ucab in Itogon pulled down shanties, old bunkhouses and a chapel. The bunkhouses were once used by Benguet Corp.

The fatalities were miners and members of their families who had taken shelter in the area from Ompong’s winds and rains.

Around 40 people remained missing as landslides also struck Loacan, Virac and Ampucao villages and the poblacion in Itogon.

Hundreds of rescuers using shovels and picks were searching in the red mud for those still missing. On Monday, two bodies and body parts belonging to a third fatality were recovered.

Itogon Mayor Victorio Palangdan said at a news conference that of the 40 people thought buried, there’s a “99 percent [chance] that they really are all dead.” Ompong has killed at least 65 people in the country.

Total ban in Cordillera

Cimatu also canceled temporary small-scale mining permits and imposed a total ban on

illegal mining in Cordillera.

“I learned that most of the pocket miners were not from Benguet but from Ifugao. So we sent them back to their province,” he said.

Informed by the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) that 10 mining operations had been given temporary small-scale mining contracts, Cimatu added: “By virtue of what happened, I am revoking those permits effective today.”

The ban covers about 10,000 small-scale miners in Itogon town.

Suspended for now

Presidential spokesperson Harry Roque explained Cimatu’s order to mean that all small-scale mining operations

would be suspended and those with permits would have their permits suspended for now.

At the situation briefing here, President Duterte blamed mining and the “inroads of civilization” for the landslides.

“If I were to try to do my thing, I will close all mining in the Philippines,” Mr. Duterte said.

The Chamber of Mines of the Philippines (COMP) said illegal small-scale mining “does not employ the same stringent safety practices required of legitimate large-scale mining operations.”

Member companies of COMP that have permits in Cordillera include Benguet Corp., Philex Mining Corp. and Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co.

Officials have said that gold

small-scale mining could resume.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has yet to act on proposed sites for Minahang Bayan, including an idle open-pit mine in Benguet.

Alternative livelihood

Cimatu's decision has alarmed Benguet officials since thousands of families rely on pocket mining.

Mayor Palangdan asked for a meeting with the DENR secretary to help choose viable areas for Minahang Bayan.

Benguet Gov. Crescencio Fajaiso said he would have to convene various agencies to determine how to deal with the loss of livelihood.

Roque said the government would provide alternative income opportunities for the small-scale miners to be affected.

At the Cordillera police headquarters in Camp Dangwa, officials told Francis Tolentino, President Duterte's political adviser, that they were keeping a close watch on the topside of the Ucab landslide because of concerns the rest of the hill would give way.

mines tunneled by big mining companies or by unauthorized individuals and small outfits have made the hillsides unstable and more prone to landslides.

Tens of thousands of small-time miners from the lowlands have established communities in high-risk areas like the foothills of Itogon.

Area declared geohazard

Benguet Corp. said it had issued "numerous notices to small-scale miners to vacate the area since the 1990s" after the MGB declared the area a geohazard. The mining company has stopped its operations in the area since the late 1990s.

Cimatu said a "Minahang Bayan" (People's Mines) must first be established in Benguet before

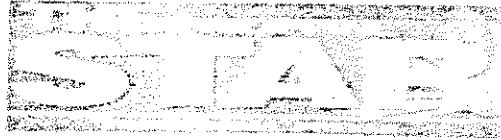
Abandoned tunnel

An abandoned tunnel of an old mine lies beneath the area that collapsed, according to Mayor Palangdan.

A total of 145 families were evacuated from erosion-prone areas of Itogon on Monday, adding to the 78 families who heeded a directive to leave the hill before Ompong struck, said Janet Armas, Cordillera director of the DSWD.

She said the DSWD would provide assistance to the families who would lose their livelihood due to Cimatu's order. —WITH RE-

PORTS FROM JULIE M. AURELIO, KARL R. OCAMPO, AP AND REUTERS INQ



Rescuers seek miracle, signs of life in Itogon

Rescuers raced against time to find and pull out survivors from a massive mound of mud and debris that buried a bunkhouse and other structures where dozens of miners and their families had sought shelter at the height of Typhoon Ompong's onslaught in Itogon in Benguet.

The official casualty figure early yesterday was set at 56 dead, according to Mario Iringan of the Cordillera Administrative Region's interior department, but the figure is expected to rise as 40 to 50 people were believed to be

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Rescuers From Page 1

still under tons of mud that buried the bunkhouse that doubled as a chapel.

Some 300 police, soldiers, firefighters and volunteers armed mostly with hand tools raced to remove rocks, mud, debris and drain water from

collapsed buildings, hoping to find some signs of life after 12 bodies were pulled out.

The village of Ucab in the picturesque Cordillera region was hit by one of 50 landslides triggered by heavy rains brought by Typhoon Ompong, which tore

across the northern tip of the Philippines early on Saturday, killing dozens of people.

Only three people have been rescued in Ucab as of yesterday. Fifty-six were missing, six of them children. Many of the adults were in an abandoned bunkhouse, next to a chapel and home of a pastor and his family. The buildings

were all crushed by earth and rocks.

The abandoned bunkhouse, owned by gold miner Benguet Corp., was near the site of a mine which was operating illegally, according to the Chamber of Mines of the Philippines.

The chamber, of which

Benguet Corp. is a member, said mining operators in Ucab had been repeatedly told to leave the area because of the threat of landslides.

- With Artemio Dum-lao, Raymond Catindig, Evelyn Macairan, Cecille Suerie Felipe, Reuters, AP

DENR suspends small-scale mining in CAR

By ALEXIS ROMERO

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) yesterday ordered the suspension of all small-scale mining operations in the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) in the wake of typhoon-induced landslides that left dozens of people dead.

Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu said the revocation of mining permits was made "to prevent further danger" to the lives of small-scale miners.

"I officially order (all illegal small-scale mining work) to cease and desist operations in the whole of CAR," Cimatu said at a press briefing in Benguet.

"The order of revocation is to the small-scale miners in CAR only. It does not cover big-scale mining. We might be filing charges against them if they don't stop despite the

cease and desist order). They could be charged with mining without permit or theft of minerals," he added.

Cimatu said the revocation would cover the temporary contracts of 10 small mining associations that were issued temporary permits.

Congress has to repeal the Philippine Mining Act to put an end to mining, which has caused environmental destruction and triggered deadly landslides, President Duterte said.

At a post-disaster meeting in Benguet yesterday, Duterte blamed mining for the landslides, which he said has "contributed a lot of heartaches to the Filipino people."

"If we cannot end mining because of the law, to end mining... Congress will have to abrogate the law," he said.

"Mining has been operating in the country uncontrolled,"

he added.

"The mining industry, it has not contributed anything substantial to the national economy...I admit we earn P70 billion a year...In the end, how much do you lose in the process?" the President said.

"At present, there are existing applications for minahang bayan (mining area for small-scale miners) in some areas of the region. While we await the approval and proclamation of these applications, we ask our small-scale miners to cooperate and stop all small-scale mining activities here," the DENR chief said.

"The DENR will be sending the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police to effect the stoppage of all mining activities, especially here in Itogon," he said.

Nearly 100 people were bur-

ied after a landslide hit a mining shelter in Itogon, Benguet during the onslaught of Typhoon Ompong last Saturday. The typhoon, the strongest to enter the country this year, has left more than 50 people dead, mostly in landslides.

During the press briefing, Itogon Mayor Victor Palangdan said a technical conference should be conducted first before shutting down small-scale mining.

"We, the local officials, know very well the situation of our small-scale miners. There are small-scale miners (who) are following the laws... they could not get license or permit because of the provisions under our Small-Scale Mining Act that you cannot apply for a permit if a big mining company will not issue you a permit. That should be amended in Congress," the mayor said.

Cimatu said the suspension of small-scale mining operations would be the first phase of their response to the landslides. The second phase would involve relocating small-scale miners to safer places.

Fay Apil, Mines and Geosciences Bureau director for CAR, said 10 mining associations were given temporary small-scale mining contracts. Of the 10,000 small-scale miners in Itogon, only about 500 are members of the associations.

"This time, I will be more strict in the location of the minahang bayan. They should not stay in areas prone to disasters. This is a wake-up call," Cimatu said.

Cimatu vowed to look into the suggestions of local executives but cited the need to strictly regulate mining operations.

"They will be required to

pay the taxes, they will be required to observe the regulation in mining, sanitation and no mercury and their tailings should not reach the river. There's no way you can get into mining if these are not complied with," he said.

For his part, presidential spokesman Harry Roque Jr. said the government is ready to provide assistance and livelihood to residents affected by the suspension. He said the labor and social welfare departments have cash-for-work programs while the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority has alternative livelihood projects.

Benguet Gov. Cresencio Pacalso said they would also work with the social welfare department so that the affected families can be enrolled in the government's cash transfer program. 2

DENR suspends mining in Cordilleras

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has ordered the suspension of all mining operations in the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) after landslides trapped and killed mine workers in Itogon, Benguet.

President Rodrigo Duterte also urged

Congress to "abrogate mining."

"If we cannot end mining because of the law, to end mining, Congress will have to abrogate the law," Duterte said during a situation briefing at the Benguet Provincial Capitol.

"If I will do my thing, I will close

all mining in the Philippines, never mind the P70 billion [in revenues]," Duterte said.

The directive of Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu came days after Typhoon "Ompong" ravaged northern

► Suspend A8

■ SUSPENDS FROM A1

DENR

Philippines, leaving dozens dead and several others missing.

"In the whole of Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR), the mining operations will be suspended," Cimatu said in a news briefing at the Benguet Provincial Capitol.

He also said he was revoking all permits of all small-scale mining in the region, starting Monday.

"The first phase is these [small-scale mining] and the second stage will be to relocate them out of those areas, very dangerous areas, because we have issued a hazard, geo-hazard map all over the country, which shows the landslide-prone areas in the country," Cimatu said.

He also called on the military and police to carry out a cease-and-desist order, until the "Minahang Bayan" or small-scale mining applications are fixed.

The DENR Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) in Cordillera said 10 associations were given temporary small-scale mining contracts, but these were revoked by Cimatu.

In a text message shared to reporters, Cimatu said that if the miners did not stop small-scale mining, charges would be filed.

Mining lobby wants tougher stance

The Chamber of Mines of the Philippines on Monday urged the government to take a tougher stance against illegal small-scale mining.

Illegal mining, it pointed out, does not employ the same stringent safety practices required of legitimate large-scale mining operators.

It said the victims in Barangay Ucab in Itogon, Benguet were part of the illegal gold-mining activities near an old abandoned bunkhouse of Benguet Corp., a member of the chamber. The area is a few kilometers away from the company's Balaoc and Dalicno mines in Itogon.

Benguet Corp. said it had sent numerous letters to the small mining operators in Ucab, ordering them to vacate the area as it had been identified by the MGB as a geohazard zone prone to landslides.

Nevertheless, Benguet Corp., along with Philex Mining Corp., deployed their rescue teams to participate in the search, rescue and retrieval operations in Ucab and other areas.

There were no reported casualties in the host mining communities of Benguet Corp. and Philex.

All other chamber members in Northern and Central Luzon have also mobilized their rescue and relief teams in their respective host mining communities.

The MGB estimates that more than 60 percent of the gold mined in the Philippines are from unregulated small-scale operations.

Apart from endangering the lives of poor mining workers and destroying the environment, illegal miners do not pay taxes and are the breeding ground of other social ills, such as child labor, prostitution, illegal drugs, gun running, and the use of banned toxic chemicals.

RALPH EDWIN U. VILLANUEVA AND EIREENE JAIREE GOMEZ

THE CASE OF THE DISAPPEARANCE OF KAREN EMPEÑO AND SHERLYN CADAPAN

By Carmela Reyes-Estropo and Allan Macatuno @InqNational

CITY OF MALOLOS—Where are Karen Empeño and Sherlyn Cadapan?

It's a question that may never get an answer despite the conviction on Monday of retired Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan Jr., former Lt. Col. Felipe Anorodo Jr. and S/Sgt. Edgardo Osorio for the disappearance of the two University of the Philippines (UP) students.

Empeño and Cadapan were abducted in the coastal town of Hagonoy, Bulacan province, on June 26, 2006, while conducting research for a school requirement.

School project

Erlinda Cadapan, mother of Sherlyn, said her daughter was the second of her five children whom she and husband, Asher, raised to be critical thinkers.

Cadapan said her daughter attended the UP Rural High School in Los Baños and had completed



JUDGMENT DAY Concepcion Empeño (left) and Erlinda Cadapan, mothers of missing student activists Karen Empeño and Sherlyn Cadapan, await Judge Alexander Tamayo's decision on the fate of former Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan Jr. at the Bulacan Regional Trial Court Branch 15 on Monday. —NIÑO JESUS ORBETA

two years as an athletic scholar at the UP College of Human Kinetics at Diliman, Quezon City.

Sherlyn was a sports science senior student when she was abducted, Erlinda said.

It was a school project that brought her and Karen to Hagonoy.

Karen's mother, Concepcion

Empeño, said her daughter, a graduating sociology student, was very friendly and would always bring her friends home.

When Karen and Sherlyn could no longer be found, their families sought the help of friends and government workers.

Finally, they asked a local court to force the government

to produce their daughters, according to lawyers of the National Union of Peoples' Lawyers (NUPL), who served as the families' counsels.

"In 2007, the mothers went to court seeking relief under the then newly promulgated writ of amparo that would shield individuals from abuse of the state. The court granted protection and allowed the mothers to inspect all military [jails]," said NUPL lawyer Maria Kristina Conti.

Charges filed

When they failed to find their daughters, the Empeño and Cadapan families turned to the Department of Justice (DOJ).

"In May 2011, the mothers filed criminal charges of arbitrary detention, rape, and other offenses against Palparan at the DOJ. After months of preliminary investigation, where Palparan appeared and put forward his defense that he did not take part in the students' abduction, the DOJ resolved to file charges of kidnapping because

it deemed the act as that of a rogue soldier," Conti said.

The Bulacan Regional Trial Court (RTC) issued an arrest warrant on Dec. 19, 2011.

Anoradio and Osorio surrendered to Judge Teodora Gonzales of the Bulacan RTC Branch 14. Their trial proceeded as scheduled.

Went into hiding

But Palparan and a fourth defendant, M/Sgt. Rizal Hilario, went into hiding.

In August 2014, Palparan was arrested in Santa Mesa, Manila, after more than three years in hiding.

Conti said the prosecution presented three witnesses who claimed they saw the two students in Bulacan under military custody.

"We have a witness, also while in military custody, who saw and talked to Palparan himself," Conti said.

Palparan and Hilario are facing separate charges of kidnapping and serious physical injuries brought by Raymond and

Reynaldo Manalo, both farmers from Barangay Bohol na Mangga in San Ildefonso town, Bulacan.

The brothers testified against Palparan in the Empeño-Cadapan kidnapping case.

They were taken from San Ildefonso on Feb. 14, 2006, for allegedly being communist rebels.

Several militiamen, among them Maximo and Michael de la Cruz, were arrested and detained for abducting the Manalo brothers.

Wilfredo Ramos, another farmer from San Miguel town, testified as a major witness against Palparan.

"The Butcher"

Palparan, called "The Butcher" by left-leaning groups because of the killings of activists wherever he was assigned, served on the "Oplan: Bantay Laya" counterinsurgency program of the Arroyo administration in the early 2000s.

He served in the House of Representatives as a party-list lawmaker from 2004 to 2009.

—WITH INQUIRER RESEARCH INQ

GROUPS HAIL CONVICTION OF PALPARAN FOR 2006 KIDNAPPING OF 2 STUDENT ACTIVISTS

By Jhesset O. Enano
@JhessetEnanoINQ

Local and international groups lauded the conviction on Monday of retired Army Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan Jr. for the kidnapping and illegal detention of University of the Philippines students Sherlyn Cadapan and Karen Empeño in 2006.

In separate statements issued as soon as the decision came down, supporters of the Cadapan and Empeño families shared a common sentiment: The law will soon catch up with the perpetrators of human rights violations.

Malacañang welcomed the decision handed down by Judge Alexander Tamayo of the Bulacan Regional Trial Court Branch 15.

"We respect the decision of the court and we would want

justice to be done to the victims," presidential spokesperson Harry Roque told reporters in typhoon-ravaged Benguet province.

Military will obey

The Armed Forces of the Philippines gave assurance that it would obey the order of the court.

"As it has been and always will be, the position of the AFP is submission to the majesty of the courts and respect for the rule of law," Marine Col. Edgard Arevalo, spokesperson for the AFP, said in a statement.

Justice Secretary Menardo Guevarra said justice had been served with the conviction of Palparan.

"Justice may come a bit late but it does come. Let's believe in that," Guevarra said.

"The time of reckoning has come," said the National Union

of Peoples' Lawyers (NUPL), which served as private prosecutors in the case against "The Butcher," the moniker that Palparan had earned for the killings of activists wherever he was assigned as a military commander.

"Despite tremendous odds and difficulties, the suffering mothers of Sherlyn and Karen through their supporters and lawyers have overcome what seemed to be a wild shot at a rare chance to make General Palparan and his likes accountable," the group said.

Arroyo next

It added: "His conviction sends the message that cocky perpetrators of hideous human rights violations will meet their match in the fortitude of the mothers, the strength of the mass movement, the courage of human

rights defenders and the value of good lawyering for the people."

Edre Olalia, NUPL national president, said his group was now eyeing possible charges against House Speaker Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, who was President when Palparan was in the military, for command responsibility.

Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) secretary general Renato Reyes said the day of the conviction was a day to be remembered by the "thousands of victims of Palparan's reign of terror" in various provinces in Central and Southern Luzon and Eastern Visayas regions.

"This is a warning to all human rights violators," Reyes said. "Impunity is not forever."

New York-based Human Rights Watch (HRW) called the decision a "big blow against impunity" in the Philippines.

"It rekindles hope among families of many other victims of human rights violations, now and in the past," said Carlos Conde, HRW Asia Division researcher.

Lawmakers hailed the conviction of Palparan.

"This should send a strong signal to the [Armed Forces of the Philippines], the [Philippine National Police] and the rest of those in the government that sooner or later the law and our justice system will hold to account violators of human rights," Sen. Francis Pangilinan said.

Good day for rights

In the House of Representatives, Bayan Muna Rep. Carlos Zarate said that while the conviction of Palparan had been long overdue, it nevertheless sent a stern warning to human rights abusers that the day of

reckoning "will eventually come."

"This is certainly a good day for the human rights community, human rights defenders and the families of victims," Zarate said.

Representatives Antonio Tinio and France Castro of Act Teachers said the court's decision should prompt the authorities to produce Empeño, Cadapan and other political activists who allegedly had been seized by state security forces.

Fr. Edu Gariguez, executive secretary of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines' National Secretariat for Social Action, said the conviction of Palparan was "justice served." —WITH REPORTS FROM

JULIE M. AURELIO, DONA Z. PAZZIBUGAN, LEILA B. SALAVERRIA, JAYMEE T. GAMIL, MARLON RAMOS AND TINA G. SANTOS INQ *MG*

Palparan, 2 others get life sentence for kidnapping, illegal detention

By CHITO A. CHAVEZ

Retired Army Major General Jovito Palparan and two others were found guilty on Monday by a Bulacan Regional Trial Court Monday for kidnapping and serious illegal detention in connection with the disappearance of University of the Philippines (UP) students Karen Empeno and Sherlyn Cadapan in 2006.

Palparan's co-accused, Lieutenant Colonel Felipe Anotado and Sargeant Edgardo ▶4

Palparan, 2 others get...

Osorio, were also found guilty of kidnapping and serious illegal detention. Another co-accused, Sergeant Rizal Hilario, remains at large.

The three were given life sentences and were each ordered to pay ₱100,000 in civil indemnity and ₱200,000 for moral damages.

Bulacan Regional Trial Court Branch 115 Judge Alexander Tamayo ordered the detention of Palparan, Anotado, and Osorio at the New Bilibid Prison (NBP).

However, their counsels appealed in open court to allow them to remain at the custodial center of Fort Bonifacio in Taguig due to another pending case at the Malolos RTC.

Relatives of the victims and other human rights advocates hailed the conviction and want them imprisoned in regular jail facilities in the company of common criminals and not in military camps or any special cell.

Concepcion Empeno and

Cadapan, the mothers of Karen and Sherlyn, respectively, and other human rights groups said that Palparan, whom they called the "butcher," will now "rot in jail" after long years of impunity and special treatment.

"We are only two of the many families who are happy with the court's decision to convict Palparan. We are thankful that the courts recognized the truth in the testimonies of our witnesses who have likewise suffered the same fate as our daughters," said Empeno.

Empeno said there remains to be justice for the poor and ordinary people, but only because of the untiring call for justice and accountability from the victims themselves.

"From the bottom of our hearts, we sincerely thank everyone who has supported us in the past four years of this ordeal," said Empeno.

Cadapan added: "this is a victory for the victims of Palparan."

The victims and relatives from

Southern Tagalog to Eastern Visayas, to Central Luzon where our daughters were abducted and disappeared, share this victory. However, this remains partial because the next question has always been "where are our children?" said Cadapan.

"We hope that Palparan's conviction will be used to shed light on the fate of desaparecidos under his watch. Until then, we shall continue searching for our daughters, and together with the families of all those killed and disappeared, we shall continue searching for justice," said Cadapan.

The two UP students went missing on June 26, 2006 in Hagonoy, Bulacan.

The court ordered Palparan's arrest in December 2011.

But Palparan went missing and was later found hiding in an apartment above a bakery in Sta. Mesa, Manila on August 2014.

Palparan was later detained at the custodial center in Fort Bonifacio in Taguig up to the day of his court appearance. (With a report from Freddie C. Velez)

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Sunday, October 1, 2011

The Manila Times

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The

Butcher gets life sentence

BY FREDERICK SILVERIO

MALOLOS, Bulacan: The Regional Trial Court (RTC) in Bulacan on Monday found retired Army major General Jovito Palparan Jr. guilty of kidnapping and serious illegal detention in connection with the disappearance of two University of the Philippines (UP) students in 2006.

>LifeA8

■ LIFE FROM A1

Butcher

The two UP student activists, Karen Empeño and Sherylin Cadapan, were abducted on June 26, 2006 in Hagonoy, Bulacan. They remain missing.

In the 31-page decision by Judge Alexander Tamayo of RTC Branch 15 in Malolos, Palparan's co-accused Lt. Col. Felipe Anotado Jr. and Staff Sgt. Edgardo Osorio, were found guilty of the same charges.

Another co-accused, Master Sgt. Rizal Hilario, who was at large, was not included in the decision but was ordered arrested.

The victims' parents, Linda Cadapan and Concepcion Empeño, were satisfied with the verdict that came almost seven years after charges were filed in December 2011, and 12 years after the two UP students were abducted.

"We are only two of the many families who are happy with the court's decision to convict Palparan. We are thankful that the courts recognized the truth in the testimonies of our witnesses, who have likewise suffered the same fate as our daughters," said Concepcion Empeño.

Linda Cadapan said the ruling was a partial victory. She said: "All victims and relatives from Southern Tagalog to Eastern Visayas, to Central Luzon where our daughters were abducted and disappeared, share this victory. However, this remains partial because the next question has always been 'where are our children?'"

Palparan, who became a congressman representing an anti-communist party-list group in 2009 or two years after retiring from the military, went in hiding in 2011 but was arrested after three years on the run.

The Karapatan human rights groups claimed Palparan had a total of 206 victims of enforced disappearances as head of various military units in Southern Luzon and the Visayas, such as the Philippine Army's 7th and 8th Infantry Divisions, during the Arroyo administration.

The three accused were sentenced to reclusion perpetua or 30 to 40 years imprisonment, and were ordered to pay P100,000 in civil indemnity and P200,000 in moral damages.

Tamayo ordered the three committed to the New Bilibid Prison in Muntinlupa.

Palparan to appeal

Palparan — nicknamed "Berdugo" or "The Butcher" by his left-leaning critics for his pursuit of communist rebels and activists — told reporters he would appeal the decision.

"How could I be guilty when there was only one witness, and that witness appeared after nine years?" he told reporters.

After the reading of decision, Palparan shouted and cursed at Tamayo, accusing the Bulacan judge of receiving bribe money in exchange for favorable decisions and risking contempt of court.

"It is public knowledge here in Bulacan, rumors I've heard, that he is receiving money," Palparan said.

Palparan and the two other army men were tagged by brothers Raymond and Reynaldo Manalo as responsible for the abduction of Cadapan and Empeño.

The Manalo brothers were also allegedly abducted by Palparan's group and were hidden in different detachments and safehouses before they managed to escape in Pangasinan in 2006.

They told the court that they saw the students Cadapan and Empeño in the safehouse where they were also detained, and sometimes saw Palparan and his men there.

The National Union of Peoples' Lawyers, which provided lawyers to the Empeño and Cadapan families, were elated over the decision that, according to the group, not only served justice but also sent a message to perpetrators of human rights violations.

"Despite tremendous odds and difficulties, the suffering mothers of Sherlyn and Karen through their supporters and lawyers have overcome what seemed to be a wild shot at a rare chance to make General Palparan and his likes accountable," the NUPL said in a statement.

Human rights group Karapatan Alliance for the Advancement of People's Rights also welcomed the court's decision.

"This is a step forward for justice, though partial for so long as Karen and Sherlyn remain missing and numerous other violations remain unresolved," Karapatan Deputy Secretary General Roneo Clamor said in a statement.

'No special treatment'

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) on Monday said it respected the decision of the Malolos court to convict Palparan and two other military men.

"As it has been and always will be, the position of the AFP is submission to the majesty of the courts and respect for the rule of law," Col. Edgard Arevalo, AFP spokesman, said.

"We also respect whatever legal recourse is available to and will be availed by [Palparan Jr.] et al. under the law and the rules of court," he added.

There will be no special treatment for Palparan in the New Bilibid Prison, Bureau of Corrections chief Ronald "Bato" de la Rosa said.

"What special treatment can we give him there? They will all suffer from the over-congestion of the maximum compound," de la Rosa said in a chance interview at Camp Crame Monday noon.

De la Rosa said Palparan would be received at the prison diagnostic center where he would stay for 60 days for quarantine, medical examination and other assessments.

Palparan will receive medical care if necessary but "the health service will not be used for personal motives," de la Rosa said.

Moreover, Palparan cannot be the "Berdugo" inside the New Bilibid Prison, he said.

"He can be a Berdugo outside when he has firearms but in the prison, he cannot have firearms," de la Rosa said.

**DIVINA NOVA JOY DE LA CRUZ
AND ROY D.R. NARRA**

'Butcher' gets 40 yrs

By Elmer N. Manuel

Justice finally caught up with retired Army Maj. Gen. Jovite Palparan Jr., also known to his critics as the "Butcher," after the Malolos Regional Trial Court found him and two others guilty of kidnapping and serious illegal detention related to the disappearance of two students in 2006.

The court found Palparan and co-accused Lt. Col. Felipe Anotado and Staff Sgt. Edgardo Osorio guilty of the charge and were sentenced to *reclusion perpetua* but a third accused identified as Rizal Hilario, remains at large.

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'Butcher' gets 40 yrs

From page 1

Reclusion perpetua carries a fixed 40-year prison term and does not allow pardon or parole until after the first 30 years of the sentence.

Judge Alexander Tamayo issued the ruling related to the disappearance of University of the Philippines (UP) students Sherlyn Cadapan and Karen Empeño in 2006.

The three were ordered to pay P100,000 to each of the victims' families.

A drama ensued as the verdict was read, because Palparan suddenly screamed at the judge and called him "*duwag*" (coward), which prompted Tamayo to warn Palparan that he could be cited in contempt. The retired military official was unfazed by Tamayo's admonition.

Tamayo then ordered that Palparan be transferred from his detention cell at the Philippine Army headquarters in Fort Bonifacio in Taguig City to a regular jail cell.

Palparan is currently detained at the Army Custodial Center in Fort Bonifacio in Taguig City.

On 26 June 2006, unidentified armed men seized the students in a house in Barangay San Miguel, Hagonoy, Bulacan and the whereabouts of the two young women are still unknown.

The disappearance of the UP students sparked an outrage as leftist groups tagged Palparan, who was then the commander of the 7th Infantry Division, as responsible for the disappearance of the students who were then suspected to be members of the New People's Army.

The former major general went into hiding following the issuance of a warrant for his arrest and was eventually nabbed in Sta. Mesa, Manila, in 2014.

Palparan was initially detained at the Bulacan provincial jail but due to security concerns, the court granted his transfer at the Army Custodial Center at Fort Bonifacio.

Justice Secretary Menardo Guevarra welcomed the conviction of Palparan, saying that justice, although late in coming, was still applied.

"Justice may come a bit late, but it does come. Let's believe in that," Guevarra said in a statement.

Human rights groups also welcomed the verdict on Palparan but are still clamoring for justice of the case since the two UP students remain missing.

Bright judicial spot

Senators lauded the conviction of Palparan.

Senate Minority Leader Franklin Drilon said the decision was a "bright spot" in the country's judicial system.

"These are bright spots in an otherwise difficult judicial process," Drilon said.

For his part, Sen. Joseph Victor Ejercito said that while it took more than a decade for the victims' families to get justice, the decision can still be considered a victory.

"As they say, justice delayed is justice denied. Maybe for the victims, this is a victory for them, I am happy for (the families of) human rights victims," Ejercito said.

Sen. Grace Poe echoed the statements of Drilon and Ejercito.

"It is right to say that this is a good signal," Poe said.

Justice may come a bit late, but it does come.

Sen. Francis Pangilinan said the court decision should send a strong signal to the Armed Forces, the Philippine National Police and the rest of those in government that, sooner or later, the law and the justice system will hold to account violators of human rights.

"As a father, I also wish the whereabouts of Sherlyn Cadapan and Karen Empeño, who have been missing since 2006, to be known," Pangilinan said.

Step forward

"This is a step forward for justice, though partial for so long as Karen and Sherlyn remain missing and numerous other violations remain unresolved," Karapatan deputy secretary general Roneo Clamor said.

"It has been 12 years and though

we welcome this decision, justice delayed is still justice denied," he added.

Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (BAYAN) [New Patriotic Alliance] said the Bulacan court's decision to convict Palparan is "a warning to all human rights violators."

"Impunity is not forever. The time of reckoning has come," BAYAN secretary general Renato Reyes said in a statement.

Counselors elated

"We congratulate the families, lawyers and human rights advocates who worked tirelessly to achieve justice for Karen and She," he added.

The National Union of People's Lawyers (NUPL), the group which provided the counsel to the families of Empeño and Cadapan, meanwhile, said that they were "extremely elated" at the conviction of Palparan.

"We are extremely elated that justice has finally caught up with the coward butcher. The law and evidence is not only on our side this time around but we are on the side of truth and justice," NUPL said in a statement.

The group said the victims' kin, supporters and lawyers "have overcome what seemed to be a wild shot at a rare chance to make Gen. Palparan and his likes accountable."

Wish for perdition

The decision of the Bulacan court serves as a message "that cocky perpetrators of hideous human rights violations will meet their match in the fortitude of the mothers, the strength of the mass movement, the courage of human rights defenders and the value of good lawyering for the people," it added.

The NUPL also wished that Palparan will face "perdition."

"We really do wish he faces perdition that he brought upon himself. And that his conviction be a signal to all other human rights violators especially of the worst kinds that rightful retribution will come in time," it said.

with: Mario J. Mallari

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'IT'S ABOUT TIME'

UP, rights groups welcome Palparan conviction

THE University of the Philippines (UP) on Monday welcomed the conviction of ex-major general Jovito Palparan in connection with the abduction of two UP students in 2006.

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Groups

The university is pleased to see justice being served in the case involving the disappearance of Sherlyn Cadapan and Karen Empeño. We hope that the guilty will be punished commensurately and not be accorded any preferential treatment because of their status," the state university said in a statement.

UP Vice President for Public Affairs Butch Dalisay said the university was willing to provide legal assistance to students in human rights cases.

"We are in high hopes that the conviction of Palparan and company will embolden everyone else to fight for human rights," Dalisay told *The Manila Times*.

"It was a long run for justice, but it was all worth it because the guilty will now taste legal consequences," Dalisay added.

Respect rights, military, police told

Lawmakers said the conviction of Palparan should send a signal to government forces that the country's justice system does not condone human rights violators.

"As a father, I also wish the whereabouts of Sherlyn Cadapan and Karen Empeño, who have been missing since 2006, to be known," said Sen. Francis Pangilinan.

Senate Minority Leader Franklin Drilon said: "These are bright spots in an otherwise difficult judicial process."

Sen. Joseph Victor "JV" Ejercito said that if Palparan gets a final conviction, he should be sent to the New Bilibid Prison "to be fair" to other convicted criminals.

Sen. Grace Poe said she believed Palparan's conviction would bring healing to the victims' families.

"This is the right message to those planning the same thing, whether in active duty or no longer in service, that someday they need to face the

law," Poe said.

Malacañan Palace also welcomed the court decision.

"We respect the decision of the court and we would want justice to be done to the victims," Palace spokesman Harry Roque Jr. said in a news briefing at the Benguet Provincial Capitol.

CPP rejoices

The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) said its members and all revolutionary forces "join the Filipino people in celebrating the conviction" of Palparan.

A priest who claims he was personally targeted by Palparan said the ex-general deserved the conviction.

"Palparan deserves a guilty verdict for his monstrous crime in killing and torturing those who are in progressive movements working to defend the rights of the poor," said Fr. Edu Cariguez, executive director of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines National Secretariat for Social Action, in an interview.

"I have personally investigated the spate of killings in Mindoro orchestrated by him. And I was also targeted by him for liquidation. The guilty verdict is justice served. He should be made accountable for his crime," the priest said.

'Big blow vs impunity'

Carlos Conde, researcher of the Asia Division of New York-based Human Rights Watch, said the conviction of Palparan was a "big blow against impunity in the Philippines."

"It rekindles hope among the families of many other victims of human rights violations, now and in the past. It should also serve as a reminder to state security forces that justice and the law will catch up with them sooner or later," he said in a statement.

JOVE MOYA, BERNADETTE E. TAMAYO, RALPH EDWIN U. VILLANUEVA AND CATHERINE A. MODESTO

Palparan, 2 other soldiers get life term

By Francisco Tuyay,
Maricel V. Cruz,
Macon R. Araneta
and Rio N. Araja

calling him a coward, after he was found guilty of kidnaping and serious illegal detention and sentenced to life imprisonment.



RETIRED Army major general Jovito Palparan shouted at a Malolos judge Monday.

Palparan and two others, Lt. Col. Felipe Anotado and

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Palparan...

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S/Sgt. Edgardo Osorio were convicted of kidnaping University of the Philippines students Sherlyn Cadapan and Karen Empeno on June 26, 2006. Both are still missing.

"Duwag ka judge! You're such a coward!" Palparan shouted as Judge Alexander Tamayo of the Malolos Regional Trial Court Branch 15 read the verdict.

When the judge threatened to cite him for contempt, Palparan said it did not matter, since they would go to jail anyway.

As court personnel tried to pacify him, Palparan went on. "You're such a fool!" he shouted at the judge.

In the service, Palparan pursued a ruthless campaign against communist insurgents in Mindoro, Samar and Central Luzon, earning him the nickname "The Butcher."

The Armed Forces of the Philippines declined to comment on Palparan's conviction, but Col. Edgard Arevalo, military spokesman, said the institution respects the decision of the court.

"As it has been and always will be, the position of the AFP is submission to the majesty of the courts and respect for the rule

of law," Arevalo said.

"We also respect whatever legal recourse are available to... Palparan Jr. et al under the law and the Rules of Court," he added.

Aside from the life sentence, each of the convicted were ordered to pay P100,000 in civil indemnity and P200,000 in moral damages.

Palparan, Anotado, and Osorio will be detained at the New Bilibid Prison but their lawyers asked that they remain at the custodial center in Fort Bonifacio in Taguig because of another pending case.

Sherlyn's mother, Erlinda, cried as the

verdict was read, saying the decision was correct and supported by the evidence.

She added that as long as she was alive, she would hope that her daughter is alive.

Palparan was arrested in August 2014, three years after he went into hiding following the issuance of a warrant against him.

A co-accused, Sgt. Rizal Hilario, is still at large.

Palparan was convicted on the strength of testimony from a witness, farmer Raymond Manalo, who testified that he saw both Cadapan and Empeno in a military cell, where he was also held. With Rey E. Requejo and Orlan L. Mauricio

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Palparan meted life for 2006 kidnapping of 2 UP students

BY ASHZEL NACHERO

A BULACAN trial court yesterday sentenced to life imprisonment retired Army Gen. Jovito Palparan Jr. after finding him guilty of kidnapping and serious illegal detention over the 2006 abduction and disappearance of two University of the Philippines (UP) student-activists.

Judge Alexander Tamayo, presiding officer of the Malolos, Bulacan regional trial court Branch 15, said the prosecution presented evidence beyond reasonable doubt

to convict Palparan and his co-accused, Lt. Col. Felipe Anotado Jr. and Staff Sgt. Edgardo Osorio.

Another accused, Master Sgt. Rizal Hilario, remains at large.

"All things considered, the evidence of the prosecution indisputably proved beyond reasonable doubt that the elements of kidnapping and serious illegal detention obtained in the two cases at bar,



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and the three accused should be penalized accordingly," part of Tamayo's 31-page ruling said.

"Wherefore premises considered, the court finds the accused Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan Jr., Lt. Col. Felipe Anotado Jr. and Staff Sgt. Edgardo Osorio guilty beyond reasonable doubt of the crimes

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PALPARAN

of kidnapping and serious illegal detention and hereby sentences each of the accused to suffer the penalty of reclusion perpetua," the ruling said.

Tamayo also directed Palparan, Anotado and Osorio to pay the families of Karen Empeno and Sherlyn Cadapan the amount of P100,000 as civil indemnity and P200,000 as moral damages in each case.

He likewise ordered the transfer of Palparan and his co-accused from their present detention cell at the Army Custodial Center in Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City to the New Bilibid Prison in Muntinlupa City.

The judge likewise directed the issuance of a warrant of arrest against Hilario, though his case will remain in the court's Archives until his arrest.

Lawyer Edre Olalia of the National Union of People's Lawyers (NUPL) who assisted the Empeno and Cadapan families in filing the cases, said the guilty verdict was a big victory for them and for the rule of law in the country.

"We are extremely elated that justice has finally caught up with the coward butcher. The law and evidence is not only on our side this time around but we are on the side of truth and justice," Olalia said in a phone interview.

Olalia said Palparan's conviction sends the message that perpetrators of human rights violations will always meet their match in the end.

"We really do wish he face perdition that he brought upon himself. And that his conviction be a signal to all other human rights violators especially the worst kinds that rightful retribution will come in time," he also said.

Inside the courtroom, relatives of Empeno and Cadapan became emotional when the guilty verdict was announced.

Cadapan's mother, Erlinda lauded the verdict even as she said they will not relent in their efforts to find her daughter.

"Tama naman po ang pasya ng korte dahil sa mga ebidensya na binigay namin sa korte kaya tama lang po ang pasya (The court's decision was right because we presented sufficient evidence)," Mrs. Cadapan, who was in tears after the verdict reading, said.

"Habang may buhay po ako, umaasa ako na makikitang buhay ang anak ko (As long as I am alive, I will not lose hope that I will still find my daughter)," she added.

A commotion also occurred at the courtroom when Palparan lost his cool after he was convicted and shouted at Tamayo, calling him "duwag" (coward).

"Judge, tarantado mo, napakagago mo (You're a coward judge, you're such a fool)," Palparan shouted.

He shouted the same invectives against Senior Assistant State Prosecutor Juan Pedro Navera, the lead prosecutor in the case.

Tamayo warned Palparan he can be cited in contempt, but Palparan was unfazed.

"Kahit i-contempt mo kami, makukulong naman kami (Even if you cite us in contempt, it doesn't matter to us, since we are going to jail anyway)," Palparan said.

Palparan also maintained his innocence as he accused the judge of being biased against them.

He said he had nothing to do with the abduction and disappearance of Empeno and Cadapan and that he even exerted efforts to locate them until he was put to jail.

"Paano ko ilalabas na hindi ko naman unatago? I don't care kung ilabas nila o kung sino man ang maglabas, but don't ask me that (How can I present people I didn't hide? I don't care if they bring them out, or whoever brings them out, but don't ask me that)," Palparan said.

Palparan said he would appeal the case before the Court of Appeals.

WITNESS TESTIMONY

Tamayo said the testimonies of witnesses Raymond Manalo and Wilfredo Ramos Jr. bolstered the cases against Palparan and his co-accused.

"This account of Raymond Manalo that dovetails with the narrative of Wilfredo Ramos, taken in conjunction with those of the other prosecution witnesses, constitute persuasive and unassailable proof that the three accused in complicity with each other committed the crimes imputed against them," he said in his ruling.

He added the "accused" denial and pretensions that they have

nothing to do with the abduction and illegal detention of Karen and Sherlyn lost credence in the face of their positive identification by the prosecution witnesses."

"As between the categorical statements of the prosecution witnesses and the bare denial of the accused, the former must perforce prevail.

Well-settled is the rule that an affirmative testimony is far stronger than a negative testimony especially when it comes from the mouth of a credible witness," he stressed.

Likewise, Tamayo dismissed the contention of the accused that the affidavits of the prosecution's witnesses have some discrepancies, adding such did not impair the credibility of the witness, as "affidavits are almost always incomplete and often inaccurate for lack of searching inquires by the investigating officer or due to partial suggestions, and as such are generally considered to be inferior to testimony in open court."

Manalo testified in court that he witnessed the rape and torture of Cadapan and Empeno since he was also being held by the military at the time the two UP students were abducted and detained.

Palparan was also accused of ordering the arrest of Raymond Manalo and his brother Reynaldo on February 14, 2006 in San Ildefonso town in Bulacan on suspicion they were members of the communist New People's Army (NPA).

Olalia said the Manalo brothers were detained and tortured until they were able to escape their captors on August 2007.

Ramos identified Osorio, a close aide of Palparan, as among the armed men who barged into their home in Hagonoy, Bulacan and took Empeno and Cadapan.

The two UP students were on an immersion work with farmers in the area when they were abducted.

Palparan was the commander of the Army's 7th Infantry Division at the time of the Cadapan and Empeno kidnapping in June 2006. He retired from service three months later.

Justice Secretary Menardo Guevarra said the guilty verdict on Palparan showed that even if it took years for the court to reach its decision, still it was worth waiting for.

"Justice may come a bit late, but it does come. Let's believe in that,"

Guevarra said.

The military said they respect the decision of the Bulacan court.

"We abide by the decision of the court and it is our stand to subscribe to the rule of law," said Army spokesman Lt. Col. Louie Villanueva.

Palparan, Anotado and Osorio have already retired from service.

After his retirement, Palparan won a seat in Congress as representative of the party list group Bantay. He ran for senator in the 2016 elections but lost.

"The military will not tolerate acts that will detriment the well being of everyone as we always advocate the protection of human rights... We always respect human rights, that has been our policy ever since," said Villanueva.

AFP spokesman Col. Edward Arevalo said: "As it has been and always will be, the position of the AFP is submission to the majesty of the courts and respect for the rule of law."

"We also respect whatever legal recourse are available to and will be availed by Maj. Gen. Palparan, Jr. et al under the law and the Rules of Court," added Arevalo.

In a press briefing in Benguet, Presidential Spokesman Harry Roque said: "We respect the decision of the court and we would want justice to be done to the victims."

ACT Teachers Representatives Antonio Tinio and France Castro hailed the court ruling as triumph of human rights against threats posed by agents of the State.

"We welcome the guilty verdict. We congratulate the families, lawyers and human rights advocates who worked tirelessly to achieve justice for Karen and Sherlyn," Tinio said.

"This verdict should start the ball rolling for accountability of military, police, and other government agents as guilty as Palparan for human rights violations such as the extrajudicial killings, the illegal arrests and detention, the threats, harassment, and intimidation, trumped-up charges against activists and human rights defenders," Tinio added.

Castro voiced optimism the court decision will help shed light on what happened to Empeno and Cadapan. — *With Victor Reyes, Jocelyn Montemayor and Peter Tabingo*

Palparan convicted

By JEFFREY DAMICOG
• CHITO CHAVEZ

Justice Secretary Menardo Guevarra lauded yesterday the conviction of retired Army Major General Jovito Palparan Jr. and several others over the disappearance of two University of the Philippines (UP) students in 2006.

Though the judgment may have taken over 10 years since the crime, Guevarra stressed that what is important is justice was still served.

"Justice may come a bit late, but it does come. Let's believe in that," he told reporters.

Malacañang also said it respects the conviction of the retired Army officer Palparan, former Army commander stationed in Central Luzon, who has been called "The Butcher" by activists for alleged involvement in the abuses in the government's anti-insurgency campaign. He has denied the allegations.

"We respect the decision of the court and we would want justice to be done to the victims," Presidential Spokesman Harry Roque said during a press conference in Benguet Monday.

In his decision, Judge Alexander

Tamayo of Malolos City, Bulacan Regional Trial Court (RTC) Branch 15 found Palparan guilty of kidnapping and serious illegal detention as penalized under the Revised Penal Code.

The case stemmed from the 2006 disappearance of UP students Karen Empeno and Sherlyn Cadapan.

Also found guilty along with Palparan were Lt. Col. Felipe Anotado Jr. and S/Sgt. Edgardo Osorio.

The three were given life sentences and were each ordered to pay ₱100,000 in civil indemnity and ₱200,000 for moral damages.

One of their co-accused, M/Sgt. Rizal Hillario, remains at large. Because of this, the court issued an alias warrant for his arrest and the case archived.

Judge Tamayo ordered the detention of Palparan, Anotado, and Osorio at the New Bilibid Prison (NBP).

However, their counsels appealed in open court to allow them to remain at the custodial center in Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City, due to another pending case at the Malolos RTC.

Despite hailing the conviction, relatives of the victims and other human rights advocates want to make sure that they are imprisoned in regular jail facilities in the company of common

criminals and not in military camps or any special cell.

Concepcion Empeno and Erlinda Cadapan, the mothers of Karen and Sherlyn respectively, and other human rights groups were jubilant over the court decision, saying Palparan dubbed as the "butcher" will now "rot in jail" after long years of impunity and special treatment.

"We are only two of the many families who are happy with the court's decision to convict Palparan. We are thankful that the courts recognized the truth in the testimonies of our witnesses, who have likewise suffered the same fate as our daughters," said Empeno.

Empeno said there remains to be justice for the poor and ordinary people, but only because of the untiring call for justice and accountability from the victims themselves.

"From the bottom of our hearts, we sincerely thank everyone who have supported us in the past four years of this ordeal," said Empeno.

Cadapan added "this is a victory for all the victims of Palparan."

"All victims and relatives from Southern Tagalog to Eastern Visayas, to Central Luzon where our daughters were abducted and disappeared,



RETIRED Philippine Army Major General Jovito Palparan (2ND from right) is escorted by Army soldiers into the Bulacan Regional Trial Court Branch 15. Palparan along with two other was sentenced Monday to life imprisonment for the crimes of kidnapping and illegal detention in relation to the disappearance of two University of the Philippines students in June 2006. (EPA-EFE)

share this victory. However, this remains partial because the next question has always been "where are our children?" said Cadapan.

Under the Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo regime, Palparan was commanding officer of different units of the Philippine Army, there were 206 victims of enforced disappearances. None of them has surfaced to this day.

"We hope that Palparan's conviction

will be used to shed light on the fate of desaparecidos under his watch. Until then, we shall continue searching for our daughters, and together with the families of all those killed and disappeared, we shall continue searching for justice," said Cadapan.

The two UP students went missing on June 26, 2005 in Hagonoy, Bulacan.

MOU on human rights

BUTUAN CITY – Government officials in the Caraga region have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the objective of helping one another in addressing the issues and concerns of human rights issues. The signing of the MOU was spearheaded by the officers and members of the Community-Based Dialogue Core Group (CBDCCG) at the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) Caraga Regional Office, along with top military and police commanders in Northeastern Mindanao or Caraga region. The officers and members of the CBDCCG in Caraga region include the Army's 401st Infantry (Unity) Brigade and Army's 402nd Infantry (Stingers) Brigade, Philippine National Police (PNP), Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), NEDA; Carrascal, Cantilan, Madrid, Carmen, Lanuza Baywatch Association Inc., People Power Volunteers for Reform (PPVR), and CHR Caraga Region 13. The goal of the CBDCCG in signing of the MOU was mainly to contribute to the improvement of the human rights situation in the Philippines.

Hope dims for landslide survivors

43 bodies of miners, family members retrieved; Ompong deaths now 65

By MARTIN A. SADONGDONG and RIZALDY COMANDA

Search and rescue teams are racing against time to look for survivors and retrieve bodies of miners who were buried by landslide in Ilogon, Benguet, at the height of typhoon Ompong's onslaught last Saturday, the Benguet

Provincial Police Office said.

As of Sunday night, 43 bodies of small-scale miners and members of their families were retrieved from the abandoned mining site in Ilogon, bringing to 65 the total number of fatalities

left by Ompong which is now moving deeper into China. At least 49 remain missing - 42 in Ilogon, five in Baguio, and one each in Kabayan and Tuba, Benguet.

The Benguet Provincial Police Office identified some of the fatalities in Ilogon as Gavino, Hyacinth, ▶4

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and Mary Rose Elong; Fred Bestoca; Junjun Bulcio; Willy Sinupen; Jerry Cuti; Hope Cielo Carino; Jenifer Carino; Rufino Aquino; Maligid Kalahe, Edward Bittowon; Jonathan Cacanindin; Andrew Tagapong; Arnold Guinsoy; Marlon Bautista; Michael Milo; Jerry Habkin; Hector Milo; Billy boy Elong; Anthony Siblag; Marcelino Buyucan; Jason Angdason; Simona Tagapong; Abias Longchasen; Daniel Fangroy; Jeremy Gracias; Rommel Banganan; Harvey Gumowang; Candoy Lagayo; Nicanor Gama-og; and Silvestre Panisok.

Slim chance for survivors

Authorities, however, said chances of finding survivors are becoming slimmer due to the threat posed by loosened soil and the prevailing weather condition in the area.

"Mahirap kasi sa oras, tapos de-likado dahil sa lupa, maraming dapat isaalang-alang. Kagabi lalo, umuulan-ulan kaya tinigil namin, nag-pull-out kami (The rescue operation is difficult due to time restraint and the danger posed by loosened soil. There are just too many things to consider. Last night (Sunday), it was raining so we had to stop and pull out our men)," Senior Superintendent Lyndon Mencio, Benguet Provincial Police Office director, said.

Presidential spokesman Harry Roque expressed fears that the number of fatalities may further increase as rescue and retrieval operations continue.

Roque was interviewed at Camp Crame in Quezon City before he flew

to Benguet with Philippine National Police (PNP) chief Director General Oscar Albayalde.

"As of last night, dito po sa (here in) Itogon alone, 43 ang nasawi (died), isa ang na-recover nabuhay at 30 pa po ang hinahanap (one was recovered alive and 30 others are still being searched for). This is as of 9 p.m. (Sunday)," said Roque, citing a report relayed to him by Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Chief of Staff Carlito Galvez Jr.

It was learned that about 100 small-scale miners sought shelter in the abandoned mining site owned by Benguet Corporation, which has since been used as a chapel, last Saturday. The miners took refuge in a bunker inside the site while Ompong was battering the region but they were buried when a landslide hit the area.

"May naumang report na pinapaalis na yung mga taong yan sa lugar na ito pero nag-akala yung mga taong yun na ligtas silasa simbahan na yun. Gina-gamit na simbahan pero abandoned facility itong isang mining company (Initial report showed that these people were already told to evacuate but they thought they were safe in that chapel. It was being used as a chapel but it is an abandoned facility owned by a mining site)," Roque said.

"Nasa ibaba kasi siya ng bundok. Ngayon, nang lumambot ang lupa na mas mataas sa kanya dahil sa lakas ng ulan, tumabon sa kanila (The site was at the foot of the mountain. When the soil loosened by the torrential rains, it buried them)," Mencio said.

Mencio said the incident occurred around 12 p.m. of September 15 in Barangay Ucab, but authorities only learned about it an hour later when a concerned citizen reported that a group of small-scale miners and their families were buried alive after a landslide.

A team was immediately dispatched to check on the situation but they cannot immediately conduct rescue operations because of the risk in the area.

Later in the day, Mencio said a team from Itogon Municipal Police Station started digging the rubbles, hoping to rescue anybody alive.

As of Monday, the rescue and retrieval team has been augmented and now numbering to 388 personnel from the CAR police's Regional Mobile Safety Battalion, Regional Intelligence Office, Crime Laboratory, Special Action Force, Philippine Army, Bureau of Fire Protection, and Bureau of Jail Management and Penology.

According to Mencio, most of the miners were residents of Ucab while rest were from other barangays.

The group and their families decided to evacuate to the abandoned mining site at the height of Ompong as they thought it would keep them safe.

"They were wrong," Mencio said.

Meet with Duterte

Roque, meanwhile, said President Duterte was scheduled to meet the families of the fatalities in Itogon around noon Monday and after that, a situation briefing was slated which will be led by Benguet Governor Cresencio Pacalso.

A consolidated and unofficial report from the PNP showed that as of 9 p.m.

Sunday, the death toll already reached 65 - 54 in Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR), seven in Cagayan Valley (Region 2), two in Central Luzon (Region 3), and one each in National Capital Region (NCR) and Ilocos (Region 1).

Furthermore, 64 persons sustained various injuries - 32 of them in CAR, 26 in Region 2, three in Region 1, two in NCR, and one in Region 3.

Still in darkness

Meanwhile, the National Electrification Administration (NEA) said service areas of at least 14 electric cooperatives were still plunged in massive blackouts.

These include the franchise areas of: Ilocos Norte Electric Cooperative (Inec); Ilocos Sur Electric Cooperative (Iseco); Isabela Electric Cooperatives I and II (Iselco I and II), La Union Electric Cooperative (Luelco), Cagayan Electric Cooperatives I and II (Cagelco I and II); Nueva Vizcaya Electric Cooperative (Nuvelco), Benguet Electric Cooperative (Beneco), Mountain Province Electric Cooperative (Mopreco); Abra Electric Cooperative (Abreco); Kalinga Electric Cooperative (Kaelco); Ifugao Electric Cooperative (Ifelco) and Aurora Electric Cooperative (Aurelco). (With reports from Lizele B. Iñigo, Myrna M. Velasco, and Francis T. Wakefield)

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BENGUET LANDSLIDE

Hopes of finding survivors fade

BY VICTOR REYES

RESCUE and retrieval workers yesterday continued to search for at least 35 miners believed buried in a landslide that hit a mining area in Itogon town in Benguet on Sunday morning.

The military said five bodies were recovered yesterday, bringing to 55 the number of fatalities so far from the landslide in Barangay Ucab.

The landslide was triggered by rains from typhoon "Ompong" which left the country on Saturday night after wreaking havoc in northern Luzon.

The latest fatality count from Ompong is 67, including those from the landslide, according to consolidated information from various agencies and officials. The 32 others died mostly from landslides in areas outside Barangay Ucab.

Lt. Gen. Emmanuel Salamar, commander of the military's Northern Luzon Command (Nolcom) whose soldiers are part of the search operations, said search and retrieval stopped on Sunday night due to risks. "The operation resumed this morning. It's an integrated search, rescue and retrieval efforts, maximizing available assets," he said.

"Thirty-five are still missing," said Salamar.

Asked if there is a chance the 35 trapped victims will be recovered alive, Salamar said: "We hope so, we hope so," he said.

"I am 99 percent sure the people there are dead," said Itogon Mayor Victorio Palangdan. "We will continue until we get them all."

Hopes of finding survivors in the rubble faded as rescuers struggled to reach the trapped miners.

Some 300 policemen, soldiers, firefighters and volunteers armed mostly with hand tools raced to remove rocks, mud, debris, and drain water from collapsed buildings,

hoping to find some signs of life.

The landslide in Barangay Ucab in the Cordillera region was only one of 50 triggered by heavy rain brought by Ompong (international name: Mangkhut).

Only three people have been rescued in Ucab. Fifty-five were missing, six of them children. Many of the adults were in an abandoned bunkhouse, next to a chapel and home of a pastor and his family. The buildings were all crushed by earth and rocks.

Rescuers used bare hands to remove roofing, slabs of concrete

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and planks of wood, standing side-by-side, passing debris along a line to a pile 50 feet away.

The abandoned bunkhouse, owned by gold miner Benguet Corp, was near the site of a mine which was operating illegally, according to the Chamber of Mines of the Philippines.

The chamber, of which Benguet Corp is a member, said mining operators in Ucab had been repeatedly told to leave the area because of the threat of landslides.

Benguet Gov. Crescencio Palcaso said the provincial government, together with the police, tried to implement forced evacuation in the landslide site prior to Ompong but the residents and miners refused to leave.

He said the landslide site has been classified as a danger zone.

Earlier yesterday, Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu ordered a stop to all small-scale mining in the Cordillera region, where landslides had killed 24 people.

"From what I see, this will take time. We are unaware how deep they were buried," said Peter Negrado, who has been involved in numerous rescue missions during natural disasters.

The typhoon affected about five million Filipinos altogether, 150,000 of whom were in evacuation centers when the Ompong hit.

Road access to Ucab, a remote village about 18 km from the northern city of Baguio, has been cut off since rains triggered landslides, which were by far the biggest causes of casualties in Ompong's wake.

Emergency responders have since Saturday afternoon been accessing the area on foot, and have no heavy-duty equipment. Buzzes of chainsaws were heard in the distance as workers tried to remove trunks of felled trees.

PNP chief Oscar Albayaide, in a Twitter message on Monday, said elite police officers were being sent to the site with radar life detectors, harnesses, digging tools, and other search and rescue equipment.

Friends and relatives joined lines of rescuers to remove debris, one rock at a time, as a handful of sniffer dogs searched for survivors.

Two bodies were pulled out from the collapsed building on Monday, taken by stretcher and placed next to an area used for panning gold.

"Heavy equipment can't come in because the access roads were affected by the landslide," said Helder Sikwan, 25, a trainee policeman.

"There are no signs of life. The order for us was to conduct search and retrieval operations."

Over a hundred soldiers with K9

units are involved in the efforts, according to Nolcom spokesman Maj. Ericson Bulusan. He said more soldiers are due to be sent to the area.

"They are manually digging area, using shovels. We cannot bring in (heavy) equipment because the soil is soft," said Bulusan. "More rescuers are coming in to help in the operations."

Capt. Armand Balilo, Coast Guard spokesman, said the agency is sending K9 dogs to Itogon to help in finding missing miners.

"The K9 SAR (search and rescue) are the same dogs that helped in the search and retrieval operations in Bohol (in 2013) when it was hit by earthquake," he said.

CASUALTY COUNT

The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council said 58 persons died from Ompong.

Its spokesman, Edgard Posadas, said eight of the deaths have been validated and confirmed by interior department which is the head of the council's Management of the Dead and Missing cluster. The 50 other cases, he said, are undergoing validation.

Of the eight validated fatalities, six were in the Cordillera Administrative Region and one each in the Ilocos Region and Central Luzon.

Posadas said they are validating information about 48 people reported missing.

The Philippine National Police-National Operations Center counted 66 dead as of 3 p.m. yesterday.

Of the 66 killed, one was from the Ilocos region, eight were from the Cagayan Valley region, three from Central Luzon, and 54 from the Cordilleras.

The PNP-NOC said 52 people were also reported missing with two in Ilocos region, 49 in the Cordilleras, and one in Metro Manila.

The PNP-NOC collates initial reports from police regional offices nationwide.

The Department of Energy said power has been restored in Pangasinan, Batanes, Barangas, Laguna, Nueva Ecija, Quirino, and Zambales.

It said the National Power Corp. also reported normal operations in the diesel power plant areas of Batanes, Isabela, and Aurora.

The National Grid Corporation of the Philippines said there are still 14 de-energized transmission lines in six regions.

Globe Telecom and Smart Communications said they have restored fixed and mobile network services in areas affected by Ompong. — *With Jocelyn Montemayor, Raymond Africa, Jed Macapagal, and Reuters*

18

A1

Ompong toll hits 83; crop damage estimated at P14B

RESCUERS recovered more than 30 bodies from a collapsed mining bunkhouse in the aftermath of Typhoon "Ompong," bringing the death toll to 83 on Monday.

Authorities gave conflicting figures on the operations at Barangay Ucab in Itogon, Benguet, where mud and rocks that fell on a bunkhouse trapped scores of miners.

Lt. Gen. Emmanuel Salamat, commander of the military's Northern Luzon Command, said more than 30 bodies were retrieved.

Mayor Victorio Palangdan of Itogon town, however, said 11 cadavers were recovered in the area of the buried bunkhouse that was also used as a chapel.

In an interview aired over radio station dzMM, he said 40 to 50 people remained trapped in Ucab, a village where most residents were miners.

In the whole Cordillera Administrative Region, Salamat said 57 people were killed based on field reports.

According to the Philippine National Police (PNP), there were a total of nine dead in Baguio City, three in La Trinidad, Benguet; one in Tuba, Benguet; four in Nueva Vizcaya; four in Cagayan province; six in Mountain Province; two in Nueva Ecija; one in Bicol; and one in Caloocan City.

>DamageA8

DAMAGE FROM A1

Ompong

P14.27B in agri damage

A total of P14.27 billion worth of agricultural crops were damaged following the onslaught of the typhoon, the Department of Agriculture (DA) said on Monday.

The figure was significantly higher than the P13.2-billion projection of the agency "in worst case scenario."

Data from the DA-Disaster and Risk Reduction Management Operation Center showed that a total of 553,704 hectares of agricultural areas in Ilocos (Region I), Cagayan Valley (II), Central Luzon (III), Calabarzon (IV-A) and Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) were affected, with an estimated volume of production loss at 731,294 metric tons (MT).

Rice contributed to the largest share of losses at 62.82 percent with an amount of P8.97 billion affecting 212,491 farmers in Ilocos Norte, Aurora, Bulacan, Nueva Ecija, Pangasinana, Cavite, Rizal and Quezon, the DA-DRRMOC said.

The affected rice farms reached 397,204 hectares or 39.91 percent of the total rice standing crops of 995,218 hectares, it added.

The volume of production loss at

435,997 MT was equivalent to 8.64 days rice consumption of the country.

According to DA-DRRMOC, provinces heavily affected included Nueva Ecija, with damage amounting to P2.84 billion, followed by Cagayan with P2.77 billion.

For corn, production losses amounted to P4.50 billion affecting a total of 148,587 hectares with estimated production loss volume at 281,039 MT.

Most of the affected crops were on their reproductive stage, which were reported as partially damaged, the DA-DRRMOC said.

High-value crops production losses, affecting 7,913 hectares in Region CAR and the provinces of Rizal, Cagayan and Isabela, reached P15.72 million.

The volume of production loss was at 14,258 metric tons, mostly on their reproductive stage.

As for livestock, losses were reported in Region CAR, with 20,516 animal heads affected (105 heads in livestock and 20,213 heads in poultry), amounting to P 5.51 million or 1.01 percent of the overall damage and losses.

Damage in irrigation facilities were reported in Ilocos Norte, amounting to P15.72 million, affecting Small-Water Impounding Projects, impounding Dams and Spillways.

DEMPSEY REYES AND EIRENE JAIREE GOMEZ WITH A REPORT FROM FRANCIS EARL A. CUETO

Palace vows cash aid to families of typhoon victims

By Nat Mariano, Ben Moses Ebreo and Romeo Dizon

PRESIDENT Rodrigo Duterte will release P25,000 financial assistance to the families of those who were killed by Typhoon "Ompong," the Palace said Monday.

"The President will first meet with the families of those who perished," Presidential Spokesman Harry Roque said in a press briefing in Itogon, Benguet.

Roque said Duterte expresses his deepest sympathies to the bereaved families of the victims of the calamity.

Next page

Palace...

From A1

"Even though the President is pleased with the disaster preparations and the local governments' immediate response, we are sympathizing with the inevitable deaths due to Typhoon Ompong," Roque said.

He added that the Department of Interior and Local Government has recorded a total of 59 deaths in the Cordillera Administrative Region.

Meanwhile, Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu ordered a stop to all illegal small-scale mining operations in the region.

He asked for small-scale miners to cooperate and stop all mining activities while his agency waits for the approval and proclamation of their applications.

"The DENR will be sending men from the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police to effect the stoppage of all mining activities, especially here in Itogon," Cimatu said.

Authorities in Itogon on Monday resumed the search for dozens of people believed to be trapped in a mine that was buried by landslides due to Ty-

phoon Ompong.

In the Cordilleras, 54 people died mostly due to landslides, 34 of whom were from Itogon, said the regional police director, Chief Supt. Rolando Nana.

Some 36 are still missing, he said. Benguet Corp. said it had rescued several small-scale miners from the area Sunday.

The mining company, which provided medical assistance to victims, said these small-scale miners have been operating without permission. Benguet used to mine in the Antamok area in the 1990s until it suspended operations in search for new sustainable technologies to mine low-grade ore. It was during this time that illegal miners frequented the area and started to operate small-scale activities, the company said.

In Nueva Vizcaya, at least 15 barangays in an upland town were still isolated due to landslides from rains brought by Ompong.

Gov. Carlos Padilla said the isolated barangays are in the upland town of Kayapa, neighboring Benguet province.

"Like in the Cordillera region, the 15 barangays of Kayapa are situated in remote upland areas which were likely hammered by strong rains of typhoon Ompong, these rains triggered landslides

on the access roads," he said.

A family of four was also buried by landslide in the said municipality while the town's Oyawi Bridge was also damaged by strong waters.

Padilla said he has ordered the immediate consolidation of damage reports from local government units and national agencies concerned.

"We will evaluate and assess the extent of damages so that we can decide if we can declare our province under a state of calamity," he added.

In Pampanga, the Regional Disaster Risk Reduction Management Council said about 160 villages remained submerged in flood waters. Six major road and bridges were also not passable to any type of vehicle, said Bobby Manale, operations officer of the RDRRMC.

Provincial and municipal authorities are leading disaster response and relief efforts with the support of the Department of Social Welfare and Development field offices and the Philippine Red Cross.

DSWD has started registration, monitoring and initial assessment of displaced families in evacuation centers. President Rodrigo Duterte visited the Ilocos and Cagayan Valley Region Monday to assess the damage and visit displaced residents in evacuation centers.

Bautista appointment welcomed

HEALTH advocacy group Anakalusugan welcomes the decision of President Rodrigo Duterte to appoint Army Commanding General Lt. Gen. Rolando Joselito Bautista to head the National Food Authority.

Bautista, who will retire from military service on Oct. 15, will replace former NFA chief Jason Aquino who earlier asked to be relieved.

"We welcome the appointment of Gen. Bautista as the new NFA head once he retires next month. With Gen. Bautista at the helm, Anakalusugan looks forward to better NFA services to our *kababayan*, especially in ensuring ample supply of cheap but quality rice," Anakalusugan media officer Florante Solmerin said.

"There can be no repeat of the *bukbok* rice controversy that hounded the past leadership of the NFA. While government officials have insisted that it is safe to eat weevil-infested rice, the fact that poor Filipinos were left without choice but to buy and eat *bukbok* rice from NFA is adding insult to injury. Filipinos deserve better than this. We all deserve to eat healthy food," Solmerin added.

Last weekend, Duterte described Bautista as somebody he could trust to fix the rice shortage problem, which has driven prices of the grain up.

Prior to Aquino's resignation, at least 330,000 sacks of rice imported from Thailand and Vietnam, which the NFA failed to unload because of the heavy rains in August, have become infested with weevil.

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CoA gives PSG leeway to buy security dogs

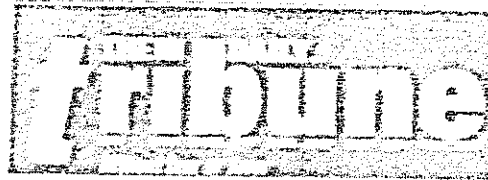
By Rio N. Araja

THE Commission on Audit is giving the Presidential Security Group the leeway to buy K-9 dogs to secure the safety of President Rodrigo Duterte and his guests.

Under its proposal, funding allocations should be automatically included in the PSG's annual budget to anticipate the need to acquire new K-9 dogs rather than request funds only when the need would arise.

In a 2017 audit of the General Headquarters-Armed Forces of the Philippines, the PSG notified CoA that it was only keeping 23 military working dogs listed as "effective" as of July 2017 and 18 new ones for procurement under the 2018 budget.

At least 11 of the new dogs were originally requested in 2017, but were funded only under the 2018 capital outlay.



Small mining banned

Itogon Mayor's wife a 'gold trader'

I am hell-bent to stop destructive mining

By Kristina Maralit

The Palace has zeroed in on small-scale mining operations as the chief culprit in the huge death toll in Itogon, Benguet in the aftermath of super typhoon "Ompong" as local officials and Benguet Mining Corp. traded blame for the disaster.

A landslide triggered by the typhoon resulted in 43 deaths and up to 100 missing in the small-scale mining area.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ordered a halt to all such operations in Benguet and other northern Luzon provinces as presidential spokesman Harry Roque said the landslide deaths will be a "game changer" regarding President Rodrigo Duterte's policy on the industry.

Itogon Mayor Victorio Palangdan laid the blame on the tragedy to Benguet Corp., the owner of the mining area, which he said failed to rehabilitate the site after it was abandoned.

Palangdan said on radio the giant mining firm did not rehabilitate the area even after a sinkhole appeared in the area.

From page 1

"After ceasing operations, (Benguet Mining Corp.) should have restored the mines but it did not do that," Palangdan said.

Benguet stopped operations after former Environment Secretary Lito Atienza issued a moratorium on mining in the area in 2008.

The company, however, said Palangdan allowed small scale miners to stay in the concession area despite its closure.

"The Mayor was quick to point fingers at Benguet but his wife is a buyer of the gold that the small scale miners are finding," a Benguet government source said.

Benguet Corp. said in a statement the LGU (local government unit) knew fully well that the structures could not withstand the typhoon's strength.

When the small scale miners took over, with the full support of the LGU in the "minahang bayan" (mining community) program, they created more unregulated and substandard mining tunnels, according to the statement.

The LGU initiative may have weakened the soil foundation of the total area, leading to the tragedy, it added.

The ban covers about 10,000 small-scale miners in Benguet's Itogon town.

"It is unfair that the company is to be blamed when some members of the LGU fully benefited from the small scale mining operations they had overseen," the source added.

Benguet Mining Corp grieves for the lives lost and will assist the government in the investigation it will undertake, the statement added.

Strong winds and heavy rains from "Ompong" battered the mountains of Benguet leaving at least 43 people dead and an undetermined number missing after a massive landslide buried a makeshift bunker used an evacuation center.

It is the worst typhoon-related incident to happen in the area in decades.

Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu said the government deployed soldiers and the police to stop illegal mining in six mountainous northern provinces in a drastic decision to prevent tragedies like the landslides.

Hope runs low

Palangdan said it's unlikely any of the dozens of people thought buried in the landslide will be found alive, though

Turn to page 2

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Small mining banned

It's unlikely any of the dozens of people thought buried in the landslide will be found alive

rescuers were still digging through the massive mound of mud and debris covering a chapel where they had sheltered.

Of the 40 to 50 people thought buried, there's a "99 percent (chance) that they really are all dead," he added.

Permits revoked

Cimatu said he is revoking all small-scale mining permits issued for mining areas in the Cordillera Administrative Region effective immediately.

"By virtue of what happened, I am revoking those permits, effective today," Cimatu said.

The ban covers about 10,000 small-scale miners in Benguet's Itogon town, where dozens of poor miners and their families were feared buried alive after seeking shelter at the height of the storm in a chapel that had once been a miners' bunkhouse. Hundreds of rescuers using shovels and picks were searching in the red mud for dozens still missing.

Officials have said in the past that gold mines tunneled by big mining companies legally or by unauthorized individuals and small outfits have made the hillsides unstable and more prone to landslides.

Tens of thousands of small-time miners in recent years have come to the mountain provinces from the lowlands and established communities in high-risk areas like the mountain foothills of Itogon.

'Mining must stop'

"I am hell-bent to stop destructive mining in the Philippines. The open-pit mining must stop," Duterte said during a meeting in Ilocos Norte last Sunday.

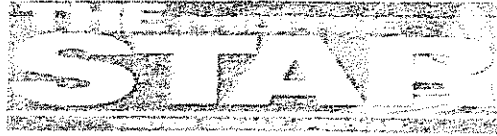
"It would result in a perdition for the country. It has to be, I think this year. Although in the process, we lose a plenty, P70 billion. But that is...you know, if you compare that money, we can always get it somewhere else," he added.

Duterte said open-pit mining operations have left bottle cap-like holes on lands, causing environmental hazards such as soil erosion.

The nearby communities are "always in danger" due to the open-pit mines, he added.

"I pity my country. And if I do not decide really to stop it, although we get P70 billion in taxes from mining, but if you compare it with the long-term destruction, our children will suffer," he said.

"Mining must stop. And if I cannot stop it during my time as President, nobody can because it's big business and the pressure is just too great," he added.



ACROSS THE COUNTRY

Marine killed in S. Kudarat clash with Reds

A Marine was killed while another was wounded in an encounter with suspected New People's Army (NPA) rebels in Sultan Kudarat over the weekend.

According to reports reaching Camp Aguinaldo, the clash occurred when personnel of the Marine Battalion Landing Team 2 chanced upon the rebels in Sitio Sinapsap, Barangay Sangay in Kalamansig. The encounter lasted for around 30 minutes.

The still unidentified Marine was brought to a hospital in Cotabato City, where he was pronounced dead.

The wounded soldier is now in stable

condition in the same hospital.

- Michael Punongbayan

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B7

2 NPA commanders killed in Davao City, North Cotabato

TWO commanders of the New People's Army were shot dead by Army soldiers in Davao City and North Cotabato over the weekend.

Lt. Col. Oca Partuza, Army spokesman, said Viva Albert Abenua, alias Ivy, commander of the Pulang Bagani Command 3, was killed in Torril District, Davao City after a 30-minute firefight between at least 25 rebels and soldiers from the 3rd Infantry Battalion.

The rebel group withdrew and left Abenua's body behind, according to Partuza.

The other rebel commander who was killed was identified

as Jacob Rondinas, who carries the aliases Jecko and Velum. He was killed in Barangay Batasan around 5 p.m. on Saturday by elements of the 39th Infantry Battalion.

Rondinas, who was in the area in a recruitment drive, has pending arrest warrants for attempted murder and frustrated murder.

The body of Rondinas, the secretary of the NPA's Guerilla Front 51, was recovered by soldiers the following day. B7

Maj. Gen. Noci Clement, 10th Infantry Division commander, said local residents reported the presence of Rondinas and his men. — *Brian Jules Campud*

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1 marine killed in Sultan Kudarat clash

ILIGAN City, Lanao del Norte: The troops of Marine Battalion Landing Team-2 (MBLT-2) clashed with a group of communist New People's Army (NPA) rebels in Sitio Sinapsap, Barangay Sangay in Kalamansig, Sultan Kudarat on Saturday, resulting in the death of a marine trooper and the wounding of another.

Capt. Arvin Encinas, spokesman of the 6th Infantry Division (6th ID) said on Monday that the 30-minute firefight happened at around 2:50 p.m. while the troops were conducting security operation after they received a report on the presence of armed men in Barangay Sangay.

Encinas said that during the encounter, a marine trooper suffered a serious injury and died in a Cotabato City hos-

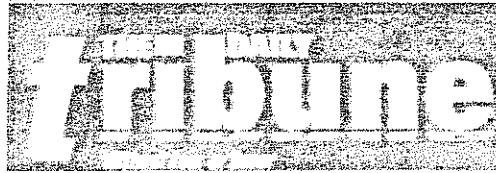
pital. He paid the ultimate sacrifice in fighting terrorism in Central Mindanao, said Encinas.

He added that another trooper was wounded but is in a stable condition. Both soldiers suffered multiple shrapnel wounds on their bodies.

Brig. Gen. Cirilito Sobejana, commander of Joint Task Force Central, said: "The troops of Joint Task Force Central will relentlessly fight the terrorist groups that usually attack peaceful communities."

"On behalf of the Joint Task Force Central, I also condole with the bereaved family, and laud our hero-soldier for offering his life in fighting terrorism," Sobejana added.

JULMUNIR I. JANNARAL



Marine trooper falls in clash

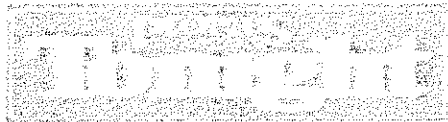
A Marine died in a firefight against a communist terrorist group in Kalamansig, Sultan Kudarat on Saturday afternoon.

The unidentified military man was part of the Marine Battalion Landing Team-2 who conducted security operations after receiving a report of alleged Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army gunmen in Barangay Sangay.

The clash lasted for 30 minutes, where another Marine troop was injured. The latter is already in stable condition in a hospital in Cotabato City.

Gen. Cirilito Sobejana of Joint Task Force Central condemned the communist group and vowed to fight for peace in Mindanao.

He also expressed his condolences to the fallen Marine and his family, and commended the soldier for sacrificing his life to fight terrorism. **KMB**



Marine killed, another hurt in Kudarat encounter

By ZAIDA DELOS REYES

A MEMBER of the Philippine Marines was killed while another was severely wounded in an encounter with communist terrorists on Sunday in Sultan Kudarat.

Identities of the victims were not yet disclosed as of press time.

Joint Task Force Central commander Brig. Gen. Cirilito E. Sobejana said the encounter occurred at 2:50 p.m. in Sitio Sinapsar, Egy. Sangay, Kalamansig.

He said troops from Marine Battalion Landing Team-2 were conducting security operation in the area following reports that the terrorists were in the area.

Upon reaching the place, a firefight occurred that lasted for 30 minutes.

During the encounter, a marine trooper suffered a serious injury and died at a hospital in Cotabato City while another was wounded.

"The troops of Joint Task Force Central will relentlessly fight the terrorist groups that usually attacks peaceful communities," Sobejana said.

"On behalf of the Joint Task Force Central, I also condole to the bereaved family, and our hero soldier for offering his life in fighting terrorism," Sobejana added.

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NPA leader killed in North Cotabato clash

By JOSEPH JUBELAG

GENERAL SANTOS CITY - A high-ranking leader of the New People's Army (NPA) in Mindanao was killed after he tried to shoot it out with police and military operatives who were about to arrest him in Makilala, North Cotabato.

First Lieut. Lea Canceran, Civil Military Operations Officer of 1002nd Infantry Brigade, identified the slain rebel leader as Jacob Rondina, who is also known as Jekco and was the secretary of NPA Guerilla Front 51.

He was killed in a shootout with police and military operatives who tried to arrest him in Barangay Batasan, Makilala.

Canceran said security forces were about to arrest Rondina who was facing murder charges. But instead of surrendering peacefully, he fired at the arresting team.

She also disclosed Rondina has been recruiting local villagers in the area to join the Communist underground.

"The prospective invitees are forced to take up arms against the government once they attended the meeting," Canceran said.

Rondina and another NPA key leader, Juanito Pueblos, were earlier reported to have led a band of NPA rebels who figured in an encounter with government troops in Barangay Astorga, Sta. Cruz, Davao del Sur last July which resulted in the death of Pueblos.

Brig. Gen. Robert Ancan, 1002nd Brigade commander, lauded the police and military personnel who conducted the operations against Rondina.

He said the death of Rondina was a big blow to the local Communist insurgency.

11

Activists submit testimonies vs Du30 to int'l HR tribunal

By Vince F. Nonato and Mart Sambalud @Team_Inquirer

People's organizations have announced yet another effort to hold President Duterte accountable for human rights violations before an international panel of lawyers.

Groups led by Bagong Alyansang Makabayan and Karapatan said an "indictment" against Mr. Duterte—"in collaboration" with US President Donald Trump—would be presented on Tuesday and Wednesday to the International Peoples' Tribunal (IPT) in Brussels, Belgium.

The IPT is composed of international human rights lawyers acting as jurors.

The tribunal would look into the testimonies of 31 witnesses who would attest to the allegations in the indictment.

Sultan Hamidullah Atar, one

of the traditional leaders in Marawi City, will also ask the tribunal on Sept. 18 to prosecute Mr. Duterte for his alleged crimes against Muslims in Mindanao.

"He [Duterte] violated the civil and political [and basic human] rights of my fellow Muslims during and after the Marawi siege," Atar told the Inquirer on Sunday night.

Suara Bangsamoro chair Jerome Succor Aba will also testify on the charges of religious discrimination, arbitrary detention and torture he had filed against agents of the US Department of Homeland Security and US Customs and Border Protection.

IPT findings, verdict

Former Bayan Muna Rep. Teddy Casiño, at a press briefing on Monday, said the IPT's findings and verdict would be submitted to the International Criminal Court (ICC) on Friday.

The submission date coincides with the 46th anniversary of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos' martial law declaration.

Casiño said the IPT's verdict would "influence international opinion" and its findings would "complement" the inquiries of other international bodies in an effort to hold Mr. Duterte "accountable for crimes."

Mindanao martial law

The indictment against Mr. Duterte cited violations of civil and political rights through extrajudicial killings, massacres, arbitrary arrests, torture, political persecution and rights violations arising from the imposition of martial law in Mindanao.

The other complainants include Kilusang Mayo Uno, Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas, Gabriela, Anakbayan, Migrante, Kadamay, Sandugo and Selda. Jude Josue Sabio, the lawyer

of confessed Davao Death Squad hitman Edgar Matobato, filed the first case against Mr. Duterte in the ICC in the Hague on April 2017.

Matobato accused Mr. Duterte and 11 government officials of crimes against humanity for the deaths of thousands of people in his administration's brutal war on drugs.

In June 2017, Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV and Magdalo party-list Rep. Gary Alejano asked the ICC to investigate Mr. Duterte for his bloody antinarcotics war. #3

The Trillanes-Alejano complaint also accused 11 police officials of complicity in what they claimed was state-sponsored killing of drug suspects.

On March 14, Mr. Duterte announced that he was pulling the Philippines out of the ICC.

—WITH A REPORT FROM INQUIRER RESEARCH INQ

STOPPING TERROR

**SENATORS URGE
GOVT TO REVIEW
INTEL FUND USE
AMID BOMBINGS**

By Leila B. Salaverria
@LeilasINQ

The recent spate of bombings in Mindanao, which took place while the island remains under martial law, should prompt the government to review how it has been spending its intelligence funds, according to Senate Minority Leader Franklin Drilon.

Successive blasts rocked General Santos City and North Cotabato province over the weekend. No one was killed in the explosions, but seven people were hurt in the General Santos explosion.

But in July and August, deadly explosions ripped through Sultan Kudarat and Basilan provinces. Five people died in the Sultan Kudarat blasts, while 11 were killed in Basilan.

"We need to revisit the utilization of the intelligence budget because the first corner is to see where the intelligence fund is being utilized, and that is why I think it is about time that we activate the select committee on intelligence funds," Drilon told reporters on Monday.

The use of the confidential funds should be tackled in a closed-door meeting of the select committee on intelligence funds, he added.

Martial law

But he also said it was premature to say if the bombings would affect any plan to extend the martial law declaration in Mindanao, which ends on Dec. 31.

Sen. Francis Pangillinan said the series of bombings was "alarming," leading him to question the effectiveness of the martial law declaration.

"What's the point of such a declaration by the government if it is incapable of preventing such bombings?" he asked.

President Duterte placed Mindanao under martial law on May 23, 2017, after Islamic State (IS)-allied militants rampaged through Marawi City.

The siege ended after five months, but Mr. Duterte sought an extension of martial law to prevent IS supporters from regrouping.

In Maguindanao province, the military said members of the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) were behind the bombing of a videoke bar in Midsayap town, North Cotabato, on Sunday night.

Brig. Gen. Cirilito Sobejana, commander of the 6th Infantry Division, described the BIFF as "peace spoilers." —WITH A REPORT

FROM EDWIN O. FERNANDEZ INQ

Cop chiefs sacked over GenSan, Midsayap bombings

By JOHN UNSON and CECILLE SUERTE FELIPE

NORTH COTABATO – An explosion ripped through Barangay Poblacion 4 in Midsayap town in this province six hours after a bomb blast hit General Santos City on Sunday.

Philippine National Police chief Director General Oscar Albayalde ordered the relief of Chief Inspector Patrick Elma, General Santos Police Station 2 commander, and Superintendent Samuel Cadungog, Midsayap town police chief, to allow an impartial probe into the incidents.

Elma was replaced by Senior Inspector Davis Dulawan. Superintendent Joan Maganto replaced

Cadungog.

Superintendent Aldrin Gonzalez, Soccksargen police spokesman, said the improvised explosive device (IED) went off near a karaoke bar only a few meters away from the municipal police station.

"No one was hurt, but the explosion caused panic among residents," Gonzalez said.

Bomb experts have yet to determine the type of IED

used.

Probers said they have yet to establish if the bombing was linked to previous explosions, but Albayalde believes militant groups with ties to the Islamic State were behind the attacks.

Seven people, including a three-year-old girl, were wounded when a bomb exploded in Barangay Apopong in General Santos City.

Five persons were killed in bomb attacks in Isulan, Sultan Kudarat on Aug. 28 and Sept. 3.

On Saturday, an ordnance team deactivated a bomb found along the Cotabato-Isulan Highway in Barangay

Matagabong in Ampatuan, Maguindanao. The IED was rigged with a blasting contraption attached to a mobile phone.

Military officials said members of the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters could have planted the bombs.

Albayalde said the police in entire Mindanao is on highest alert since the Sultan Kudarat bombing on Sept. 3.

"We reminded our regional directors in Mindanao to strengthen their target hardening measures... Intelligence gathering is also very important," he said.

Bomb explodes in North Cotabato

ZAMBOANGA CITY: An improvised explosive device (IED) went off on Sunday in Midsayap, North Cotabato, officials said on Monday.

There were no casualties in the blast that occurred seven hours after an explosive was detonated in General Santos City.

The army's 6th Infantry Division (6th ID) said the blast occurred at Theresa's Place Videoke Bar in Poblacion 4 just after a military and police patrol passed the area.

Captain Arvin Encinas, an army spokesman, said no one was hurt in the explosion in Midsayap as he blamed the blast on the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters under Abu Torayfe.

He said soldiers and policemen recovered bomb debris from the area. "The materials used on the bomb concealed in a jersey shirt, was aluminum flash powder as main charge placed in a plastic container with a cell phone, 9-volt battery and concrete nails as fragmentation," he told the *Mindanao Examiner*.

Encinas said authorities were looking for three people who bought soft drinks at the bar. "They were suspected of leaving the bomb at the bar. This terror group will launch bombing attacks in urban centers as part of their retaliation against continued military operations."

In December 2016, a bomb exploded under a police patrol car outside a Catholic church in Midsayap town and wounded over a dozen people.

The latest bombing was carried

out despite the imposition of martial law in the restive southern region where security forces are battling militants tied to IS and communist insurgents.

Testimonies heard

The Commission on Human Rights began investigating the killing by army soldiers of seven civilians the Western Mindanao Command (WestMinComm) has accused of being Abu Sayyaf members.

The military insisted those who clashed with troops and the seven killed in Patikul town on September 14 were among 100 militants under Radulan Sahiron and Hajan Sawadjaan. Seventeen soldiers were wounded in the fighting.

But families and relatives of slain villagers strongly denied the military's allegations and said they were just civilians harvesting fruits from their own farm.

Human rights investigators with municipal and provincial officials led by Governor Toto Tan and Patikul Mayor Nasser Hayudini, and the police heard the testimonies of the victims' families.

Tan gave the families financial assistance as they vowed to pursue murder charges against those involved in what the victims' kin branded as "a massacre."

Lt. Col. Gerry Besana, a WestMinCom spokesman, said troops clashed with the militants in Bakong village.

He said Sawadjaan was among those wounded in the fighting.

AL JACINTO

2 police officers relieved over Cotabato blast

By Francisco Tuyay

POLICE Chief Oscar Albayalde has ordered the relief of two police officials in Mindanao after a second explosion rocked Midsayap in Cotabato, which followed the blast in General Santos that injured seven people including a three-year-old child on Sunday.

The military has blamed the Islamic State-inspired Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters behind the bombing of a videoke bar in Midsayap on Sunday night.

In a statement released on Monday, Brig. Gen. Cirilito Sobejana, head of the Army's Sixth Infantry Division, described the BIFF under Abu Torayfe as "peace spoilers."

Senate Minority Leader Franklin Drilon on Monday cited the need to revisit the use of the intelligence budget following the series of bombings in Mindanao.

"The first corner is to see where the intelligence fund is being utilized, and that is why I think it is about time that we activated the committee on intelligence funds," Drilon said.

Senator Panfilo Lacson on Sunday asked if Congress' support for the martial law in Mindanao was worth it.

"With a promise of peace in Mindanao, we burned candles to pass the Bangsamoro Organic Law. That after we supported the extension of martial law," Lacson said in a tweet on Monday.

The two police officials relieved from their post were Chief Insp. Patrich Elma, Station-2 Commander of the General Santos City Police Office, and Supt. Samuel Cadungon, Chief of Police of Midsayap Cotabato.

Albayalde immediately posted Sr. Insp. Davis Dulawan and Supt. Joan Maganto vice Elma and Cadungon respectively.

Earlier, Albayalde relieved two police officials in Sultan Kudarat after the twin bombings that killed five people and wounded 40 others. With Macon Ramos-Araneta and PNA

Police chiefs in North Cotabato, GenSan relieved over bombings

BY RAYMOND AFRICA
AND VICTOR REYES

PNP chief Oscar Albayalde yesterday relieved two ranking officials assigned with the Central Mindanao Police Regional Office following separate explosions in General Santos City and Midsayap town in North Cotabato on Sunday.

Ordered relieved were Chief Insp. Patrich Elma, station 2 commander of Gen. Santos City Police Station, and Supt. Samuel Cadungon, chief of police of Midsayap Municipal Police Station in North Cotabato.

Elma was replaced by Senior Insp. Davis Dulawan, while Cadungon was replaced by Supt. Joan Maganto.

Albayalde said the relief order was to pave the way for an impartial investigation on security lapses after the two separate explosions in General Santos City and Midsayap town on Sunday, the third and fourth explosions, respectively, to hit the region in 19 days.

At around 7:15 p.m., Theresa's Place videoke bar located at baran-

gay Poblacion 4 in Midsayap town was rocked by an explosion. No one was reported killed or injured.

A witness told police investigators three unidentified men, said to be between 25 to 30 years old, arrived on a motorcycle and ordered softdrinks and sandwiches at the videoke bar. They hurriedly left after finishing the meal.

A few moments later, an explosion was heard inside the bar.

Police said there were no other customers when the explosion happened.

Capt. Arvin Encinas, spokesman of the Army's 6th Infantry Division, pointed to members of the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) as primary suspects in the explosion incident.

"It has been monitored that this terror group will launch bombing attacks in the urban areas as part of their retaliation (against the military for their losses)," Encinas said of the BIFF.

Encinas said initial investigation showed that the "materials used was aluminum flash powder

as main charge placed in a plastic container with cell phone, 9 volts battery and concrete nails as fragmentation and it was concealed in a jersey shirt."

The Midsayap town explosion happened hours after an improvised explosive device was detonated besides two pharmacies in Crossing Makar, barangay Apopong in General Santos City before noon on Sunday. The explosion left eight injured, including a six-year old girl.

The BIFF and the communist New People's Army are suspects in the General Santos City incident.

The third and fourth bombings happened even as Albayalde placed the entire police units in the Mindanao region under full alert status as an offshoot of the August 28 bombing in barangay Kalawag 3 in Isulan, Sultan Kudarat which killed three and injured 36 others; and the September 2 explosion inside a computer shop in barangay Kalawag 2 also in Isulan town, which claimed the lives of two teenagers.

Albayalde said investigators are

still determining if the bombings were done by one and the same sets of suspects, whom the PNP earlier said was a faction of the BIFF under Commander Turaitie.

He said there are four factions of the BIFF wanting to get recognition from the Islamic State, the reason why they conduct bombings.

"There are four groups who compete against each other to get recognition from ISIS. Although they come from one main group, there are different sub-groups with different leaders," Albayalde said.

He said they received intelligence information that these groups were set to disrupt the tuna festival in General Santos which was scheduled from September 1 to 5.

"But the tuna festival is already over. Just the same we cannot afford to relax. These people will surely find ways to carry out the bombings," he added.

He reminded regional police chiefs in Mindanao to intensify target-hardening measures and gathering of intelligence information to thwart future bombings.

GenSan, Midsayap police chiefs sacked

By AARON B. RECUENCO

The commander of a police station in General Santos City and the chief of police of Midsayap, North Cotabato were sacked from their posts, following two separate explosions in Central Mindanao on Monday.

Ordered relieved were Chief Insp. Patrich Elma, station commander of Police Station 2 of General Santos City police office; and Supt. Samuel Cadungog, chief of police of Midsayap town.

Director General Oscar Albayalde, chief of the Philippine National Police (PNP), said it was the regional director of Central Mindanao who ordered their relief after the two blasts.

Elma was replaced by Sr. Insp. Davis Dulawan, while Supt. Joan Maganto replaced Cadungog.

The General Santos City bombing wounded eight civilians, who were either passing by or were standing near a pharmacy when the blast occurred before noon.

serve as a constant reminder that there should be no room for complacency when it comes to security in Mindanao.

The explosion in Midsayap occurred at a KTV bar a few hours later that reportedly wounded at least one person.

"We reminded our regional directors in Mindanao area to strengthen their target hardening measures. Of course, their intelligence gathering is also very important to prevent these bombings," said Albayalde.

The official said they have yet to determine if those responsible in the bombings in General Santos City and Midsayap town belonged to the same group responsible for the two bombings in Isulan town of Sultan Kudarat.

It could be recalled that security officials tagged a faction of the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) as responsible for the Isulan bombings. Police have already charged the suspects responsible on the Isulan blast.

The two Isulan blasts killed five persons, and wounded more than 40 others.

Albayalde said the attacks should

"We should not relax because these people will take advantage of any opportunity for them to carry out attacks," said Albayalde. ||

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GenSan, Midsayap town cop chiefs sacked

The police commanders of General Santos City and Midsayap town in North Cotabato were sacked from their posts following the two separate explosions both on Monday.

Sacked were Supt. Raul Sulhan, director of the General Santos City police; and Supt. Samuel Cadunpog, chief of police of Midsayap town.

Director General Oscar Albayalde, chief of the Philippine National Police (PNP), said it was the regional director of Central Mindanao whom he ordered to be relieved after the two blasts.

The General Santos City bombing injured eight civilians who were either passing by or standing near a pharmacy when the blast

occurred before noon while the explosion in Midsayap town two days ago reportedly injured at least one person.

"We reminded our regional directors in Mindanao area to strengthen their target-hardening measures. Of course, their intelligence gathering is also very important to prevent these bombings," said Albayalde.

The official said they are yet to determine if those responsible in the bombings in General Santos City and Midsayap town are the same group responsible for the two bombings in Isulan town of Sultan Kudarat.

It was recalled that security officials tagged a faction of the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters

(BIFFF) as responsible. Police have already charged the suspect responsible on the Isulan blast.

The two Isulan blasts killed five people and wounded more than 40 others.

Albayalde said the attacks are a constant reminder that there is no room for complacency when it comes to security in Mindanao. The entire Mindanao has been under Martial Law while police forces in the area were placed under highest security alert status since the second Isulan blast.

"We should not relax on this because these people will take advantage of any opportunity for them to carry out attacks," said Albayalde. (Aaron Recuenco) □

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3 freed hostages turned over to Indonesian authorities

ZAMBOANGA CITY (PNA) - The military's Western Mindanao Command (Westmincom) has formally turned over to Indonesian authorities three of their compatriots who were recently freed by Abu Sayyaf bandits in Sulu.

The captives who were freed on Saturday in Barangay Buanza, Indanan, Sulu after over a year captivity were Hamdam Bin Salim, 34; Subande Satto, 27; and Sudarlan Samansung, 41.

Lt. Gen. Arnel Dela Vega, Westmincom chief, turned them over to Indonesian Ambassador to the Philippines Dr. Sinyo Harry Sarundajang Sunday afternoon at Camp Basilio Navarro, which houses the Westmincom headquarters in this city.

The three, accompanied by Sarundajang and the Indonesian Army Attache, immediately left for Manila

after the turnover ceremony.

Sarundajang expressed his gratitude to the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Westmincom for the effort they exerted in securing the safe release of the hostages.

"We give our assurance that we will always be of assistance for the common interest of our country and the Indonesian government," Dela Vega said.

Lt. Col. Gerry Besana, Westmincom information officer, said the three Indonesians were freed due to mounting pressures by the continuous military offensive and efforts exerted by local government officials in Sulu.

He said the freed hostages were immediately taken to Kuta Heneral Teodulfo Bautista Station Hospital for medical check-up and custodial debriefing.

He said the release of the three Indonesians was also made possible through the joint efforts of former Sulu Gov. Abdusakur Tan; Tarhata Misuari, wife of Moro National Liberation Front founding chair Nuruladji; and Abdul Kiram Misuari.

The three Indonesians were seized by the Abu Sayyaf bandits on January 18, 2017 while the victims were aboard a fishing vessel near Taganak Island, Tawi-Tawi.

Taganak, which is part of Turtle Islands municipality in Tawi-Tawi, is located at the very edge of the international treaty limits separating the Philippines from Malaysia.

Besana disclosed that the Abu Sayyaf bandits are still holding captives 11 people in the hinterlands of Sulu province.

He said the hostages included two foreigners - one Dutch and a Vietnamese - and nine Filipinos.

• **Int'l support
for OLBARMM**

DAVAO CITY – The international community has vowed to support the new Bangsamoro government that will be established when the Organic Law for the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (OLBARMM) is ratified in a plebiscite on January 21, 2019, Presidential Adviser on Peace Process (PAPP) Jesus Dureza said. In a message read by PAPP assistant secretary Dickson P. Hermoso during a gathering of the US-Philippines Exchange Alumni at the Marco Polo Hotel Davao on Sunday, Dureza said international community has expressed trust and confidence in the work for peace of the government (GPH) panel and Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). He said some foreign countries vowed to provide financial and technical support as well as other needs for the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) that will replace the existing ARMM government if the OLBARMM is ratified. "It shows there is overwhelming international recognition of our work. It is an affirmation of the effectiveness of (President Rodrigo) Duterte in leading our country towards just and sustainable peace," he said. (Antonio L. Colina IV) //

Justice, but still no closure

Twelve years after student activists Sheryl Cadapan and Karen

Empeño disappeared in Bulacan, their families are getting justice. Yesterday, Malolos Regional Trial Court Branch 15 Judge Alexander Tamayo convicted Jovito Palparan of kidnapping and serious illegal detention and sentenced the retired Army major general to life in prison. Convicted together with Palparan were Lt. Col. Felipe Anotado and S/Sgt. Edgardo Osorio.

Palparan, who was dubbed "The Butcher" by human rights advocates, has denied ordering the kidnapping, detention, rape and torture of the two University of the Philippines coeds in June 2006 when he was the infantry division commander in Central Luzon. He has also defended his methods, likened by critics to a dirty war, which he employed against insurgents.

There is still no closure for the families of Cadapan and Empeño, who are among the *desaparecidos* in this country. Unwilling to give up on the possibility that the two victims might still be alive, and unable to give them a formal farewell, the relatives remain suspended in a limbo of sorrow.

With his continuing insistence on his innocence, Palparan is unlikely to provide the grieving relatives any clue regarding the two victims' fate. Hurling invectives yesterday at the

EDITORIAL

judge, Palparan is set to appeal his conviction all the way to the Supreme Court. It could take another 12 years before final judgment is rendered. At least his offense does not allow him to post bail while his case is on appeal.

Besides the search for justice, Palparan's conviction should inspire a reassessment of the military mindset and methods in fighting insurgencies. Palparan's counterinsurgency methods enjoyed support from a certain segment of the population. He was singled out for praise in the State of the Nation Address of Gloria Macapagal Arroyo during her presidency. He became a party-list congressman representing Bantay. When Palparan was first ordered arrested by the Malolos court, military officers were suspected to have helped him hide for three years until he was nabbed in the city of Manila. □

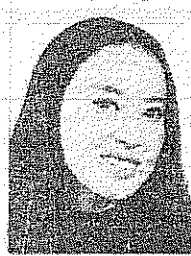
Violent methods and egregious violations of human rights in quelling rebellions tend to have diminishing returns. Such methods have contributed to making the communist insurgency in the Philippines one of the longest running of its kind in the world. The ideology may now be unrecognizable, but the unrest and discontent behind the armed dissent are still there. Punishing those who engage in dirty wars is just a laudable step in ending the rebellion for good.

HOTSPOT

MOCHA USON

On false teachers and fake lessons

The previous week was bombarded with controversial statements coming from Catholic priests who are against the Duterte administration. First, a video started making the rounds on social media where a priest was caught praying for President Duterte to fall sick. This was followed by Fr. Robert Reyes urging the military to denounce the current authority, saying that they (our soldiers) are not a private army, but are of service to the Filipino nation.



While I admire their passion, I strongly believe that they are on the wrong side of history. And as priests, they have gone beyond their commitment to God and the Christian faith.

First, Fr. Robert Reyes is not doing the public and in particular the followers of the Catholic faith any good because rather than urge the people to pray for the betterment of our nation, he calls for them to rebel against the current government.

In Romans 13:1-2, it says that "let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves."

Fr. Robert Reyes should have thought of this before spewing harsh words against the Duterte administration, because with his actions it shows that he doesn't know how to respect authority.

Second, as a man of faith, Fr. Robert Reyes should be leading the public in praying for the well being of our nation. He should be urging us to reflect on what is happening to our country and for us to discern as to which direction we should steer our country, and not dictate what to do. Because with what he is doing right now, Fr. Robert Reyes is not asking us to think and discern, but is rather pushing us to rebel and attack the government.

He could have urged us to pray for the president and that he improves his decisions, as it is apparent that the priest is not happy with how President Duterte is handling the affairs of the country. But no, he is urging us to revolt.

This is very alarming because as a priest, he is also a primary influencer in society. He feeds the people with his agenda each and every time he celebrates mass. And with his statements, he is nurturing his followers with hate and anger. Are these the kind of emotions that we would want to carry in our hearts?

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Third, as a priest, Fr. Robert Reyes should take the lead in abiding the law. He should be the first to respect the law and only rebel when the government forbids him to practice his faith. But the government is not doing that, so there is no point to go against it.

Fr. Robert Reyes claims that President Duterte is a dictator, especially now that it is under his administration that the amnesty of Sen. Trillanes is revoked and is now pending arrest. Had he been indeed a dictator, the president would have had the senator apprehended immediately. But now, he is still waiting for the court to decide before the actual arrest can take place, but he believes in due process.

Where is the dictatorship in this scenario?

It really pains me to see Fr. Robert Reyes say such things, or even think about such things. I do hope that he is able to reflect on his thoughts and acquire a better, more enlightened perspective on how to deal with our nation's problems. He should not nurture sermons of hate and anger, but of love and peace—especially to those he deems to be his enemies.

In Mark 12:30-31, the greatest commandment is to "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength." And the second greatest command is to "love your neighbor as you love yourself." Is praying for the president to fall ill, or urging our soldiers to turn their backs on the administration ways of exercising these commandments?

The answer is no. Hence Fr. Robert Reyes, and as well as the priest who prayed for the president to fall ill, should stop their false teachings and start re-learning God's lessons before it's too late.

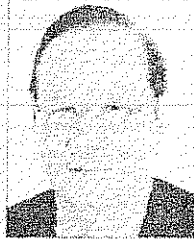
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INTROSPECTIVE

TONY F. KATIGBAK

Amnesty granted cannot be revoked

Tensions have been running high in the Philippines these past few weeks, or to be completely honest, these past few years. For a country that was promised that corruption would be stamped out and that peace and order would be restored, it's ironic to note that the complete opposite seems to have happened. In the past few years the death toll has increased dramatically, violence is even more prevalent than ever, corruption looks to be at an all time high, prices have skyrocketed, and there is less peace and order than there has been in a very long time.



It's sad that we have placed ourselves in a position wherein the peso is reaching all new lows and there doesn't look to be any reprieve in sight. A position where our countrymen can't even afford the basic goods and necessities they need to survive and where a super typhoon threatens our shores and the lives of countless Filipinos. And instead of being front and center and promoting relief operations, as the government should be, they are instead still arguing amongst themselves.

To be quite frank the song has remained the same and it is getting quite tiresome. There is no synergy in the way politicians work in the Philippines. Let's face it no one is perfect, and many politicians have made mistakes, but it seems that whenever we elect new officials they are more intent to taking apart what their predecessor built instead of improving on it. Don't get me wrong – that's not to say that past mistakes

should not be fixed – but the reality is we never seem to be moving forward, we always remain rooted in the past.

Currently what is under contention now is the amnesty of Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV. President Duterte has claimed that the amnesty granted to Trillanes is invalid and has been seeking to have him arrested. When this blew up all over the news (and continues to do so) it felt like 2007 all over again. Is this still where we are? With everything else that is happening are we back to the military uprisings that happened over a decade ago? Does the president truly feel this is where he should channel his energy when so many Filipinos are suffering? The priorities of the current administration are quite mind-boggling.

President Duterte has claimed that Trillanes' amnesty should be void because Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin signed it instead of the president, at the time Benigno Aquino. Former president Aquino, however, has said that the amnesty process for Trillanes followed the same procedure that all former presidents used including Corazon Aquino, Fidel Ramos, Joseph Estrada, and Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. He said that if this amnesty is seen as invalid then all the amnesty grants by his predecessors should be invalid as well.

However, despite President Duterte's earlier claims about who signed Trillanes' amnesty, what appeared on Proclamation No. 527 is that the amnesty was invalid because

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Trillanes did not apply for amnesty. His application appears to be lost and this was the basis for the president signing the proclamation. However, during his privilege speech in the Senate, Trillanes showed photo and video evidence of him filing the application so now many are wondering why the Department of National Defense can't seem to find the papers. Former National Security Adviser Jose Almonte said that Trillanes should not be punished solely on the basis that his application can't be found and that an investigation into the missing papers should commence right away.

There is obviously no love lost between President Duterte and Senator Trillanes. The latter has been quite vocal about his issues with the current Commander-in-Chief and has been pushing, for quite some time, for an investigation into some of the president's activities like his alleged P2.4 billion bank accounts and the Davao Death Squad. He has not been afraid of calling the president a mass murderer and has not backed down from statements against the administration. Naturally this makes him a prime target as one of the main, and one of the loudest, voices of dissent.

It's not surprising that the president does not like him, but I feel he has devoted far too much time trying to find ways to get "rid of him." Does he feel threatened because the senator does not appear to be afraid of him

like many others? Although Trillanes is fighting for his legal rights and preserving the amnesty he was granted, he has also said that he is not afraid of being arrested because he is not afraid of the president.

I think that the administration should tread carefully when it comes to pursuing this. At present there seems to be no legal basis for revoking the senator's amnesty and unless they can prove, legally, that there is a reason to void it then perhaps they should take a step back. I'm hoping we are not heading for a constitutional crisis if the administration continues to push for what they want despite no legal precedence or standing.

In the end, I think it's more important for the government and for our president to focus on the real problems facing our country and channel his efforts into addressing these instead of going head to head with those who oppose him. We've all experienced hard times before but these days it just seems to be getting worse and worse. The government needs to find ways to address the soaring inflation, the crippling rice shortage, and the increase in violent crimes.

If the president really wants to do good things for the Philippines, and I believe that he does, then he needs to let go of all his wild paranoid destabilization fears and get to work. People are angry and they want improvements. There will always be voices of opposition because things aren't improving, they are only getting worse. If the president really wants to silence his opposition then he needs to focus on what really matters. New strong economic policies and revisiting policies that may not work are what is needed to address untamed inflation, not giving all his attention to would-be "plots" and "conspiracies."

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MEDIUM RARE

Trillanes thriller



By JULIE Y. DAZA

WELL, it would have been thrilling but for the typhoon that took away the thunder of a spectacular arrest of a senator of the realm. Is it too late to comment on the case of Senator Antonio Trillanes IV, erstwhile LTSG, Philippine Navy?

Of course it is, now that we have weathered the storm - or have we? - of the senator's lightning outbursts, during which he called the President a drunk, paranoid, a lousy dresser so totally lacking in self-esteem (unlike military men who are trim, lean, and mean in their neat, figure-hugging T-shirts). After Gringo Honasan, who was elected and reelected for his reputation as a "maverick" before it was changed to "cashiered," proved how voters enjoy the company of rebels as a counterbalance to the compliant horde, Senator Trillanes has shown more than a streak of the contravida in public performances, usually in the form of Senate hearings.

How did he ever end up in the military, for one so unable, so unwilling to obey his superiors, who are not only older but also wiser, and of higher rank? He humiliated a general and cabinet secretary to the extent that

Angelo Reyes ended his own life rather than have his honor dragged through the mud. He courted contempt not once but twice for disrespecting the rules cited by the chairman of the Blue Ribbon committee. He very nearly came to blows with a senator of his own age. In another flare-up, he leaned over another senator's table to turn off the latter's microphone.

Cute! That's what we say when a baby throws a tantrum. But in the case of this telegenic lawmaker, due process demands our patience as we wait for him to grow up. So far the courts have tried to tame the President's exasperation as due process allows him to 1) stay safe in his man-cave in the Senate building; 2) plan his next step while his lawyers invoke the line that absence of evidence is not evidence of absence; 3) extend his Andy Warhol 15 minutes of fame; 4) hope that his vision of a rub-out - his car blocked by other vehicles as their passengers jump out to abduct him, producing "silence and then I'm gone" - does not come to pass.

President Duterte's retort, "I'm not interested in arresting him," has muted the drama. Before the next four typhoons blow in, let the prosecution and defense go to court with clean hands and sober arguments. 9

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Editorial

The wheels of justice grind for General Palparan et al

FROM an unknown poet referenced by 1st century AD's Plutarch and cited by sceptic philosopher Sextus Empiricus, an ancient proverb later translated to English by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow goes:

*"Though the mills of God grind slowly;
Yet they grind exceeding small;
Though with patience
He stands waiting,
With exactness grinds He all."*

Justice may be slow, but it will surely come.

We think of this today as we receive the news that the judge of Malolos Regional Trial Court Branch 15 handed down on Monday the verdict on retired Army Major-General Jovito Palparan Jr. and two others for the kidnapping and serious illegal detention of UP students Karen Empeño and Sherlyn Cadapan in 2006.

The process of bringing General Palparan to justice has been a long, slow and painstaking process. It was marked by stages when the principal accused became a fugitive and was subjected to a manhunt, when the AFP was accused of hiding one of its own, when the government was accused of being uninterested in a full resolution of the case. Up until this late stage, many Filipinos had often wondered whether Palparan would ever be meted just punishment in our justice system.

With the court decision on Monday, we have incontrovertible proof to show the nation and the world that Palparan is not beyond the reach of our system of justice, that regardless of the support he may have received from the public, the military and the political class, the general is not above the law and must face his just deserts.

Judge Alexander Tamayo of the Malolos court sentenced Palparan and his two co-accused, Lt. Col. Felipe Anotado and Staff Sgt. Edgardo Osorio, to reclusion perpetua (life imprisonment). The three were also ordered to pay the victims' families P100,000.

Media reports said a commotion occurred at the courtroom when Palparan screamed at Judge Tamayo and called him "duwag" (coward).

This prompted Tamayo to warn Palparan that he could be cited in contempt, but the retired general was defiant.

Tamayo also ordered Palparan's transfer from his detention cell in the Philippine Army headquarters at Fort Bonifacio in Taguig City to a regular jail cell.

Security was tight at the court during the reading of the verdict, which was witnessed by members of various human rights organizations that have been supporting the families of the victims for years. Reaction to the verdict has been uniformly positive across society and the nation.

Justice Secretary Menardo Guevarra said of the verdict: "Justice may come a bit late, but it does come. Let's believe in that."

The National Union of People's Lawyers (NUPL), the private prosecutors counsel for the victims, hailed the court's decision.

It said: "This is a step forward for justice, though partial for so long as Karen and Sherlyn remain missing and numerous other violations remain unresolved."

There is a larger dimension to this judicial verdict, and it concerns the efficacy and supremacy of our judiciary on questions of law and justice.

Despite bitter cases of injustice around us, the rule of law still exists in this country. We are certainly not living under the thumb of a dictator.

Just as justice deeply rooted in eastern and western cultures, so it is rooted in the Philippines.

Longfellow got it right. This whole business is finally about just retribution.

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Soldier's retirement pay can be withheld for child's support

Dear PAO,

My husband is a retired soldier and we are already separated. He refused to give support to my child despite my demands. I coordinated with the government agency concerned about the withholding of an amount



DEAR PAO
**PERSIDA
ACOSTA**

from his pension for the support of my child but my request was not granted. I would like our financial support be withheld from my husband's pension by the agency concerned, is this possible?

Maricel

Dear Maricel,

Yes, the needed financial support can now be directly withheld by the employer from the salary or pension of your husband in consonance with the provision of Republic Act 9262 (Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act of 2004), but you need to file a petition in court for the issuance of the protection order.

Under Section 8 of the said law:

"A protection order is an order issued under this act for the purpose of preventing further acts of violence against a woman or her child specified in Sec. 5 of this Act and granting other necessary relief. The relief granted under a protection order serve the purpose of safeguarding the victim from further harm, minimizing any disruption in the victim's daily life, and facilitating the opportunity and ability of the victim to independently regain control over her life. The provisions of the protection order shall be enforced by law enforcement agencies. The protection orders that may be issued under this Act are the barangay protection order (BPO), temporary protection order (TPO) and permanent protection order (PPO). The protection orders that may be issued under this Act shall include any, some or all of the following reliefs:

xxx xxx

(g) Directing the respondent to provide support to the woman and/or her child if entitled to legal support. Notwithstanding other laws to the contrary, the court shall order an appropriate percentage of the income or salary of the respondent to be withheld regularly by the respondent's employer for the same to be automatically remitted directly to the woman. Failure to remit and/or withhold or any delay in the remittance of support to the woman and/or her child without justifiable cause shall render the respondent or his employer liable for indirect contempt of court.

xxx"

The above cited provision of law was also applied by the court in Pension Gratuity and Management Center vs. AAA (G. R. No. 201292, August 1, 2018), where the Supreme Court through Honorable As-

sociate Justice Mariano C. del Castillo stated:

"Thus, in Republic v. Yahon, the Court held that PGMC may be ordered to automatically deduct a portion from the retirement benefits of its member-recipients for direct remittance to the latter's legal spouse as and by way of support in compliance with a protection order issued by the trial court, pursuant to the provisions of Republic Act No. 9262 (RA 9262) or the Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act of 2004. The Court declared therein that RA 9262 - which is a special law; a later enactment; a support enforcement legislation; and one that addresses one form of violence, which is economic abuse against women and children - should be construed as laying down an exception to the general rule that retirement benefits are exempt from execution. The Court therein noted that RA 9262 itself explicitly authorizes the courts to order the withholding of a percentage of the income or salary of the defendant or respondent by the employer, which shall be remitted directly to the plaintiff or complainant other laws to the contrary notwithstanding xxx xxx".

Applying the above-quoted decision in your situation, your husband is deemed to be committing economic abuse under RA 9262; however, it is necessary that you file a petition in court for the issuance of protection order against him. One of the reliefs that can be granted under such order is the withholding of appropriate percentage of his pension which can be remitted directly to you as financial support.

This opinion is solely based on the facts you have narrated and our appreciation of the same. The opinion may vary when the facts are changed or further elaborated. We hope that we were able to enlighten you on the matter.

Editor's note: Dear PAO is a daily column of the Public Attorney's Office. Questions for Chief Acosta may be sent to dearpao@manilatimes.net.

Q

Teachers' month



FORMATION
GARY
OLIVAR

TYPHOON "Ompong" roared into northern Luzon over the weekend, wreaking the usual wide swathe of damage across the mountainous regions of Ilocandia.

But I honestly think that a lot more damage was averted by the heavenly appeals of millions of Filipino prayer warriors—not to mention the high level of preparation mounted by Duterte's Cabinet, who reminded me a lot of how PGMA responded to "Ondoy" in 2009, and contrasted sharply with the miserable response to "Yolanda" in 2013 under PNoy.

All that uninvited water from "Ompong" should remind us that the Philippines ought to be the last country in danger of a water shortage.

But this is precisely the danger we're facing now. Speaking at a recent session of the Arangkada Forum, former MWSS chairman Ramon Alikpala said that the lack of water supply and sanitation projects in the government's Build Build Build program makes the country's position on water security a cause of concern.

Foreign business chambers replied that we need to designate a Cabinet-rank "water czar" to immediately address the impending water crisis. Over the long term, however, the recommended solution was the passage of a new law to create an independent Water Regulatory Commission to govern water service provision nationwide.

A Philippine Water Summit is being planned for November. That ought to be a good time to launch long-postponed initiatives to capture and store all that seasonal typhoon rainwater especially for the populous Greater Manila regions; plan creative approaches to different types of water resources and service areas; and ensure that the entire sector is properly priced, planned, coordinated, and regulated.

At last Friday's Nanka media forum in Quezon City—which went ahead rain or shine—our guest was the disconcertingly young Karl Kendrick Chua, a former World Bank country specialist for the Philippines whose main job now as an undersecretary at the Finance Department is crafting Duterte's comprehensive tax reforms and shepherding them through Congress.

The first tax reform, TRAIN-1, went into effect last January and drew a lot of criticism for higher prices caused by the law's new or higher excise taxes. But Karl assured us that those taxes are only a small reason for inflation (the bigger ones are higher oil prices abroad, higher food costs and peso depreciation at home); the excise taxes will soon be offset by higher disposable incomes among wage-earners due

to lower personal income tax rates also under the new law; and in any case, the inflationary effect is only one-off.

The second package, TRAIN-2 renamed the "TRABAHO Bill" (Filipinos do love their acronyms), proposes to lower corporate income taxes (from 30 to 20 percent) as well as rationalize investor incentives. The foreign chambers, which include a lot of export zone locators, are already hollering, "Leave PEZA alone!" To which Karl's calm response is that nobody's incentives are being withdrawn. They are simply being reevaluated and will be reissued under an omnibus investment code, provided they meet the perfectly reasonable standards of transparency, locator performance measurement, sunset dates, and compliance with a broader strategic investment plan.

TRABAHO has already been approved by the Lower House—thanks in no small part to the tireless efforts of Speaker GMA, who thinks nothing

Public school teachers today in fact receive more compensation in salary, allowances and benefits compared to those in private schools, enough to prompt a reverse migration of faculty.

of calling meetings on Sundays—but will face rougher sailing among the inflated egos in the Senate, especially with campaign season around the corner for the reelectionists. We can only wish USec Karl good luck in those trenches.

Talking about inflated Senatorial egos...we came across the following online claims about the "true facts" in the case of Senator Trillanes:

His alleged Certificate of Amnesty was signed by former Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin, not by former President Aquino. Nor was the document authenticated.

What is on record is only a pro-forma Amnesty Application, with no "Received" copy and again not authenticated.

Records of the Makati RTC show that the Trillanes mutiny case was not dismissed but only suspended.

What's on record is a video clip of his general admission of guilt, not a written admission of specific guilt which also requires official date and signature.

Because of all the above, Trillanes' amnesty is claimed to be "void ab initio." This means he remains subject to a military court-martial, even as the suspended cases against him in civil-

ian courts can simply be revived.

I was asked to write something about the ongoing celebration of National Teachers' Month (NTM), which started last Sept. 5 and will culminate with National Teachers' Day on Oct. 5. This is something close to my heart, my mother having received a doctorate in education and taught all her life (at PCU and then UP).

Following a precedent set by UNESCO in 1993, the local month-long celebration of NTM started in 2008 upon the initiative of soon-to-be Education Secretary Bro. Armin Luistro together with Metrobank Foundation president Chito Sobrepeña. It aims to "engage the public in appreciating the contributions of Filipino teachers and the nobility of the teaching profession," under the leadership of a multi-sectoral NTM Council.

Since its inception, and with the support of R.A. 10743 and President Aquino's Proclamation 242, the NTM has managed to roll out a total of 532 initiatives just for the years 2012-2014; book significant tri-media mileage costing over P600-M from 2012-2015; reach over 720,000 Facebook followers in 2015 alone; and increase the number of participating organizations every year since 2008.

We've all heard stories about the unpaid teacher-volunteers who man the precincts every election, or about heroes and heroines in impoverished rural areas who regularly dig into their meagre salaries to pay for needed classroom supplies.

Fortunately, things have slowly been getting better. Public school teachers today in fact receive more compensation in salary, allowances and benefits compared to those in private schools, enough to prompt a reverse migration of faculty. And they may yet see their salaries double under Duterte—the same as what he delivered to soldiers and policemen—subject of course to vetting by DBM's Ben Diokno, whose thankless job is to be the grinch, the scrooge, the party-spoiler when everybody else just wants to party.

Unfortunately, mindless partying always ends you up the same place: buried in debt. Which is what happened to too many of our public school teachers, forcing the GSIS to intervene to refinance and consolidate—most likely at huge discounts—the debts they've incurred from salary loans and other sources, both formal and informal.

But refinancing can only be the first step. If GSIS wants to get its money back, it will have to reeducate our educators in the fundamentals of financial literacy. To my mind, this should include two essential learnings: numeracy, of course, and—just as important—values formation. We trust that Education Secretary Liling Briones, a former National Treasurer herself, will continue to do the right thing for her millions of charges.

AS
Readers can write me at gbolivar1952@yahoo.com.

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US overtures

AT first, the US did not seem to pay attention to the pronouncements of President Rodrigo Roa Duterte aka Digong to veer away from the hitherto "special relations" with the Philippines.

After all, some of his predecessors have uttered similar sentiments only to succumb to kowtowing to the US in no time soon after.

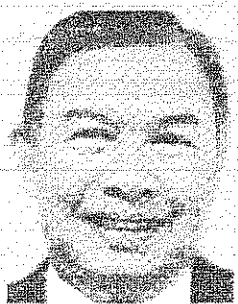
When Digong showed he is really serious about pursuing a foreign policy that is no longer dependent on the US, especially after cultivating closer and friendly relations with China and Russia, she finally realized something had to be done before further estrangement between us takes place.

Like a spurned lover, the US appears to be courting us since.

She started by offering to sell us military hardware which were denied us before but which Digong said we didn't need, like F-16 jet fighters. She did not mention anything about submarines and brand new helicopters, nor used ones which as I have said in this space before, have killed more of our pilots than enemies of the state on the ground.

US Ambassador Sung Kim must be at his wit's end trying to soften the impact of silly statements from visiting functionaries of the State and Defense departments and clumsy moves from Washington itself, like three Cabinet members writing to Digong offering to sell us our military requirements.

In my view, the letter should have been written by President Donald Trump to his counterpart, not only for propriety but also for impact. The letter should have also included an assurance



CROSSHAIRS
REY O. ARCILLA

Will Digong succumb to US overtures, or to be more precise, to any and all forms of pressures to tow the line, so to speak?

that the US Congress will not block any military sales to the Philippines. (Two senators successfully blocked an earlier sale of some 26,000 rifles to us when we needed them most during the terrorist siege of Marawi because of alleged violations of human rights in our campaign against illegal drugs.)

Lately, Kim had a "private" meeting with Digong after which he tweeted:

"Excellent meeting with President Duterte to discuss shared goals, including defense priorities and economic partnership. Our alliance remains strong and iron-clad."

On the other hand, Digong kept mum about what they talked about.

"I cannot discuss until I get his permission. It is a diplomatic tête-à-tête but nothing earthshaking, but more of confidentiality. I hate to break the rules," he said.

My wish is the two also discussed Digong's vow to rid our country

of foreign troops and to terminate the EDCA and VFA. Someone asked me why not include the 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty. Well, that, too, if the US wants. That treaty has no instant reallocation clause against an aggressor. Action of either party is subject to constitutional processes. As the late President Ferdinand Marcos once said, such constitutional process would likely mean a delay leading to the destruction of the Philippines before the process is completed.

I wish Digong also raised the return of the Balangiga bells and the forging of a reciprocal visa agreement.

The big question now, in my mind at least, is "will Digong succumb, too, to US overtures, or to be more precise, to any and all forms of pressures to tow the line, so to speak?"

THE CIA

Digong has been saying without

US OVERTURES

equivocation that among those who have been destabilizing his administration, aside from the Yellows, the elite/oligarchs, the communists and the drug lords, is the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

For a while, this allegation has been ignored by the US until Digong sent his Security Adviser Hermogenes Esperon, Jr. to the CIA headquarters in Langley, Virginia, to take up the matter.

Shortly thereafter, Amb. Kim gave assurance that the CIA has no plot to kill Digong.

"I can assure you with great confidence and conviction that there is actually no effort in the US government, including the CIA, to come up with some effort to undermine President Duterte's administration," he said.

"We have a very strong cooperation with all the security agencies and it will continue," he added.

The last statement, I must confess, leaves me with an uneasy feeling. The defense establishment and the police organization are, unfortunately, littered with pro-US elements for various reasons known only to them.

COMELEC

The Comelec, guardian of the sacrosanct right of the people to choose their leaders, has introduced enhancement measures that are supposed to ensure the integrity of the May 2019 mid-term elections. About time.

I'm sure, however, the commissioners of the poll body are aware that such measures would be for naught if and when some in their

See US OVERTURES > Page B5

ranks engage in shenanigans like offering candidates promise of sure election for a fee.

Needless to say, candidates should beware of such offers. Some may actually win and still be charged for services not rendered. Those who actually lose, naturally won't pay the fee. Both scenarios are based on the assumption that the arrangement will be "cash on delivery." Of course, it could also be the other way around.

REMINDERS

This segment is intended to remind the Duterte administration of some of its yet unfulfilled promises and matters that need attention and/or follow-up action. More importantly, the people are entitled to know what's being done about them.

1. Digong's promise to rid the country of foreign troops. This, of course, necessitates abrogating the lopsided and constitutionally infirm VFA and the EDCA.

2. Reciprocal visa arrangements with the US and other countries. (What is the DFA doing about this? Our embassy in Washington?)

3. The retrieval of the Balangiga bells. (NOTE: The US Embassy has confirmed that Defense Secretary James Mattis has notified the US Congress of the intention to return the bells to us. However, some people in the state of Wyoming where two of the bells are located, the third one being in a US military base in South Korea, have objected to returning the bells.)

4. The return of the Canadian waste. (Sources say the DOJ has filed a motion before the proper court for the importer to return the waste to Canada. No decision yet. No word about what Canada is doing either. The DFA should be following this up.)

Today is the 143rd day of the twelfth year of the enforced disappearance of Jonas Burgos, son of the late press icon and founder of this newspaper, Joe Burgos.

After the acquittal of Major Harry Baliaga, Jr., the only person formally charged with Jonas' kidnapping, I guess what happens next is now up to Divine Providence.

From an internet friend:

Three tourists were driving through Wales.

As they were approaching Llanfairpwllgwyngyll on the Welsh island of Anglesey, they started arguing about the pronunciation of the town's name.

"Llan-fair-poo-wee..." said the first.

"No, no, it's llan-fair-pi-well..." argued the second.

"I think we need to ask a local about this," the third sighed.

They argued back and forth until they stopped for lunch.

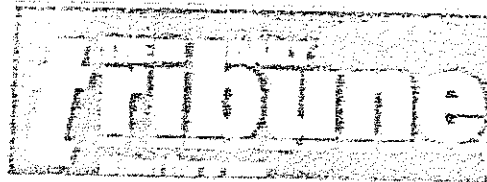
As they stood at the counter, the third asked the blonde employee:

"Before we order, could you please settle an argument for us? Would you please pronounce where we are... very slowly?"

"Sure!" said the girl behind the counter. She leaned toward them and said: "Burr-rrr-gerrrrr-Kinnnnng."

FB: <https://www.facebook.com/reynaldo.arcilla.9847>

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Enfant terrible

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The basic fear in Trillanes is facing his comrades in the military, primarily his co-graduates at the Philippine Military Academy who brooks no government position in disciplining their prestigious rank.

From a simple annoyance, the antics of Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV at the Senate have become unbearable as he is now acting like a spoiled brat who needed pampering from his peers making his arrest desirable to many.

His campout has become a yellow mob event and a stress test on the leadership of Senate President Vicente Sotto III as senators and staff of the chamber have indicated annoyance at the senator's daily propaganda racket.

Sotto earlier warned Trillanes and his yellow backers that the grounds of the august chamber is not Plaza Miranda where they can hold rallies to their heart's content.

Still, Trillanes holed up himself at the Senate for two weeks, a stay which he predicated on the court arrest order while he keeps on inventing reasons to prolong his stay.

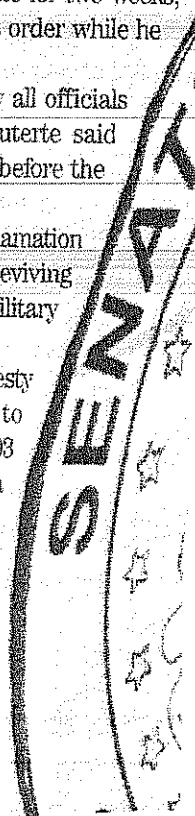
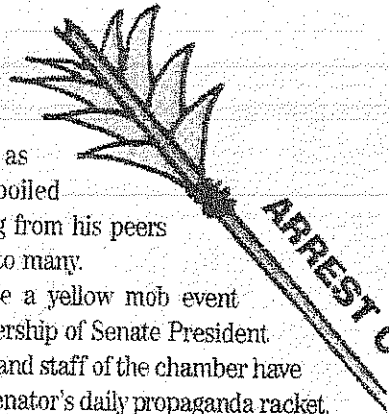
His excuses had turned absurd since nearly all officials who mattered aside from President Rody Duterte said nobody was interested in having him arrested before the court order.

The apprehension of Trillanes stems from Proclamation 572 that revoked his defective amnesty, thus reviving mutiny and *coup d'etat* charges against him in military and civilian courts.

The proclamation cited infirmities in the amnesty that former President Noyoy Aquino granted to Trillanes for his involvement in the 27 July 2003 short-lived Oakwood mutiny and the 2007 Manila Peninsula siege.

Hours after the issuance of the proclamation, police and military units cased the Senate premises apparently waiting orders or for the opportunity to arrest Trillanes.

Apparently, the senator is trying to elude military arrest and court martial where he will have to come face to face with members of the institution that was dishonored by his acts.



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While
holed up,
Trillanes
continued
attacking
Rody
through his
regular press
briefings
that are
always
well-attended
by media.

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana and officials at the Armed Forces of the Philippines assured him that the military will defer to the regular courts in issuing an arrest warrant on him.

Last 13 September, hours after vowing to leave the Senate on that Thursday night, the senator again changed his mind about leaving his sanctuary which was the second time that he backpedaled.

Trillanes' alibi was that motorcycle-riding men were tailing his vehicle.

When he presented the photograph of his supposed tormentors, at most two agents were identified, hardly enough to match up against the army that escorts the former rebel.

The basic fear in Trillanes is facing his comrades in the military, primarily his co-graduates at the Philippine Military Academy (PMA) who brook no government position in disciplining their prestigious rank.

An association of Mindanao-based graduates of the PMA recently put out an advertisement seeking Trillanes' removal from the Philippine Military Academy Alumni Association Inc. roster as a show of their disapproval of Trillanes' rebellious acts.

Among the grounds the group cited for seeking Trillanes' expulsion from the alumni records included "inciting to sedition, proposing to commit *coup d'etat* and graft; committing graft and corruption and his disrespect and arrogant behavior towards senior officers and the President."

Just last Monday, Trillanes cranked up his arrogance saying that his stay in the Senate is nobody's business.

He went to the extent of challenging the authority of his peers including Sotto saying the Senate "is not incurring any additional expenses for his stay at his office."

While holed up, Trillanes continued attacking Rody through his regular press briefings that are always well-attended by media.

The longer that Trillanes illegally occupies the Senate, the more it reflects on the ability of the Senate leadership which is becoming a victim of the senator's whims.

Sotto assured Trillanes will not be arrested inside the Senate building except if a warrant of arrest is issued against him.

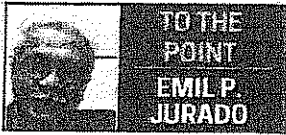
The court is expected to act soon enough to settle Sotto's dilemma.

It would be better for Trillanes to be co-authoring with detained Sen. Leila de Lima her daily dispatches from Camp Crame rather than holding daily media briefings at the expense of the Senate.

OFFICE

TODAY

How will Duterte solve our problems?



I TURNED 91 last Saturday, the same time Super Typhoon "Ompong" (Mangkhut) was battering Hong Kong and other parts of China. Was that a coincidence? I don't know.

I consider myself blessed for reaching this age. My mind is still very clear and my memory is as vivid as ever. I have a generally healthy body, except for the usual aches and pains, and I am still able to pound on my typewriter to write this column three times a week. Meanwhile, others my age are wheelchair-bound or bedridden.

I thank God every day for all the blessings I have. Indeed, the road never ends!

There were three events that stood out last week. First it was Super Typhoon Ompong that devastated northern Luzon. The damage could go up to the billions of pesos.

Second, President Duterte revoked the amnesty given by his predecessor to Senator Antonio Trillanes and 59 other Magdalo soldiers who were involved in stand-offs at the Oakwood and Peninsula Manila hotels during the Arroyo administration.

Trillanes has indeed become a thorn on the side of the President and his family, with his incessant attacks on them.

The third event was when President Duterte and his dummy, presidential legal counsel Salvador Panelo, had that zarzuela—they called it a tete-a-tete. This, when the people expected the President would address the nation on the many ills we were facing. Prices were soaring and the staple commodity, rice, was hard to come by.

During this conversation, President Duterte echoed the claim of Solicitor-General Jose Calida that President Aquino had not really signed Trillanes' amnesty proclamation and simply delegated it to Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin. Thus, it had no effect because only presidents could pardon on grant amnesty.

What happened was that with all Duterte's ranting against Trillanes, he made a martyr of the latter. The President should not have done this because

“ He faces many challenges on multiple fronts.”

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Trillanes was nothing of the sort. He does not deserve the attention.

Sadly, nobody among the opposition—not Trillanes, not Vice President Leni Robredo—enjoys that credibility to successfully provide an alternative to President Duterte.

The President also lost the opportunity to connect with the nation when he chose to devote much time to talk about an alleged attempt by the communists, the Liberal Party, his critics, and Trillanes.

President Duterte may sit comfortably with his very good trust ratings – for now. In the long run, however, the gut issues of inflation and rice will haunt him and undo everything he has done.

History tells us that small events become the tipping point that decides the fate of the republic.

I have been a journalist for almost seven decades and I have covered no less than 10 president. I can assure you—yes I have seen things happen.

Santa Banana, there is another problem from which President Duterte cannot escape. Super Typhoon Ompong devastated a large area and damaged lives and assets. This affected many Filipinos, rich and poor alike.


With so many rice farms and corn fields destroyed, the inflation rate is bound to surge further. And then, our economic managers have decided to import meat, fish and other commodities. It's a matter of supply and demand. When the supply of goods and services is outpaced by the flow of money, that's inflation. Politicians cannot blame greedy businessmen, foreigners, the tax reform laws and other factors.

This is why President Duterte should address the problem. Inflation is a gut issue. As more people grow hungry, so will the discontent.

When the late strongman Ferdinand Marcos proclaimed martial law in 1972, he was facing threats from the communists, the Mindanao secessionists, and civil society.

These days, President Duterte is facing more problems. I really don't know how he can solve all these.

I am not saying President Duterte should declare martial law or a revolutionary government. I am just saying that he is facing overwhelming challenges.


www.emiljurado.weebly.com

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6



Medium Rare

Julie Y. Daza

Trillanes thriller

WELL, it would have been thrilling but for the typhoon that took away the thunder of a spectacular arrest of a senator of the realm. Is it too late to comment on the case of Senator Antonio Trillanes IV, erstwhile LTSG, Philippine Navy?

Of course it is, now that we have weathered the storm – or have we? – of the senator's lightning outbursts, during which he called the President a drunk, paranoid, a lousy dresser so totally lacking in self-esteem (unlike military men who are trim, lean and mean in their neat, figure-hugging T-shirts). After Gringo Honasan, who was elected and reelected for his reputation as a "maverick" before it was changed to "cashiered," proved how voters enjoy the company of rebels as a counterbalance to the compliant horde, Senator Trillanes has shown more than a streak of the *contravida* in public performances, usually in the form of Senate hearings.

How did he ever end up in the military, for one so unable, so unwilling to obey his superiors, who are not only older but also wiser, and of higher rank? He humiliated a general and cabinet secretary to the extent that Angelo Reyes ended his own life rather than have his

honor dragged through the mud. He courted contempt not once but twice for disrespecting the rules cited by the chairman of the Blue Ribbon committee. He very nearly came to blows with a senator of his own age. In another flare-up, he leaned over another senator's table to turn off the latter's microphone.

Cute! That's what we say when a baby throws a tantrum. But in the case of this telegenic lawmaker, due process demands our patience as we wait for him to grow up. So far the courts have tried to tame the President's exasperation as due process allows him to 1) stay safe in his man-cave in the Senate building; 2) plan his next step while his lawyers invoke the line that absence of evidence is not evidence of absence; 3) extend his Andy Warhol 15 minutes of fame; 4) hope that his vision of a rub-out – his car blocked by other vehicles as their passengers jump out to abduct him, producing "silence and then I'm gone" – does not come to pass.

President Duterte's retort, "I'm not interested in arresting him," has muted the drama. Before the next four typhoons blow in, let the prosecution and defense go to court with clean hands and sober arguments.

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ONLINE NEWS

18 SEPTEMBER 2018

www.inquirer.net

Alleged NPA rebel killed in Davao clash

By: Erin Lim - erin@inquirerdotnet

Inquirer Mindanao / 06:26 PM September 17, 2018

DAVAO CITY — An alleged leader of the communist New People's Army (NPA) was killed in a firefight with government troops in a hinterland village here on Sunday, the military said Monday.

Viva Albert Abenua, alias Ivy, died following a 30-minute gunbattle with soldiers in Barangay Baracatan, Toril district, according to Capt. Jerry Lamosao, 10th Infantry Division public affairs officer.

Lamosao said soldiers of the Army's 3rd Infantry Battalion were on combat patrol when they clashed with a group of rebels at 10:45 a.m., leading to the death of Abenua, 37, a resident of Agusan del Sur and alleged commanding officer of the NPA's Pulang Bagani Company (PBC) 3.

No soldier was hurt in the incident, Lamosao said.

Aside from the slain rebel leader's body, soldiers also recovered at the site of encounter an M16 rifle, an AK-47 rifle, eight magazines loaded with bullets for the two rifles, four detonator switches, medical equipment, medicines, and various personal documents. /ee

www.inquirer.net

Palparan's conviction marks a bright spot in judicial process'

By: Cathrine Gonzales - Reporter / @cgonzalesINQ

INQUIRER.net / 06:00 PM September 17, 2018

Three senators on Monday lauded the conviction of retired General Jovito Palparan Jr. and two others for the kidnapping and serious illegal detention of two students of the University of the Philippines (UP) in 2006.

Senate Minority Leader Franklin Drilon said the decision of a Bulacan court sentencing them to reclusion perpetua or life sentence marked "a bright spot in an otherwise difficult judicial process," he told reporters in an interview.

For Senator JV Ejercito, their conviction meant a "victory" for UP students Sherlyn Cadapan and Karen Empeño who have been missing since 2006 after being kidnapped by Palparan and his accomplices.

"Dun sa mga nabiktima, it is a victory for them. Happy ako for those human rights victims (It is a victory for the victims. I am happy for those human rights victims)," he told reporters.

"Well siguro kung sakaling final na ang conviction, dapat fair, dapat pantay-pantay, dapat sa kulungan sa Bilibid [ikulong si Palparan] (Well maybe if the conviction is final, it should be fair, he should be jailed in Bilibid)," he said.

Senator Risa Hontiveros, meanwhile, viewed the court decision as a lesson and a warning for those who abuse human rights.

"Ang lahat ay may kabayaran. Magsilbi sana itong aral sa lahat ng sangkot sa sistematikong pamamaslang ng ating mamamayan, gumagahasa sa ating demokrasya at pilit tayo isinasailalim sa diktatura," she said in a statement.

(Everything has a price. May this serve a lesson to all those involved in a system of killing our citizens, raping our democracy and forcing us to be ruled under a dictatorship.)

www.inquirer.net

Palparan conviction to add zeal in fight vs state terrorism, says CPP

By: Delfin T. Mallari Jr. - @inquirerdotnet

Inquirer Southern Luzon / 05:43 PM September 17, 2018

LUCENA CITY – The conviction of former Army Major Gen. Jovito Palparan will further boost the people's struggle against alleged terrorism of government forces under the Duterte regime, the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) said Monday.

"With the conviction of Palparan, the Filipino people are further emboldened to demand an end to the reign of terror and mass murder of the fascist Duterte regime," the CPP said in a statement.

The CPP said Duterte's counter insurgency campaign dubbed "Oplan Kapayapaan" and martial law declaration in Mindanao "and grave violations of human rights clearly draw from Palparan's legacy of impunity and terror."

"Palparan's ilk, including zealots of the US-doctrine of counter-insurgency now occupy the top echelons of the Armed Forces of the Philippines," the rebel group said.

The CPP said the revolutionary forces join the people, human rights defenders and mass organizations in celebrating the conviction of Palparan, a known rabid nemesis of New People's Army rebels.

"It is a victory attained through relentless campaign for justice and retribution for all the fascist crimes perpetrated during the course of Palparan's reign of terror especially under Gloria Arroyo's Bantay Laya 1 and 2," the CPP said.

The CPP said his conviction will further strengthen the determination of other alleged victims of Palparan to demand justice for all his alleged crimes during his reign as the military's chief implementer of the state's bloody anti-insurgency campaign.

"Palparan's conviction amplifies the Filipino people's demand for Arroyo and her fascist cohorts to be indicted, imprisoned, prosecuted, and punished for the numerous crimes and rampant violations of human rights committed during their campaign of vicious suppression of democratic rights," the rebel party said.

On Monday, the former Army official was convicted by the Malolos Regional Trial Court for kidnapping and serious illegal detention over the enforced disappearance of UP student activists Sherlyn Cadapan and Karen Empeño in 2006. /kga