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**OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS**

## **NEWS CLIPPINGS**

**20 September 2018**

**Thursday**



*Honor. Patriotism. Duty*

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# Palace wants mayors missing in action fired

By CHRISTINA MENDEZ

The mayors who were "missing in action" when Typhoon Ompong ravaged their towns should be fired for apparent inaction, presidential spokesman Harry Roque Jr. said yesterday.

"It is but right to fire those who did not make themselves visible during the typhoon, because in weather conditions that are *caso fortuito*, we expect that our local governments will be on top of their constituencies," he said in Filipino.

Roque issued the statement after the Department of the Interior and Local Government ordered a probe on 10 "absentee" mayors at the height of the typhoon.

"They should not be the first ones to hide or go on vacation. The reason why they were elected is for them to provide leadership in times of need," he said.

The DILG is validating reports that at least 10 municipal mayors in Cagayan Valley and the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) were absent during the onslaught of Ompong (Mangkhut).

Interior Undersecretary for peace and order Bernardo Florece Jr. said local chief

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executives (LCEs) found liable for absenteeism and negligence of duty may be sanctioned with administrative cases.

Based on the DILG's Operation Listo protocols, LCEs whose local government units (LGUs) fall under the alpha (low-risk), bravo (medium-risk) and charlie (high-risk) areas during typhoons are mandated to undertake necessary critical preparedness actions as part of disaster preparations.

DILG spokesman Jonathan Malaya said the names of the municipal/city mayors could not be divulged at the moment as the department is still reviewing their performances vis-à-vis the Operation Listo protocols.

"The department doesn't want trial by publicity so the actual names of erring mayors will be released after the investigation is complete," he

said.

Mayors who will be proven negligent or remiss in doing their duty, especially as chairpersons of their respective local disaster risk reduction and management council, need to explain or justify in writing within the prescribed period why no disciplinary action shall be taken against them, Malaya said.

### 'Go hard on the mayors'

As this developed, senators yesterday urged the government to go hard on the mayors being probed.

In separate interviews, Senate Minority Leader Franklin Drilon and Sen. Panfilo Lacson said the 10 mayors were reportedly in Manila at the height of the weather disturbance.

"The mayors should be held to account. Why were they in Manila when their provinces

were battered? To me, that is gross neglect and they should be investigated," Drilon said.

Lacson said it appeared that the LCEs were negligent and insensitive since the weather agencies have been giving daily advisories on the approaching typhoon.

"Unless it's a life and death situation, for me it's (absence) not justified," he said.

The senator said he is leaving it up to the DILG to determine the sanctions it wants to impose on the mayors.

### No travel authority?

Meanwhile, the mayors and other local government officials under investigation will also face another investigation for leaving their posts without travel authority.

Cagayan Gov. Manuel Mamba said no mayor from his province applied for and secured travel authority from the Office of the Governor as provided by the Local Govern-

ment Code.

"When going out of your jurisdiction, local government officials should secure travel authority or file leave of absence, whether the trip is an official or private affair," he said.

Reports had it that a day before Ompong hit the province, Cagayan's vice governor, some mayors, vice mayors and provincial board members were being given a tour of Malacañang.

Under Section 96 (permission to leave station) of the Local Government Code, provincial, city, municipal and barangay appointive officials going on official travel shall apply and secure written permission from their respective LCEs before departure.

"The application shall specify the reasons for such travel, and the permission shall be given or withheld based on considerations of public interest, financial capability of the local government unit concerned and urgency of the

travel," the Code stated.

Mamba said he did not sign any travel authority for any of the local government officials.

"It's a mandate of the Local Government Code," he said, adding that he is now consulting the legal office for possible sanction to be taken against the mayors if evidence warrants.

"It is very important for the mayors to be in their locality during calamity. *Hahanapin ka ng constituents, media at iba pang* sectors during a calamity (Your constituents, the media and other sectors will look for you during a calamity)," he added.

What happened "is a very good learning experience for all of us," according to Mamba.

"As early as Sept. 8, when the storm was still over Guam, I forewarned the mayors because we could already see that there would be a strong typhoon," he said in Filipino.

He added that Cagayan lo-

cals were aware of the impact of a strong typhoon after their experience with super typhoon Lawin (Haima) in 2016 so that from then on, the people in the province have become afraid of the devastation caused by such a weather disturbance.

Mamba also pointed out that the mayors should have implemented preemptive evacuation of residents in areas that would be hit by Ompong.

He said he needs to take action against the mayors or he himself will be liable for negligence.

"Of course, I'll be negligent if I won't conduct the investigation. It's hard to gloss over misdeeds. Let's correct the wrongdoing so it won't happen again," he said.

Mamba said classes in Cagayan have resumed in all levels days after the typhoon battered the province, destroying 10,528 houses and damaging hundred others. — With Paolo Romero, Cecille Suerte Felipe, Emmanuel Tupas

# GOV'T AID TO COLLEGE STUDENTS CUT BY P3.2B

STORY BY JHESSET O. ENANO AND JOVIC YEE

Most of the 350,000 beneficiaries receiving state subsidy stand to lose their yearly stipend of P6,000 to P12,000 in 2019 as the budget for student financial assistance has been slashed to P1.7 billion from P4.9 billion.

FROM A1

By Jhesset O. Enano and Jovic Yee @Team\_Inquirer

Most of the more than 350,000 tertiary students receiving stipends from government are expected to lose the lifeline next year as the budget for the "Tulong Dunong" program has been drastically cut to P1.1 billion from P4.1 billion.

Tulong Dunong, a needs-based scholarship, is one of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED's) student financial assistance programs, the budget for which in 2019 has been slashed by the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) to P1.7 billion from this year's P4.9 billion.

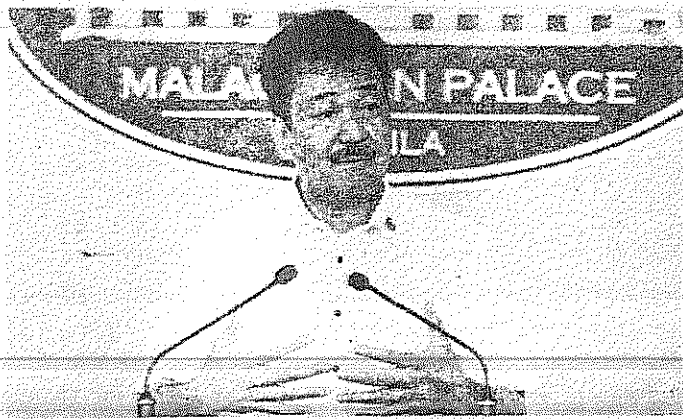
Scholars under Tulong Dunong, whether from public or private colleges or universities, receive stipends ranging from P6,000 to P12,000 yearly.

### Medical students

CHED officer in charge J. Prospero de Vera III said on Tuesday that the huge cuts in the student financial assistance programs would also adversely affect some 1,200 students taking medicine in eight state universities and colleges (SUCs).

De Vera said not a single peso had been approved by the DBM for these medical students for 2019.

No funding had been allocated for the program for med-



J. Prospero de Vera III

ical students for this year, but after deliberations in Congress, around P250 million was finally realigned for the scholarship program.

Rebel returnees studying at SUCs under the "Pavapa at Masaganang Pamayanan" program also stand to lose financial aid, after the DBM decided against setting aside a budget for it.

De Vera said that the CHED had raised the matter to Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process Jesus Dureza, whose office oversees the program.

### Expenses despite no tuition

"For Tulong Dunong, it is the belief that because tuition and miscellaneous fees are already free, there is no more need for it," he said at a press briefing.

He was referring to the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act, which allowed free education in SUCs.

But De Vera noted that de-

spite the free tuition law, continuing education costs remained a problem, particularly for students from poor families.

"What the CHED did when tuition was already free was to authorize that the Tulong Dunong funds be converted into stipends for book and transportation allowance, among others," he said.

### Limited TES slots

De Vera said the worst hit would be recipients from private universities.

"They will have no more assistance from the national government to offset their tuition costs," he said.

Those affected may opt to apply for the Tertiary Education Subsidy (TES) program, which offers a scholarship grant of P40,000 yearly.

Slots are limited, however, to around 300,000 scholars, and TES prioritizes students from poorer families and those enrolled in private schools in

areas that do not have existing state universities.

Despite the cuts, De Vera expressed optimism that hearings in Congress would still usher some changes in the funding for the financial aid to tertiary students.

"We have already brought this to the attention of the House of Representatives and they have promised to look into it and see what they can do," he said.

#### DepEd budget

In the Senate, lawmakers said they would work to restore at least half of the 2019 budget of the Department of Education (DepEd).

Sen. Bam Aquino, who on Wednesday led the hearing on DepEd's 2019 budget, noted that the agency should have enough funds to build at least 10,000 classrooms next year.

He said giving the DepEd anything less was "unwise" as this would mean that the government would have to triple efforts by 2020 just so there would be an adequate number of classrooms throughout the country.

For this year, DepEd's budget for its basic education facilities program stands at more than P105.5 million.

This includes the construction of 47,000 new classrooms and 5,913 technical-vocational laboratories.

For 2019, however, the DBM cut the program's funding by 67 percent, giving the DepEd only P34.7 million.

This means that next year the DepEd would have funds to

build only 4,110 new classrooms and 1,320 technical-vocational laboratories.

#### Counterintuitive

Sen. Risa Hontiveros said the cut was illogical and "counterintuitive," given that there was a need to continually build and rebuild classrooms.

DepEd data show that there are more than 757,000 classrooms nationwide. With a student growth rate of 1.7 percent, the department needs to have at least 10,000 new classrooms annually.

This is on top of the additional 40,000 classrooms that the DepEd also needs to build so that it could further reduce class sizes.

Currently, each classroom holds 33 elementary students or 36 junior high school students.

Since the proposed budget covers the construction of only a little more than 4,000 classrooms, Aquino said it was important for the budget to be restored to around 50 percent so that the bare minimum requirement of building 10,000 classrooms could be met.

Earlier, the DepEd said that despite the budget cut there would be no classroom shortage as 81,630 classrooms were expected to be turned over by December 2019.

Under the cash-based budgeting system that the government will implement next year, agencies are required to spend their budget within the fiscal year, with an extension of six months for payments. INQ

PENTAGON PRAISES 'ROBUST PARTNERSHIP'

LORENZANA, MATTIS DISCUSS PH-US ALLIANCE

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana met with his US counterpart, James Mattis, at the Pentagon to discuss the two countries' partnership.

The US Department of Defense released a video and a few photos of Lorenzana's visit on Tuesday (Wednesday in Manila).

"The two leaders highlighted the long-standing friendship and values between their countries," the US side said.

"The Philippines-US alliance remains robust, based on an enduring history of close engagement and our unwavering commitment to work together

on shared values," Lorenzana said during the meeting.

Quoting the late Filipino statesman Carlos P. Romulo, Mattis said the two countries' alliance brings "common love for liberty, shared allegiance to democracy and a battle-tested comradeship."

Defense procurement

The meeting came weeks after three US officials, including Mattis, supposedly wrote to President Duterte expressing support for the country's military's modernization program and to offer a partnership for

defense procurement.

The United States has expressed concerns about the Philippines' plans to buy military equipment from Russia.

Last week, Mr. Duterte met with US Ambassador Sung Kim in Malacañang, but he refused to discuss the meeting's details.

"I cannot discuss that until I get his [Kim's] permission ... There was nothing earth-shaking but more of confidentiality," the President said.

Kim said the meeting was mostly about defense priorities and economic partnerships. —FRANCES MANGOSING INQ



# Rody says he's afraid to die

President Duterte admitted that he is afraid of dying as he extolled a Medal of Valor awardee for bravery during a visit to Camp Melchor Upi in Gamu, Isabela last Tuesday.

Since Duterte couldn't join Gen. Bartolome Vicente Bacarro's birthday celebration yesterday, he directed his special assistant Christopher Go to give Bacarro a gift.

"I am giving him something beautiful... not a woman, but a beautiful present," the President instructed Go in Filipino.

"Sir, I hate to disappoint you. I want to have dinner with you but we are in the field. But if you'd allow me to invite you one of these days," Duterte told Bacarro.

The President then gave Bacarro a salute.

"I have faith in Valor awardees because I am, myself, a coward. I am afraid to die. I idolize everyone who is brave," Duterte said.

Duterte has declared that he wants to die a hero for the country - willing to take the bullet for the Filipino people - to emulate

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## Rody says From Page 1

Dr. Jose Rizal.

He has wished for a heroic death rather than dying of old age or disease.

Duterte saluted Bacarro after he was informed that it was the military official's birthday.

When Bacarro was a young lieutenant in 1991, he led the 6th Citizen Armed Force Geographical Unit (CAFGU) Active Auxiliary company of the 21st Infantry Battalion in

fighting 150 communist rebels in Isabela.

Despite being wounded, Bacarro scaled a wall surrounding a compound where his

CAFGUs were pinned down by enemy fire.

He commandeered a truck and rammed the wall, giving the CAFGUs an exit point, and had his wounded men evacuated, along with a wounded civilian.

His 50-man force suffered three casualties, the communist rebels, 16.

In 2016, Bacarro testified in the Senate and discredited the testimony of alleged Davao death squad member Edgar Matobato, who linked Duterte to extrajudicial killings when he was Davao City mayor.

Bacarro, commanding officer of the 502nd Infantry Brigade of the 5th Division, is a member of the Philippine Military Academy Class of 1988.

- Christina Mendez



# Palace: No pardon for Palparan

By ALEXIS ROMERO

Malacañang yesterday described as "baseless" fears that President Duterte would pardon and release retired Army general Lovito Palparan Jr. who was sentenced to life in prison for the

kidnapping and detention of missing University of the Philippines student activists Sherlyn Cadapan and Karen Empeño.

"The government sent Palparan to jail and the government would ensure that the victims

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## Palace: No From Page 1

would be given justice," presidential spokesman Harry Roque Jr. told radio station *dzRH* to allay such fears, especially of Erlinda Cadapan and Concepcion Empeño, the mothers of the two missing.

Dubbed by human rights groups as "The Butcher" for his alleged involvement in the crackdown on activists, Palparan was found guilty for

the kidnapping and serious illegal detention of Cadapan and Empeño. The two were abducted in Barangay San Miguel, Hagonoy, Bulacan on June 26, 2006 and have since been missing.

The Malolos Regional Trial Court (RTC) Branch 15 also ordered Palparan and his two co-accused soldiers to indemnify the families of the missing

students with P100,000 in civil damages and P200,000 as moral damages.

The elder Cadapan and Empeño welcomed the ruling but were worried that Duterte would pardon Palparan and release him from prison.

In an interview with *ABS-CBN News Channel*, Mrs. Empeño said Palparan is admired by former president and incumbent Speaker Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, an ally of Duterte. She expressed fear that Arroyo and Duterte might find a way to help Palparan escape accountability.

### Palparan transfer

Meanwhile, the two mothers are calling for the transfer of Palparan to the national penitentiary following his conviction.

In a statement, they, together with the advocate group *Hustisya*, slammed the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) for allowing Palparan to remain at the Army Custodial Center at Fort Bonifacio in Taguig City instead of enforcing his immediate transfer to the New Bilibid Prison (NBP) in Muntinlupa City, following his conviction on Monday.

Mrs. Empeño and Mrs. Cadapan recounted that after the decision was read before Palparan on Monday, his counsel asked if the former military general could remain at Fort Bonifacio as there were still pending cases against him, but Malolos RTC Branch 15 Judge Alexander Tamayo denied the plea, saying it would be against the Supreme Court guidelines that upon conviction, inmates should be transferred to national penal institutions such as the NBP.

"We were also informed that the judge has handed over the decision to Palparan's security from Fort Bonifacio. What commitment order is (the AFP personnel) looking for? What makes Palparan different from ordinary prisoners who were immediately transferred to the NBP upon conviction?" Mrs. Cadapan said.

"The delay of his transfer to the NBP reeks of special treatment. He has been proven guilty, and as long as he remains in an army camp, that is impunity," she added.

"They have wronged us since the day they took our daughters and made them disappear without a trace. We are calling on all those who supported us in this fight for justice to join the call to jail Palparan at the NBP," Mrs. Empeño said.

Evangelina Hernandez, chair of *Hustisya*, said the AFP "is making a fool out of the victims and even the courts" by saying it is still waiting for a commitment order from the Malolos RTC before enforcing

Palparan's transfer of detention.

"The court decision is the order itself. The military is putting themselves above the law again," Hernandez said.

*Hustisya*, together with the group *Desaparecidos*, or Families of the Disappeared for Justice, will hold protest actions this week to demand Palparan's transfer to the NBP, according to Hernandez.

"The AFP is obviously making excuses whatever they can to keep their beloved general, a criminal and human rights violator, in their turf. The court decision is the commitment order itself," Hernandez said.

"Palparan should be brought to the NBP the soonest. He has enjoyed years of special treatment at Fort Bonifacio, it's time that justice be served at the fullest by treating him like a common criminal," she added.

### 'Ball in hands of NBP'

Until such time that the Philippine Army is furnished with an official copy of the commitment order by the Bulacan court, Palparan will remain under its protective custody, according to a military official.

"We were not furnished with the commitment order by the NBP, so the ball now is in the hands of NBP authorities on what to do with General Palparan," Army spokesman Lt. Col. Louie Villanueva said.

The commitment order, according to Villanueva, should be transmitted by the court's sheriff or through registered mail. Until such time that the court order is received, Palparan will have to remain at the custodial center.

Villanueva gave assurance that as soon as the Army receives the commitment order for Palparan, he will be immediately moved to the NBP.

Bureau of Corrections chief Ronald dela Rosa, upon learning that Palparan had been convicted, had waited for the former Army general at the NBP's Reception and Diagnostic Center (RDC).

"I am now waiting for him here at the RDC," Dela Rosa said in a radio interview last Monday.

As a matter of procedure, convicted prisoners ordered committed to the NBP have to initially spend around two months at the RDC to undergo medical check-up and orientation on life inside the country's main prison facility.

Dela Rosa also said that Palparan, following his stay at the RDC, is likely to be incarcerated at the maximum security compound. — With Elizabeth Marcelo, Jaime Laude

# NO DUTERTE PLAN TO PARDON PALPARAN, SAYS MALACAÑANG

By the Inquirer Staff  
@Team\_Inquirer

Malacañang on Wednesday squelched speculation that President Duterte would pardon retired Army Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan Jr. as human rights groups accused the Armed Forces of the Philippines of coddling the former general who was convicted earlier this week for the abduction and disappearance of two University of the Philippines students.

"There is no basis for that," presidential spokesperson Harry Roque said in a radio interview regarding a possible presidential pardon for Palparan.

Palparan, dubbed "The Butcher" by militant groups, was sentenced, along with former Lt. Col. Felipe Anotado and S/Sgt.



Jovito Palparan Jr.

Edgardo Osorio, to life imprisonment for the kidnapping and illegal detention of Karen Empeño and Sherlyn Cadapan in 2006.

"It's the government that jailed Palparan and it will be the government that will ensure that justice will be given to the victims," Roque said.

Empeño and Cadapan were

seized in June 2006 by armed men in Hagonoy, Bulacan province.

The two UP students were last seen being tortured in a military camp.

### Mockery of the law

In a statement, rights group Hustisya said the AFP was making a mockery of the law by refusing to immediately commit Palparan to the New Bilibid Prison (NBP) after his conviction.

"The AFP is making a fool out of the victims and even the courts by saying they're still waiting for a commitment order. The court decision is the order itself," said Evangeline Hernandez, chair of Hustisya, an organization of victims and relatives of victims of human rights violations.

Hustisya said Palparan was

still being held at the Army custodial center in Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City, three days after his conviction.

The group said the military was "making all kinds of excuses" in trying to keep Palparan in its custody.

According to Hustisya, Palparan's counsel asked that he be allowed to remain in Fort Bonifacio to attend to other pending cases against him, which the judge denied on grounds that doing so would violate Supreme Court guidelines to immediately transfer a convict to a national penitentiary.

### Special treatment

"Palparan should be brought to NBP the soonest. He has enjoyed years of special treatment in Fort Bonifacio, it's time that

justice be served [to] the felicitous by treating him like a common criminal," Hernandez said.

Erlinda Cadapan, Sherlyn's mother, said the AFP was perpetrating "impunity" by keeping Palparan.

"The delay of his transfer at the NBP reeks of special treatment. He has been proven guilty, and as long as he remains in an Army camp, that is impunity," she said.

### Warning of same fate

One of the President's arch-critics, jailed Sen. Leila de Lima, warned Mr. Duterte and his associates that they could meet the same fate as Palparan for their alleged human rights violations.

"No matter how brave you are now and how much you disrespect the human rights of Fil-

ipinos—including their right to life and freedom—you will be judged and made to answer for your wrongs," said De Lima, who is facing what she describes as trumped-up drug charges.

She said the conviction of Palparan should open the eyes of people in power and their minions who act as if they were the law.

"Remember that all those who commit wrong will be held to account at the proper time," said De Lima, who was the justice secretary when the case was filed against Palparan.

The verdict, she said, was "a welcome respite in our long and tedious struggle against impunity in this country." —REPORTS FROM CHRISTINE O. AVENDAÑO, LEILA B. SALAVERRIA AND MELVINGASCON INQ

# 'No pardon for Palparan'

BY CATHERINE VALENTE AND DEMPSEY REYES

**P**RESIDENT Rodrigo Duterte will not grant pardon to retired major general Jovito Palparan Jr. who was convicted of kidnapping and illegal detention, Malacañang assured the public on Wednesday.

Palace spokesman Harry Roque Jr. allayed fears that Palparan, who was meted life imprisonment on Monday for the disappearance of Snerlyn Cadapan and Karen Empeño in 2006, would be granted presidential pardon.

*"Ang nagpakulong po kay Palparan ay gobyerno at ang gobyerno rin ang magsisiguro na mabigyan ng katarungan iyong mga biktima (The government went after Palparan and the government will ensure that the victims will be*

given justice)." Roque said in an interview with dzRH radio.

The two students were abducted by Palparan's men during the height of then President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo's anti-communist insurgency drive "Oplan Bantay Laya."

Empeño's mother, Concepcion, earlier voiced her fear that Palparan might be pardoned especially now that Arroyo is the speaker of the House of Representatives.

Palparan was found guilty on Monday by Malolos Regional Trial Court Judge Alexander Tamayo for

the abduction of Cadapan and Empeño. He was sentenced to life imprisonment and committed to the National Bilibid Prison.

However, the retired major general will remain in the custody of the Philippine Army until the Malolos court issues an order for his transfer to the NBP, Lt. Col. Louie Villanueva, Army spokesman, said.

"We are still waiting for the order from the court regarding General Palparan's transfer. As of now, he will be retained here at our custody pending the order from the Malolos court," Villanueva said.

## Roque: No presidential pardon for Palparan

MALACANANG spokesman Harry Roque Jr. yesterday said there was no basis for fears that convicted retired Gen. Jovito Palparan will get a presidential pardon.

Roque, in a radio interview, assured the families of Sherlyn Cadapan and Karen Empeño of the government's commit-

ment to serve justice to the victims.

"Wala pong basehan iyan. Ang nagpakulong po kay Palparan ay gobyerno at ang gobyerno rin ang magsisiguro na mabigyan ng katarungan iyong mga biktima. (That has no basis. The government jailed Palparan and the government would also ensure that justice will be

served to the victims)," Roque said.

The Malolos Regional Trial Court Branch 15 on Monday convicted Palparan, Lt. Col. Felipe Anotado and S/Sgt. Edgardo Osorio for kidnapping and serious illegal detention charges and sentenced them to life imprisonment.

A day after the conviction of Palparan,

the mothers of the two victims - Erlinda Cadapan and Concepcion Empeño, expressed fears that Palparan might be pardoned by President Duterte, bringing to naught the 12 long years that they waited for justice to be served.

They noted the President has been repeatedly saying he would pardon military

and police personnel who are jailed for doing their jobs.

Cadapan and Empeño went missing in 2006 while in immersion work in Bulacan. It was believed that the two students were abducted by Palparan and his men and have been kept as hostages by the military. B3

## No pardon plan for Palparan

By Elmer N. Manuel  
and Kristina Maralit

President Rodrigo Duterte has no plan to pardon former Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan Jr. who was convicted for the abduction of two University of the Philippines (UP) students who remain missing until now,

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### Baseless fear

"There's no basis for their fears. It was the government that pressed charges against Palparan and it is the government that will make sure the victims will be served justice," he added.

Sherlyn and Karen were tagged as rebels, abducted and then reportedly tortured by Palparan, who was the commanding officer of the 7th Infantry Division in Central Luzon and his men 12 years ago at the height of former President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's anti-insurgency campaign "Oplan Bantay Laya."

There have been no traces of the two since.

Malolos Regional Trial

in her State of the Nation Address in 2006, a month after the students went missing, Arroyo lauded Palparan for leading the fight against communists, saying the general will "not back down until the regions under the terror of darkness see the dawn

of light."

Their lawyer, Josa Deinla, said granting pardon is well within the powers of President Duterte. But their camp hopes that the President will not use it to free Palparan who has been labeled by activists as "The Butcher."

### From page 1

the Palace said yesterday.

The Palace gave the assurance to the mothers of missing students Sherlyn Cadapan and Karen Empeño who expressed fears about the possibility of a presidential pardon for Palparan.

**Mothers of the two UP students remain in the dark about the whereabouts of their daughters.**

Erlinda Cadapan and Concepcion Empeño, mothers of the two UP students, remain in the dark about the whereabouts of their daughters and expressed fears that Palparan, who was dubbed "The Butcher" by human rights advocates, will be set free after he and two others were sentenced to life imprisonment.

"The government jailed Palparan and the government would also ensure that justice will be served to the victims," Roque said on radio.

Court Branch 15 Judge Alexander Tamayo on Monday sentenced Palparan, Lt. Col. Felipe Anotado and S/Sgt. Edgardo Oserio to life in prison and ordered their immediate transfer to the New Bilibid Prison from their detention

cell at Fort Bonifacio.

### GMA factor

Empeño's mother, Concepcion, said she fears a possible pardon for Palparan, especially now that incumbent Speaker Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, who she said

"idolized" her general, has risen to power once again.

"I fear that it might happen. He was found guilty, but Gloria is back and she and our President might find a way to exonerate him," Empeño said in an earlier interview.

## Police official on deadly misencounter: Never again

By **NESTOR L. ABREMATEA**  
and **MARIE TONETTE GRACE MARTICIO**

**TACLOBAN CITY** - The new head of the Philippine National Police Regional Maneuver Company's 805th Regional Mobile Force Battalion (RMFB) has vowed there will be no repeat of the "misencounter" in Samar that claimed the lives of six police officers and the wounding of nine others.

Sr. Insp. Winrich Laya Lim said the tragic incident last June 25 in Sta. Rita town will never happen again now that the Philippine Army has intensified its coordination with police stations.

Lim said that as a consequence of the misencounter the entire Sta. Rita police force led by Chief Inspector Don Archie Suspeña was relieved.

Police Officers Phil Rey Mendigo, Edwin P. Ebrado, Wyndell S. Noronho, Rowel Reyes, Julie Y. Escalo, and Julius H. Suarez were killed when their group was fired upon by armed men who turned out to be troopers from the Army's 87th Infantry Battalion.

Wounded in the incident were Officers Romulo Cordero, Elmer F. Pan, Chris Angelo A. Pialago, Jaime G. Galoy, Rey C. Barbosa, Jonel C. Gonzaga, Rommel Bagunas, Janmark K. Adones, and Roden T. Goden.

Also on Wednesday, the military said the families of the slain cops received ₱60,000 as assistance from the Army's 8th Infantry Division (ID).

During a joint military-police dialogue in Palo, the 8th ID commander Major Gen. Raul Farnacio, said the wounded policemen received from ₱10,000 to ₱25,000 as assistance.

"We deemed it necessary na pulungin yung families kasama yung ibang mga ahensiya para maicommit natin yung mga dapat ideliver para sa kanila," Farnacio said.

The aid is part of the comprehensive assistance program from various agencies and foundations, which include financial assistance, livelihood, scholarships and housing for the families of slain policemen.



### Loose firearms surrendered

BALCH, Lanao del Norte - Local residents turned over at least 30 short and long firearms to the military, Tuesday, in the latest round of surrender of loose firearms in the municipalities of Linamon, Matungao, Pantao-Ragat and Poona Piagapo in this province. The turnover of the weapons, among them Browning automatic and Garand rifles, Ingram machine pistols and Magnum-37 guns, was held at the Fourth Mechanized Infantry Battalion headquarters in Nangka, Balo-i here. (Bonita L. Ermac) *q*

## PH should be prepared to handle illegal

### Pinoys deported by Malaysia

By **NONOY E. LACSON**

**ZAMBONGA CITY** - Zamboanga City 1st district Rep Celso Lobregat called on the different line agencies of government to strengthen their policies in handling thousands of undocumented Filipinos who are starting to arrive in this city after Malaysian government tightened the deportation of illegal migrants in Sabah and Sandakan.

Lobregat said that the agencies concerned, like the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Bureau of Immigration (BI), Over-

seas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA), Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), together with the government forces from Western Mindanao Command (WESMINCOM), Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) and the Philippine National Police (PNP), should be able to come up with policies that will stabilize existing procedures in processing, documentation and profiling of those deportees when they arrive in Zamboanga City after being deported from Malaysia.

"Instead of dropping those deportees off directly at the places of origin,

mostly in Jolo, Sulu and Bongao, Tawi-Tawi, they are being processed here in Zamboanga City, so we must be careful in dealing with them especially in profiling them, because we never know their identities, and perhaps, their immediate families," Lobregat said.

He added that "since Zamboanga City has been hosting the processing of thousands of deportees in the past, and because the DSWD Processing Center is also here, we cannot do otherwise rather than to accommodate all of them before they will be sent back to their original hometown for

disposition."

Lobregat said that ample preparation of contingency measures in the upcoming mass deportation in Malaysia should already be prepared in order to prevent last minute dilemma which causes inconvenience to Zamboanga City and to the agencies concern as well.

Earlier Philippine Ambassador to Kuala Lumpur Charles Jose urged the estimated 400,000 undocumented Filipinos in Malaysia to avail of the voluntary deportation program of that host country before it ends on September 30.

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## Governor to review illegal mining ops in Agusan del Sur

BUTUAN CITY - Governor Adolph Edward G. Plaza is determined to review and stop the reported illegal mining operations in this province, particularly in the municipality of Bunawan.

"I will personally look into this one and I will ask concerned agencies of the government and the military and police to help me in putting an end to the illegal mining activities," stressed the provincial chief executive at the sidelines of the "Federalism in Focus" Forum at the Inland Resort, Hotel and Convention Center here on Monday.

Plaza said his concerns over illegal mining grew after he saw what happened in some parts of Luzon when typhoon Ormpong struck last week.

"I don't want this to happen in my province due to illegal mining operations. Illegal mining must be stopped to avert any untoward incident," Plaza pointed out.

He said he also expects to hold dialogues with the legitimate mining companies in his province so that he could get information on how to eradicate illegal mining operation.

Last July 30, Plaza and Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) Regional Director Engr. Roger A. De Dios jointly issued a ceased and desist order to all small-scale mining operations in the municipality of Bunawan, Agusan del Sur province. (Mike U. Crismundo)

# Church backs rallies vs another 'dictator'

AN archdiocese in Iloilo province in central Philippines and major Catholic Church organizations have called on the faithful and Catholic institutions to join simultaneous rallies against 'dictatorship' in the country on September 23 to condemn the 'rise of another dictator.'

The Church organizations on Wednesday said they hoped that the protest rallies might awaken their desire to 'fight for human rights [and] stand firm against the continued damaging effects of Martial Law in 1972 to

Dictator/A2



## CDO activates militias over bomb threats

**CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY:** Police Chief Supt. Timoteo Padeb, the regional police director based in Camp Alagar here, has ordered the activation of village militias to serve as force multipliers in the wake of recent bombings in Cotabato.

In the neighboring city of Iligan, 88 kilometers west of the Cagayan de Oro, the local government has also activated and armed 120 special civilian auxiliary forces to work closely with the local police and the military under the supervision of the 51st Brigade.

Iligan City Mayor Celso Regencia said the curfew would stay until October 7.

In a statement released to the local media, the police regional command appealed to the public to be on the lookout for suspected persons and baggage left in any part of the city.

Militiamen operate in coordination with the local police in gathering information on and reporting to the police suspicious persons in their villages.

On Tuesday, the Cagayan de Oro City Police Office (COCPPO), also in a statement, called on residents for sobriety amid reports of bombing threats to the city.

Police Supt. Mardy Hortillosa 2nd, the local police spokesman, said the "bombing scare" that hit this trading hub of Northern Mindanao could be the handiwork of "pranksters."

Notwithstanding, the intelligence community has scrambled to identify the sources of the information.

Hortillosa said it was "business as usual" in Cagayan de Oro, except for heavy traffic caused by police checkpoints in strategic areas.

"We want to ask the public for understanding for the inconvenience that the police checkpoints might have caused. After all, we want to make the city and the people safe at all times," he added.

CRIS DIAZ

# Malasakit outlets to sell cheap vegetables

AMID high prices of basic commodities in the retail market, the Department of Agriculture (DA) on Wednesday announced that it would put up food outlets in Manila that would offer low-priced

vegetables shipped from southern Mindanao. Agriculture Secretary Emmanuel Piñol, in his Facebook post, said the DA would open TienDA "Malasakit Food Outlets" beginning Friday, September 21, to sell vegetables at half the prevailing prices in Metro Manila markets now, as a measure to fight profiteers who have increased their prices two-fold over shortage speculation. Starting Friday, these vegetables, including dressed chicken, rice and fish, will be sold at very low prices in the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) Compound in San Andres, Manila," Piñol said in the post dated September 19. "The DA TienDA Malasakit Food Outlets will be open every Friday and Saturday thereafter until prices in the market are stabilized," he added. On Thursday, the first plane-load of fresh vegetables from Mindanao will arrive in Metro Manila. The shipment includes high value crops including carrots, cabbage, potatoes, broccoli, cauliflower, tomatoes, pepper and others. The Agriculture chief said the DA has engaged the Department of National Defense (DND), which has C-130 cargo transport aircraft, and a private company that owns two B-727 cargo planes, to airlift vegetables, fish and fruits from Mindanao to supply the markets of Metro Manila. Starting next week, at least

## CHEAP FROM A1

# Malasakit outlets to sell cheap

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Starting next week, at least

six refrigerated containers of vegetables from Mindanao would be shipped to Metro Manila every week to beef up supplies and bring down prices, he added.

Data from Philippine Statistics Authority showed that as of the first week of September, vegetables sold at markets in Metro Manila were priced as follows: *sitao* (string beans) at P120 per kilogram, cabbage at P200/kg, carrots at P130/kg, tomato at P120/kg, onion red at P120/kg, pechay at P100/kg, white potato at P80/kg and eggplant at P100/kg.

Just recently, consumers got alarmed over the price hike of red chili peppers or *siling labuyo* from around P150/kg in February to about P1,000/kg in previous weeks.

Piñol said the DA was also looking at expanding the scope of its "Malasakit Food Outlets" through establishing outlets in other areas in Metro Manila and every barangay (village) in coordination with the local government units.

Meanwhile, National Food Authority (NFA) rice will soon be available in select supermarkets around the country as a result of the signing of an agree-

ment between NFA, Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and Philippine Amalgamated Supermarkets Association (Pagasa).

Trade Secretary Ramon Lopez said the agreement would help consumers have better access to NFA rice.

"NFA rice is very much in demand. These supermarkets are in our neighborhood so they are really accessible. This is our way of providing more access to our consumers," he added.

Consumers will be allowed to purchase a maximum of four kilograms of NFA rice at P27 per kilogram for the regular milled variety P32 per kilogram for well-milled.

Pagasa President Steven Cua said their group, which caters to the class B, C, D, E market, currently has 40 plus members with more than 160 stores.

"We have members as far as Baybay, Southern Leyte, Negros Occidental, Butuan, Biliran and other far-flung areas. So this [agreement] will make sure that NFA rice will reach these areas," he added.

Cua, however, said he could not guarantee that their 160 branches would all sell NFA rice.

**EIREENE JAIREE GOMEZ AND ANNA LEAH E. GONZALES**

# Lanao board exec, wife, three others face drug charges

By Lance Baconguis

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—The Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency said Wednesday it had caught what it described as the biggest narco-politician here to date and three other incumbent officials.

PDEA Region 10 and ARMM arrested Hussien Magandia, a Provincial Board member of Lanao del Sur, his wife Norhainah Magandia, son-in-law Amienquialed Dimal, an incumbent councilor of Marawi city and Aktar Magandia, former chairman of Maguing Proper village in Maguing Lanao del Sur.

PDEA ARMM regional director Juvenal Azurin said they had conducted an almost year-long surveillance of the family.

PDEA, the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National police, armed with a search warrant issued by judge Alandrex Betova, executive judge of RTC branch 16, raided their house on White Flower Street, Sitio Bacayo in Tubod, Iligan City, on Sept. 19, 2018 and found one plastic sachet containing suspected shabu weighing 500 grams worth P3.4 million, a cal. 357 revolver, drug materials and financial and bank documents.

Azurin said Norhainah Magandia was also a first cousin of drug queen Lovely Adams Impal who was arrested in January 2017 by PDEA agents.

He said they were now extracting information from the suspects and the notebooks they confiscated to determine the extent of their illegal drug operations.

"They are the biggest narco-politicians that we arrested this year," Azurin said.

He said the family did not appear in President Rodrigo Duterte's "matrix" of politicians involved in illegal drug operations.



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# 'Consignee for hire' in P6.8B smuggled shabu cited in contempt

BY JOHN DAHO

A "CONSIGNEE FOR HIRE" was cited in contempt and ordered to pay costs, Richard Gordon yesterday told parliament. The Senate blue ribbon committee announced the alleged smuggling of P6.8 billion worth of shabu that shipped past the Bureau of Customs last year.

Gordon, a senator from Manila, cited Maritana del Cruz Signapan, a Manila-based importer, as the person who she refused to give names of other personalities involved in the smuggling attempt.

Senators also cited company SMYD Trading as well as the consignee of the shipment that contained 100 metal containers found empty in a warehouse in Manila, and which the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) suspected contained an approximate quantity of shabu worth P6.8 billion.

"After several days of contemptuous attitude

and defiance in understanding the charges, I believe that she has already lied on me and on the committee. The claim here is I was not the consignee of the shabu," Gordon said in a statement. He also mentioned that he had already contacted the committee to provide a list of names.

Signapan, a former Manila-based import and export investigation Service officer who was arrested in Singapore and placed under custody in Manila, is also allegedly training in the country. It was believed that she had been in the country for some time.

The questioning of Gordon, Signapan and other personalities began from supposed call by Maritana del Cruz and company to PDEA to provide a list of names of consignees of the shipment.

NEWSMAGAZINE PHOTOS

## CONSIGNEE

show that she was the consignee on record of the shipment.

Maritana had earlier claimed he was asked by Guban to talk with Signapan about the set-up. He also testified before the committee that it was Guban who introduced her to Signapan.

Pressed to tell the truth, Signapan insisted she was telling the truth and at one point, even tried to evade answering by invoking her right against self-incrimination.

Gordon threatened she could be charged with perjury and could face criminal charges for smuggling illegal drugs into the country. Signapan stood her ground and insisted she only dealt with Maritana.

Guban, when grilled why he chose SMYD Trading as the "consignee"

for the shipment, claimed he was ordered by his superior, whom he identified as one "Col. Acierito," to choose Signapan's trading firm as the consignee for hire.

The "Col. Acierito" named by Guban turned out to be former Senior Supt. Eduardo Acierito, who has been ordered relieved from service by the Office of the Ombudsman for grave misconduct over his role in the anomalous issuance of AK-47 rifles firearms licenses from August 2011 to April 2015.

Acierito, along with other police officials, were indicted for issuing firearms licenses to one Isidro Lazada for 1,400 units of AK-47 that were later on found in the possession of the CPP-NPA.

Gordon was told that Acierito was dismissed from the PNP on

August 14, 2016, a few days after a shipment containing two magnetic lifters with an approximate 355 kilos of shabu worth P2.4 billion was seized by the BOC and the PDEA at the Manila International Container Port.

Gordon issued a subpoena against Acierito, and directed Customs Commissioner Isidro Lapeña to coordinate with the PNP to locate the whereabouts of the former police official.

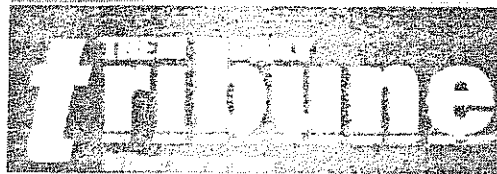
Also during yesterday's hearing, PDEA Director General Aaron Aquino said the government had sought the help of Hong Kong in hunting down a certain KC Chan, believed to be behind the smuggling of the P2.4 billion worth of shabu seized by joint operatives of the BOC and PDEA last August 6.

Aquino said the PDEA is having difficulty in getting more information about Chan, a Hong Kong national, because he has many aliases, among them Chao Yue Wah, Albert Chan and Tony Chan.

Gordon said he will coordinate with the Department of Foreign Affairs to speed up the cooperation between the PDEA and its Hong Kong counterpart.

Chan is the reported liaison behind the 355-kilo shabu shipment that authorities found in the MICE. He was said to have paid the owners of the Vecaba Trading International to be the shipment's consignee on record.

The consignee, Vecaba Trading International, said Chan only used the company's name and that they did not know that the shipment contained drugs.



# EO puts back NFA under DA

The order also reorganizes the NFA Council, placing Piñol as chairman

**By Kristina Maralit and Kuhlin Gacala**

On the heels of problems involving the state grains agency, President Rodrigo Duterte signed an Executive Order (EO) returning the control of the National Food Authority (NFA) to the Department of Agriculture (DA).

EO 62 also placed under the DA the Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA) and the Fertilizer and Pesticides Authority.

The order also reorganizes the NFA Council, placing Piñol as chairman with the NFA administrator, presumably retiring Philippine Army commander Rolando Bautista, as vice chairman.

NFA is currently on the spotlight due to criticisms against it over skyrocketing prices of commercial rice and the dwindling supply of rice sold at subsidized prices.

"Back to mother agency!" Agriculture Secretary Emmanuel "Manny" Piñol posted on his social media page.

The aforementioned agencies, along with the National Irrigation Administration, were separated from the DA by former President Benigno Aquino and placed

*Turn to page 2*

# EO puts back NFA under DA

**NFA Administrator, presumably retiring Philippine Army commander Rolando Bautista will become vice chairman**

**From page 1**

under the supervision of the Office of the President in May 2014.

**Council restructured**  
Other members of the council include Finance Secretary Carlos

Dominguez III, Trade and Industry Secretary Ramon Lopez, National Economic and Development Authority Director General Ernesto Pernia, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Nestor Espenilla Jr., LandBank president and CEO Alex Buenaventura and a representative from the farming sector to be appointed by Mr. Duterte.

Once the transfer of the three agencies is formalized, the DA's budget will more than triple, excluding the P15 billion that the PCA expects to get from the proceeds of the P105-billion coco levy fund.

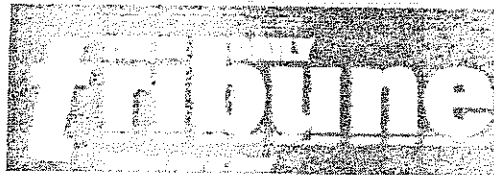
Subsidized rice will also soon

be available at supermarkets as part of the government's measure to lower its prices.

Consumers may buy up to two bags or four kilograms of NFA rice in participating supermarkets at the government ceiling of P27 per kilogram.

Lopez said this initiative targets to improve consumer access to affordable rice and ease the long queues at NFA rice outlets in wet markets.

"We asked the supermarket association to be outlets of NFA rice so we have additional access to affordable rice. They will pick up from NFA warehouses," Lopez said.



## Missing fisherman found with help from Singapore

The Department of National Defense (DND) recently sent its gratitude to the Republic of Singapore Navy after it helped the Philippine Navy locate a fisherman who was reported missing last week in the West Philippine Sea.

Freddy Apat was reported missing on 14 September when he didn't return to his mother boat *FB Michele* after he boarded his small boat to fish in the vicinity of Rizal Reef.

The boat captain requested

for assistance to conduct search and rescue operations in the area.

The government then sought the assistance of the Information Fusion Center (IFC), a regional maritime security center managed by Singapore, to send out notices to all nearby vessels about the incident.

These efforts were not wasted as Apat was rescued by fishing boat *FB Glenmar B* who saw him waving from his boat 34 nautical miles off Cape Melville on Monday morning.

KMB

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## 'WINNING THE WAR'

# DU30 SEES END OF COMMUNIST INSURGENCY NEXT YEAR

By Julie M. Aurelio  
and Jeannette I. Andrade  
@Team\_Inquirer

President Duterte on Tuesday night predicted that the communist rebellion would end by the middle of next year, a forecast immediately dismissed by the insurgents.

In a visit to the Army's 5th Infantry Division at Camp Melchor de la Cruz in Gamu, Isabela, the President said the government was "finally winning the war" against communist rebels.

"I think, if God will have mercy, the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) will be over by the second quarter of next year. There are many [rebels] surrendering, and the good thing is they bring firearms," he said.

Mr. Duterte said many rebel fronts in Mindanao were falling, especially in the Davao and Agusan provinces.

"On the western part, they don't have any strong fronts there because the Moros are there, and the Moros won't allow them to become too powerful," he added.

## Taking fentanyl

But CPP founding chair Jose Maria Sison said Mr. Duterte may have been taking too much fentanyl in claiming that the military was close to destroying the party and its armed wing, New People's Army (NPA).

In a statement posted on his Facebook account on Wednesday, Sison described Mr. Duterte as "delusional."

The President, he said, will more likely be ousted from office than succeed in ending the CPP-NPA insurgency by 2019.

"He is taking too much of fentanyl. Thus, he is pipe-dreaming. He forgets that the campaigns of mass murder, mass intimidation, fake surrenders and fake encounters under [the Armed Forces'] 'Oplan Kapayapaan' are angering the people and inciting them to intensify their resistance," Sison claimed. *JJ*

## Public discontent

Mr. Duterte admits to taking fentanyl, which some experts said may be potentially addictive, to relieve body pains caused by a motorcycle accident a few years ago.

According to Sison there is growing public discontent with the administration because of the soaring prices of basic goods and the imposition of "regressive" taxes.

The President made the remarks during his visit to the Army camp after presiding over a situation briefing on the damage caused by Typhoon "Ompong" in Isabela.

He cited the efforts of the 5th ID in convincing some 100 members of the NPA to surrender recently. The government recovered 45 firearms from the rebels. *INQ*

# Duterte sees Reds defeated in mid-2019

By ALEXIS ROMERO

President Duterte is expecting the defeat of the decades-old communist insurgency by the second quarter of 2019 as the prospects for peace talks between the government and the rebels remain uncertain.

Duterte said many communist New People's Army (NPA) rebels have surrendered despite threats of being assassinated by their former comrades.

"I think that if God is mer-

ciful, this would be over by about the second quarter of next year. Many are surrendering. The good thing there is there are firearms," the President said.

"Usually, they do not bring firearms. That's really prohibited. You will really be killed. But this time, they are coming down and surrendering firearms," he added.

Duterte said rebel leaders were among those who have abandoned the armed struggle. Intelligence personnel were able to gather informa-

tion from the insurgents who surrendered, he added.

Previous presidents have also predicted the demise of the communist movement, the oldest existing Maoist insurgency in the region.

Peace negotiations between the government and the rebels were terminated after Duterte accused the communists of seeking a coalition government, a power-sharing set-up that he said is not allowed by the Constitution.

The President has also chided the rebels for launch-

ing attacks against government forces and civilians while talks of the opioid are ongoing.

## 'Delusion'

Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) founder Jose Ma. Sison claimed that Duterte showed signs of delusion when he predicted the downfall of the CPP-NPA next year, saying it is more likely that the President will be ousted from power before that period.

Sison, in his social me-

dia post yesterday, said that Duterte's statement may be a result of his taking too much Fentanyl.

"It is more likely that Duterte would be ousted from power" than him destroying the people's revolutionary movement by the middle of next year, Sison said.

The President had also claimed that Sison is dying of cancer.

National Democratic Front (NDF) peace panel chairman Fidel Agcaoili denied Sison is dying. He said the

CPP founding chairman has recovered from a bout of arthritis.

Sison added that people consider Duterte a clown who imagines that he has all the money to give jobs and houses to the millions of people who participate in the revolutionary movement.

"More importantly, he is now the target of people's rising hatred. They reject the traitorous, tyrannical, murderous and corrupt character of his regime," Sison said.

4 - With Jaime Laude

### Cop hurt in Butuan NPA attack

A police officer was wounded when suspected New People's Army (NPA) rebels attacked a police station in Barangay San Mateo in Butuan City yesterday.

Police Officer 1 Ritchel Golandrina was hit in the right leg. Senior Superintendent Albert Magno, Butuan police chief, said the rebels strafed the police station at around 5:12 a.m.

"Our personnel stood their ground in a 10-minute firefight," Magno said in a text message.

In Nueva Ecija, personnel of the Northern Luzon Command (Nolcom) launched pursuit operations for NPA rebels who attacked soldiers in Bongabon town on Monday.

Maj. Ericson Bulosan, Nolcom spokesman, said members of the Kilusang Sierra Madre fired at a military detachment while the soldiers were preparing to conduct humanitarian and relief assistance for victims of Typhoon Ompong.

"Instead of lending a helping hand to typhoon victims, they disrupted the composure of the troops," Bulosan said. — Emmanuel Tupas, Ben Serrano, Michael Punongbayan

DISRUPTED CLASSES, END#

## AS 'OMPONG' RAGES, MINDANAO LUMAD IN UST

INGERED LIVES

### TAKE SHELTER FROM ANOTHER 'STORM'

By Jodes A. Agoncillo  
@jagoncilloINQ

Typhoon "Ompong" forced the suspension of classes at the University of Sto. Tomas on Friday last week, but it failed to stop activities at the Central Seminary gym, where student-volunteers still came to hear the stories of a group of victims taking shelter from another kind of "storm."

"It was unsafe in our place. The people, including our teachers, were getting shot at, schools were being bombed, children were being separated from parents," said Raquil Mandacawan, 16, recounting the recent experience of his tribe in Davao Del Norte.

#### Accused by military

Catherine Dalon, a Grade 10 student from North Cotabato, said her mother and grandfather—as well as her teachers—were being accused by the military of being communist rebels or terrorists. "But have they killed anyone? Have the soldiers even seen them carrying a gun?"

The two teenagers were among the 62 members of the indigenous communities (lumad) from Mindanao who spent several days in UST as part of the Bakwit School program, an initiative seeking to raise awareness on the

effects of armed conflicts and rural unrest on the poor and marginalized, especially on the youth.

As a Bakwit partner, UST played host to 45 students, five teachers and 12 parents from several lumad schools, mainly those run by the Salugpungan Tapanan Igkanugon Community Learning Center in Davao del Norte, Tribal Filipino Program in Surigao del Sur, the Mindanao Interfaith Services Inc. (Mistfi), Fr. Fausto Tentorio Memorial School, Alternative Learning Center for Agricultural and Livelihood Development Inc. in Surigao and Agusan del Sur, and the Center for

Lumad Advocacy and Services.

The delegation's selection and travel were facilitated by the Save our Schools Network (SOSN), which blamed the increasing "militarization" of lumad communities on President Duterte's decision to place the whole of Mindanao under martial law in response to the May 2017 terrorist assault on Marawi City.

#### 'One with you'

The UST program ran from Sept. 10 to 17, during which the lumad students, teachers and parents attended literacy classes and skills training through inter-



active sessions with Thomasians. The delegates were also given lodgings inside the campus.

"We are opening UST for you, so that in some ways we can be one with you in your struggle. We are behind you in attaining your dream of quality education," Fr. Pablo Tiong, vice rector for religious affairs, said in his welcome remarks.

Rius Valle, SOS-Mindanao spokesperson, said Bakwit School seeks to convey to those in Metro Manila and other parts of the country "the real situation of the lumad in Mindanao under martial law."

The term "bakwit"—short for

evacuation—sums up the state of alarm hounding the students and their families, starting with the closure of their schools due to "military harassment," Valle said.

#### 1 laptop for 109 users

Part of the program was giving the students a tour of UST's computer and biology laboratories, its museum and other facilities. For Dalon, a Mistfi student from North Cotabato, it was her first time to see so many computer terminals in one room. Back in her school, there was only one laptop—donated by a teacher from Metro Manila—for the use of 109 students.

"Most of us have not seen a desktop computer before," Dalon said.

For Mandacawan, it was a chance to share what happened to his 19-year-old cousin, Obello Bay-Ao, who was shot dead in 2017.

"Obello's father asked him to go out in the field to find something to eat. He was shot twice on his way back. We know it's the paramilitary (unit) who killed him because he was able to identify the shooter before dying in the hospital six hours later," Mandacawan recalled.

#### Here to tell people

"People should know there are lumad being affected by martial law in Mindanao; we have stopped going to school because of it," he said.

But worse than the disruption of their classes is the continuing threat that hangs over their families' lives. "I am not sure if my mother is safe now or if she has something to eat," Dalon told the Inquirer.

"But if I just stay there, nothing will happen. Nobody believes us there. The harassment continues. We're here to tell the people what we are experiencing; the effects of the President's every pronouncement. We are not even sure if we can go back," she said. INQ

### • Sexually abused Amazon gives up

CAMP BANCASI, Butuan City - A female medical officer of the New People's Army (NPA) reportedly surrendered to a field unit of the Army's 19th Infantry (Commando) Battalion (19th IB) in Magpet, Cotabato province on Monday, Lt. Tere Ingente, chief of Public Affair Office (PAO) of the Army's Northeastern and Northern Mindanao 4th Infantry (diamond) Division (10th ID) said. The 4th ID PAO officer disclosed that the female medical officer, whose identity was withheld for her safety, escaped from her group's highland camp between mountain borders of North Cotabato, Davao and Bukidnon. She alleged that she was sexually abused by the leader of their unit. The 20-year-old was the designated medic of Pulang Bagani Command 2 (PBC2) of the CPP-NPA Central Mindanao Committee, according to Ingente. (Mike U. Crismundo)

# Butuan cops scuttle NPA attack

By MIKE U. CRISWINDO

**C**AMP COL. RAFAEL C. RODRIGUEZ, Butuan City - The 22-man strong police force of a station located in the outskirts of this city foiled a New People's Army (NPA) attack, Tuesday.

The officers and men of the Butuan City Police Office Station 5 (BCPO-S5), which is located 30.6 kilometers south of this city, reported being attacked by an undetermined number of heavily armed Communist terrorists at 5:12

a.m. Tuesday.

BCPO-S5 reported that it was able to repulse the attack after a 10-minute firefight.

The station had been on "alert" status because Barangay San Mateo, which is located in its jurisdiction, was preparing for a fiesta that was to be held on Wednesday.

Only PO1 Ritchel Golandrina suffered a minor wound in the right leg, the BCPO-S5 report said.

Northeastern Mindanao Police Office Regional Director Chief Supt.

Gilbert DC Cruz lauded the police force of BCPO-S5 under Sr. Insp. Henry Sumillano for successfully defending their station.

"Policemen manning the station were able to fight back, preventing the rebels from getting firearms from the police station," he said.

Troops from the Regional Mobile Force Battalion and Butuan City Mobile Force Company immediately reinforced and conducted clearing operations, the region's police chief said.

Cruz believed that the troops have

inflicted casualty on the retreating rebels, and has ordered a check on all hospitals and medical facilities within the city and province for any admission of patients with gunshot wounds.

He also directed all police unit commanders to conduct checkpoints in coordination with the Army, and intensify security operations.

Due to the harassment incident, school officials suspended classes at the San Mateo Elementary School on Tuesday for the safety of the 290 pupils.

# UST hit by bomb scare

THE University of Sto. Tomas (UST) received a bomb threat through a text message on Wednesday.

According to the Manila Police District (MPD), a medical technology student reported the receipt of a text message saying that a bomb would go off inside the campus at 12 noon.

*'Dahil sa di natuloy sa Mapua University ay itutuloy namin ito sa UST Manila sa dapit alas dose ng tanghali, ipasa ito at mabuhay ang New People's Army! (Because the operation in Mapua University was foiled, we will bomb the University of Santo Tomas around noontime. Please pass and long live the New People's Army!),'* the message that was circulated across the campus said.

Members of the MPD's Explosive and Ordnance Division combed the campus but found no explosives.

The university did not cancel classes.

On Tuesday night, the Mapua Institute of Technology also received a bomb threat, prompting school officials to suspend classes and office work and to evacuate its students and employees. No bomb was found.

**KIMBERLY MALAIT,  
ARIC JOHN SY CUA**

# Joma belittles Rody claim on NPA defeat

BY VICTOR REYES

COMMUNIST leader Jose Maria "Joma" Sison yesterday said President Duterte is "delusional" for saying the New People's Army, the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines, may be defeated by the military by middle of next year.

He said it is more likely that Duterte would be ousted by the second quarter of next year.

Duterte on Tuesday expressed belief the NPA would be defeated by the second quarter of next year because of the continued surren-

der of many of the communist rebels, estimated by the military to be about 4,000.

He reiterated this yesterday during an event in Malacañang, saying the NPA is getting weak and will be defeated by next year.

He also said he does not think "that we'll ever have a peaceful negotiator with Sison." He said talks with the communists show Sison's group is just really after a "coalition government."

"...at the end of the narratives there are exchanges of notes and everything, in the different parts of the... it really boils down to

...almost like a code of government. Sovereignty is not with us, the people. And even for to put it in writing is already wrong," he said.

"I don't think I can do it," he added.

Duterte recently cancelled peace negotiations with the CPP-NPA-National Democratic Front of the Philippines because of among others, a spate of NPA attacks.

Sison, CPP founder and NDFP chief, said in a statement "Duterte is delusional

See JOMA > Page 80

## JOMA

by claiming that he shall have destroyed the CPP-NPA and the entire revolutionary movement of the people by the middle of next year. He is taking too much of Fentavil. Thus, he is pipe-dreaming."

He alleged the mass murder, mass intimidation, fake surrender and fake encounter under the military's Oplan Kapayapaan, the military's blueprint in winning peace, "are angering the people and inciting them to intensify their resistance."

Sison also said the "regressive taxes" imposed by the Duterte administration on the public have "caused the prices of basic goods and services to soar to unaffordable levels."

"It is more likely that Duterte would be ousted from power than that he could destroy the people's revolutionary movement by the middle of next year," he also said.

Yesterday at the oath-taking of officers of the Liga ng mga Barangay, he reiterated that NPA fronts are falling one by one - *With Jocelyn Montemayor*

## CPP's Sison says Du30 'delusional'

THE Communist Party of the Philippines said Wednesday that President Rodrigo Duterte is "delusional" after the President said that the five-decade long insurgency of communist rebels and revolutionaries in the country will end by 2019.

"Duterte is delusional by claiming that he shall have destroyed the CPP-NPA and the entire revolutionary movement of the people by the middle of next year," said CPP founding chairman Jose Ma. Sison in a statement.

Sison claimed that Duterte is "pipe dreaming" and his remark was brought by too much intake of fentanyl, a pain reliever which the president admitted to use as medicine.

"He forgets that the campaigns of mass murder, mass intimidation, fake surrenders and fake encounters under Oplan Kapayapaan are angering the people and inciting them to intensify

their resistance," said Sison.

Sison added that the Duterte administration is bankrupt and weakened by bureaucratic and military corruption, excessive military and police spending, counterproductive projects, mounting debt burden and budgetary and trade deficits.

"The government has imposed regressive taxes on the consuming public and caused the prices of basic goods and services to soar to unaffordable levels," Sison, who is also the National Democratic Front of the Philippines chief political consultant, added.

Sison also tagged Duterte as a clown for giving jobs and houses to the millions of people who participate in the revolutionary movement. **A3**

"He is now the target of people's rising hatred. They reject the traitorous, tyrannical, murderous and corrupt character of his regime," said Sison.

# NPA rebels use mines, wound 7

By Francisco Tuyay

NEW People's Army rebels set off a roadside bomb at a military convoy Tuesday, wounding seven army soldiers shortly after an encounter in Buenavista, Agusan del Norte the military described as a violation of International Humanitarian Law.

Maj. Gen. Ronald Villanueva, commander of the Army's 4th Infantry Division, said the NPA violated the provision of the IHL relating to the use of anti-personnel mines during hostilities.

"NPA terrorists have again violated International Humanitarian Law by using landmines that cause severe damage to a person and may decapitate his body," Villanueva said.

Troops from the 23rd Infantry Battalion were heading back to their barracks preceding an encounter with NPA rebels at Sitio Afa, Brgy Lower Olave, Buenavista town when NPA rebels detonated a landmine on their path.

Reports said the landmine exploded few minutes after troops and the NPAs from Alias Yolly from Guerrillas Front Committee 4A of Northern Central Mindanao Regional Command figured in a clash, wounding seven soldiers.

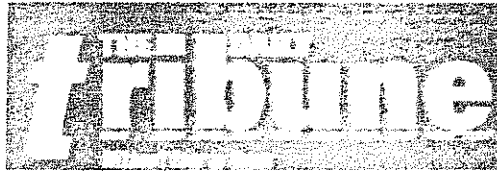
Villanueva said the seven soldiers suffered minor bruises from shrapnel and were immediately evacuated to a nearest medical facility.

But Villanueva said such incident "will not shake our will to fight. In fact it will push our troops to exert more effort."

He said the encounter occurred after a tip-off from individuals regarding the presence of NPAs in their area, prompting the 23rd IB "to launch combat operations," said Lt. Col. Francisco Molina Jr., Commanding Officer of the 23rd IB.

Prior to the incident, troops encountered the same NPA terrorist group of Alias Yolly in Sitio Bulak of the barangay and municipality.

The firefight lasted for 30 minutes with more or less 15 members of GF4A.



# NPA escapee accuses leader of sexual abuse

By Kathleen Mae Bulquerin

Claiming sexual abuse by their leader, a female member of the Communist Party of the Philippines – New People’s Army (CPP-NPA) terrorist group escaped and surrendered to the 19th Infantry Battalion in Cotabato Province last Monday.

According to Wilma (not her real name), 20 years old, she was designated as a medic of Pulang Bagani Command 2 (PBC2) when she escaped from her group while they temporarily camped in a mountainous area between the province of North Cotabato and Davao City.

Her father, who knew where they were camped, asked for assistance from the Army troops who rescued her in Brgy. Galinan in Davao City.

“We joined the NPA to stop the abuses, yet we suffer the same within the organization,” said Wilma in an interview after her rescue.

Wilma also claimed that she was one of five teenage girls from Magpet, Cotabato who were forced to join the NPA terrorists last March 2018. She said they were all sexually harassed by the so-called leader of the group identified as alias Botchoy.

**We joined the NPA to stop the abuses, yet we suffer the same within the organization.**

Commander of Army’s 4th Infantry Division Maj. Gen. Ronald Villarueva called on the parents of female members of the NPA to help them and report the whereabouts of the terrorist group.

“Their leaders make sexual advances on their females by touching delicate body parts to the extent that these females feel molested and sexually abused. I call on the parents who have daughters that joined the NPA terrorists to reach them and ask them to come home before it will be too late,” said Villarueva. 7



## Digong hinarap ang 85 sumukong NPA

GAMU Isabela - Hinarap ni Pangulong Duterte ang 85 mga dating kasapi ng New People's Army (NPA) na sumuko sa pamahalaan matapos ang isang pagpupulong sa loob ng Camp Melchor dela Cruz na nakabase sa bayan na ito. Kamakalawa ng hapon.

Sa eksklusibong dayalogo sa pagitan ni Pangulong Duterte, mga sumukong rebelde at mga opisyal ng pulisya at militar ay muling iginilit ng Pangulo ang katalagahan ng buhay

at programe ng pamahalaan para magbigyan ng magandang kinabukasan at kabuhayan ang mga rebeldeng nananatiling naghihirap sa mga kabundukan.

Nauna rito ay ininayag ni Duterte na bibigyan niya ng trabaho at pagkakatagan ang mga rebeldeng susuko o magbabe ng kanilang mga armas para sa katahimikan ng bansa.

Ayon kay Army Captain Jefferson Somera, taga-pagsalita ng 5th Infantry Division na nakabase rito, nasa 140 ang

bilang ng mga nagbalik sa pamahalaan o sumuko sa mga awtoridad sa taong kasalukuyan.

Pinakamarami umano sa mga sumuko ay mula sa lajawigan ng Ifugao, sinundan ng Cagayan, Mt. Province, Isabela, Nueva Vizcaya at Quirino.

Bukod sa sumukong mga rebelde ay ipinisita rin kay Pangulong Duterte ang 50 piraso ng iba't-ibang kalibre ng baril na isinuko sa militar at nabawi sa ilang mga gupaan sa nasasakupan ng SID. (Victor Martin)

## Encounter: NPA utas, 7 sundalo sugatan

Patay ang isang miyembro ng mga rebeldeng New People's Army (NPA) habang pitong sundalo ang nasugatan sa pagpapasabog ng landmine ng mga rebeldeng New People's Army (NPA) matapos ang engkuwentro sa Brgy. Lower Olave, Buenavista, Agusan del Norte kamakailawa ng hapon.

Sa ulat ni Major Gen. Ronald Villanueva, Commander ng Army's 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division (ID), alas-3:45 ng hapon habang nagsasagawa ng security patrol ang tropa

ng Army's 23<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Battalion (IB) nang mababat ang grupo ng mga armadong rebelde na nauwi sa engkuwentro sa nasabing lugar.

Ilang saglit pa, napasiang ang isang rebelde na si Rex Angadon, 23 at magsasakang katutubo na na-recruit ng NPA rebels. Samantaling 30 minuto matapos ang bakbakan, nagpasabog ng landmine ang grupo ni alvas Ka Yolly ng Guerilla Front Committee ng North Cen-

tral Mindanao Regional Command na ikinasugat ng pitong sundalo mula sa shrapnel ng landmine at agad na inilikas sa encounter site ng kanilang mga kasamang sundalo.

Narekober sa encounter site ang pitong SIM cards, memory cards na naglalaman ng larawan at videos ng mga rebelde, isang magazine ng M16 na may 18 bala, mga subersibong dokumento at isang solar panel. (Joy Cantos)

## 5 10 rebelde umatake sa Army camp

**BONGABON.** Nueva Ecija - Inatake ng 10 miyembro ng New People's Army (NPA) ang base camp ng 70th Infantry Battalion (IB) ng Philippine Army (PA) sa Barangay Labi, Bongabon, Nueva Ecija, kamakailan, ayon sa Northern Luzon Command (NOLCOM).

Ito ang kinumpirma ni NOLCOM spokesman Army Maj. Erickson Bolusan.

Aniya, nangyari ang pagsalakay habang abala ang mga ito sa pagsasalansan ng mga relief goods para sa mga naapektruhan ng bagyong "Ompong", bandang 11:00 ng umaga.

Dahil dito, sumiklab ang engkuwentro sa pagitan ng tropa ng pamahalaan at ng grupong mga rebelde na napilitang umatras patungong bulubunduking bahagi ng Sierra Madre, matapos ang ilang minutong

sagupaan.

Ayon kay Bolusan, target sana ng mga rebelde ang food packs at iba pang mga gamit na dadalhin sa evacuation centers.

Walang inuulat na nasugatan sa panig ng tropa ng pamahalaan gayundin sa panig ng hinihinalang mga NPA.

**Light A. Noiasco**

### ④ UST, Mapua nabulabog sa bomb threat

Binulabog ng magkasunod na bomb threat ang University of Sto. Tomas (UST) at Mapua University sa Maynila, iniulat kahapon.

Sa ulat ng Manila Police District (MPD)-Explosives and Ordnance Division (EOD), nakatanggap ng bomb threat ang isang freshman medical technology student, bandang 9:26 ng umaga nitong Miyerkules.

Galing umano ang banta sa New People's Army (NPA) at nagsasabing may sasabog na bomba sa loob ng unibersidad, na matatagpuan sa España, sa Sampaloc, kaya agad na ipinaalam sa pamunuan ng UST.

Tumawag sa EOD ang UST management para magsagawa ng inspeksiyon sa bisinidad ng unibersidad.

Bago mag-12:00 ng tanghali, idineklara ng mga tauhan ng EOD na negatibo sa bomba ang unibersidad.

Hindi sinuspinde ang klase ng mga estudyante at hindi rin nagpatupad ng evacuation.

Samantala, sa ganap na 4:21 ng hapon nitong Martes, nakatanggap din ng bomb threat ang Mapua University, na matatagpuan sa Muralla Street sa intramuros.

Nakatanggap umano ng tawag ang security guard na si Ernesto Caasi mula kay Elenard Cabuang, construction engineer, na nagsabing may nagpadala sa kanya ng text message na nagbababala hinggil sa sasabog na bomba sa unibersidad.

Agad na sinuspinde ang klase ng mga estudyante at itinawag ang insidente sa MPD-EOD.

Inspeksiyon ng awtoridad ang paligid ng unibersidad at ay idineklarang ligtas mula sa anumang pampasabog, pagsapit ng 6:20 ng gabi.

**Mary Ann Santiago**

## Medical officer<sup>5</sup> ng NPA, sumuko

CAMP BANCASI, Butuan City-  
Sumuko sa pamahalaan ang isang  
babaeng umano'y medical officer ng  
Communist Party of the Philippines  
- New People's Army (CPP-NPA),  
upang takasan ang umano'y  
pang-aabuso ng kanilang lider sa  
kababaihang miyembro nito.

Sa inilabas na impormasyon ni  
Public Affairs Office chief, Lt. Tere  
Ingente ng Philippine Army (PA)-  
Northeastern at Northern Mindanao  
4th Infantry Division (ID), ang  
nasabing amasona ay sumuko sa  
field unit ng 19th Infantry Battalion  
(19th IB) sa Magpet, Cotabato,  
Kamakailar.

Ayon dito, hindi na niva maatim  
ang panghahalay sa kanila ng lider ng  
kanilang kilusan kaya nagpasya na  
lamang siya ang tumakas sa kilusang  
nakapuweste sa kabundukan sa  
pagitan ng North Cotabato sa Davao  
at Bukidnon.

"She ran away and sought refuge  
and voluntarily surrendered to our  
field unit of Alpha Company of the  
19th IB," ayon kay Ingente.

Sa interogasyon, aminado ang  
nasabing medical officer na itinalaga  
sila bilang medic ng Pulang Bagani  
Command 2 (PBC2) CPP-NPA Central  
Mindanao Committee.

"When her father knew his  
daughter's whereabouts, he asked  
assistance to the nearest Army  
detachment and was rescued  
immediately by troops of 19th IB  
somewhere in Calinan area (BUDA  
or Bukidnon-Davao route)," aniya.

Dagdag pa ng amasona, isa  
siya sa limang babaeng mula sa  
Magpet, Cotabato na nakaranas ng  
sexual harassment matapos silang  
pinuwersang sumapi sa kilusan nitong  
nakaraang Marso.

**Mike U. Crismundo**

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# Isulan bombers charged; AKP tagged as suspect in GenSan attack

By **MARTIN A. SADONGDONG**  
and **JOSEPH JUBELAG**

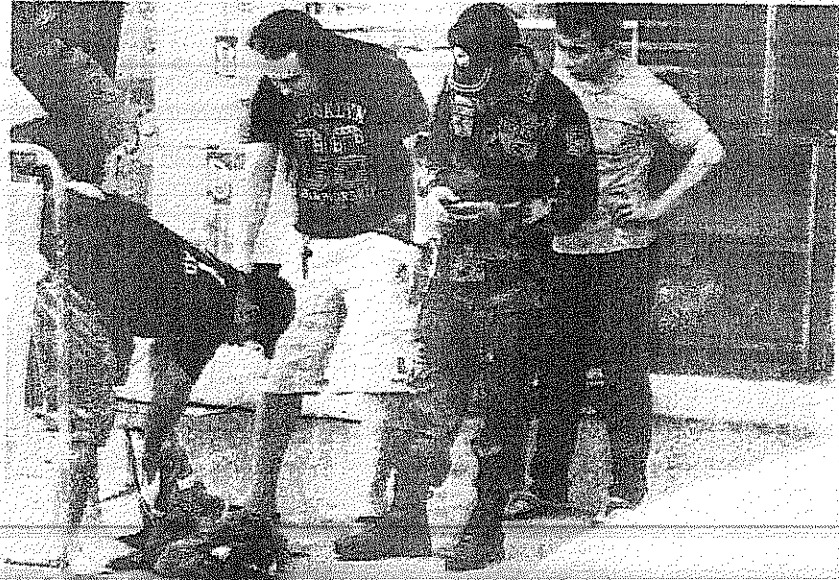
The Philippine National Police (PNP) has filed double murder and multiple frustrated murder charges against 19 suspects and several other John Does tagged in the September 2 bombing in Isulan, Sultan Kudarat, a ranking police official disclosed Wednesday.

Police identified the suspects as Esmael Abdulmalik alias Abu Turaiife, a self-proclaimed commander of the Islamic State (IS)-inspired faction of the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighter (BIFF); Esmael Pendatun Nawal alias Gary; Imam Animbang alias Kagul Karialan; Ismael Abubakar alias Imam Bungos; Salahuddin Hassan; Nur Hassan alias Andot/Abu Salman; Dudin Hassan; Making Hassan; Bashir Nilong; Mersidik Naway alias Abu Mersid; Mornong Ismael; Ali Solaiman; Carmen Usman, and several John Does.

Chief Superintendent Eliseo Tam Rasco, regional director of Soccsksargen Police Regional Office (PRO-12), said the suspects were either residents of Barangay Buliok, Pagalungan town or Barangay Tukanakuden, Sultan sa Barongis town in Maguindanao.

He said the Special Investigation Task Group (SITG) assigned to the case concluded that the suspects conspired in bombing Liezther James Internet Cafe along Valdez Street, Barangay Kalawag 2, Isulan, Sultan Kudarat last September 2.

The attack resulted in the death of John Mark, 18, and Marialyn Luda,



**BETTER SAFE THAN SORRY** - A member of the Explosive and Ordnance Team of the local police check an unattended backpack in front of a business establishment along Quezon Avenue in Midsayap, North Cotabato, Tuesday morning. Security has been tight in the area after a bomb exploded last Sunday night at a videoke bar. (Keith Bacongo)

15, and wounding of fourteen others, he said.

"SITG investigation result showed that [suspects] conspired together in the planning and execution on the placement of an improvised explosive device (IED) contained in a white with red stripe bag that exploded inside the said internet cafe," Rasco said.

Prior to the September 2 bombing, Isulan, Sultan Kudarat had been rocked with an explosion in the middle of a town festival last August 28 killing three people and injuring 36 others.

Police have filed charges against Abu Turaiife and 24 others in the first Sultan Kudarat bombing.

Meanwhile, Rasco also released the computerized facial composition (CFC) of the primary suspect behind another bomb attack in General Santos City last Sunday, September 16.

The male suspect, tagged as among the remnants of the Ansar Khilafah Philippines (AKP) terror group, was described as between 35 to 40 years old, 5'5" to 5'6" tall, 55 to 57 kgs., medium build and has brown complexion. He also has curly hair.

Rasco said the suspect was with a cohort when they left a package carrying an improvised explosive device (IED) in front of a lying-in clinic in Barangay Apopong, General Santos City.

## 13 BIFF men charged for Isulan blast

BY RAYMOND AFRICA

THE Central Mindanao Police Regional Office on Tuesday filed charges against 13 men and several John Does in connection with the September 2 explosion in Isulan, Sultan Kudarat, police said yesterday.

The blast, the second in the town, killed two persons and injured 14 others.

Charges of double murder and multiple frustrated murder were filed before the Sultan Kudarat Provincial Prosecutor against Esmael Abdulmalik alias Abu Turaiife, and 12 of his alleged cohorts for the explosion inside the Liezther James internet café in Barangay Kalawag 2, Isulan town.

Supt. Aldrin Gonzales, regional police spokesman, said Turaiife and the other identified suspects belong to the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters.

The unidentified suspects are from the towns of Pagalungan or Sultan sa Barongis in Maguindanao, a known stronghold of the BIFF.

PNP chief Oscar Albayalde earlier said the

suspects in the Isulan bombings were members of a BIFF faction who were trying to get the attention of the Islamic State.

Gonzales said the regional police office also released a computerized facial sketch of the suspected bomber in General Santos City last Sunday, the third explosion in the region in 19 days.

The first bombing occurred on August 28 while Isulan was celebrating its 61st founding anniversary. Three persons died.

The third blast was beside a pharmacy in Barangay Apopong, General Santos City, which injured eight. A fourth explosion to hit the region happened inside a videoke bar in Midsayap, North Cotabato. No one was hurt.

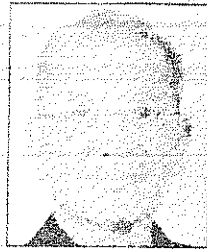
In the General Santos explosion, police said the bomber was described to be 5'5" to 5'6" tall, of medium build, 35 to 40 years old, weighs about 55 to 57 kilograms, with brown complexion. He has curly hair and was last seen wearing a sweatshirt and red cargo pants aboard a black motorcycle. He was with another man wearing a black bonnet, black sweatshirt, and black pants. B2

# BREAKTHROUGH

ELFREN S. CRUZ

## Martial Law really happened

In history, we commemorate glorious days and eras that make us proud of our nation and its people. However, almost every nation in the world also remember its "days of infamy" mainly to remind us never to let those dark days happen again.



The Marcos martial law period was one of the darkest times in Philippine history. It has been said that only the Japanese occupation during the Second World War inflicted more suffering for the Filipino people. One would think that those responsible for the tragedy of the martial law would dedicate themselves to making amends as their penance and asking forgiveness for their sins. Instead we see a concerted effort to revise history - to deny the tortures and human rights violations that happened. There is even an almost comical attempt to repaint that period of our history as some kind of golden age.

I never thought that after 34 years, those who were responsible for so much suffering would be seeking to go back in power. Unbelievably, they are seeking to return to power espousing the same Marcosian ideology. The past 34 years represent an entire generation who never experienced martial law. There is a need to educate this new generation on what really happened.

In a previous column, I recommended four books that reflect the real history of martial law. These books are *Marcos Martial Law: Never Again* by Raissa Robles; *A Garrison State in the Making and Other Speeches* by Senator Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino Jr.; introductory notes by Nick Joaquin; *Martial Law in the Philippines: My Story* by Aquilino Q. Pimentel Jr.; *LABAN: His Story*, a collection of essays by several authors including Jose Cojuangco Jr., Ninoy Aquino, Corazon Aquino and Nick Joaquin.

On the eve of the day we remember the imposition of martial law, here is another book. I would recommend. It may not be that easy to find, but make the effort because it is a must-read book: *NOT ON OUR WATCH: Martial Law Really Happened. We Were There*, edited by Jo-Ann Q. Maghnon. The 13 writers in the book were all college editors during their students days in the 1960s and 1970s.

The book includes the following articles: *Introduction: The Hollow Years, The Full Years* by Conrad de Quiros; *Forty Years in China: From Student Activist to International Journalist* by Jaime FlorCruz; *Remembering the Music...and the Storm* by Jay Valenciano; *Taking the Track Less Trodden* by Manuel M. Dayrit; *A Dead Toenail* by Vic Wenceslao; *Scruples After the First Quarter Storm* by Diwa C. Guinigundo; *Marcos's Dark Legacy to the*

*Nation* by Victor H. Manarang; *The Political Economy of Martial Law* by Calixto V. Chikiamco; *Images of Martial Rule*; *Lest We Forget* by Roberto Verzola; *Martial Law Baby* by Sol E. Juvida; *From Flower to People Power (Memoirs of a Petit Bourgeois)* by Jack Teotico; *I See, I Forgive, I Forget* by Al S. Mendoza; *The First of Our Dead* by Jose Dalisay Jr. Illustration by Ed Aragon. In his essay, Conrad de Quiros writes:

"We are a country that has the hardest time remembering anything. That is fallow ground for planting the seeds of historical revisionism, and the Marcoses have been hard at work in it. Time and the Marcoses have embarked on the Great Forgetting. It is things like this that should jolt us into a Great Remembering.

Martial Law was a time when so many of the country's best and brightest fell into the dark pit of state terrorism. But this was also a time when so many of the country's best and brightest rose to remind the world what it means to be the best and brightest. It is not just to be bright enough to become CEO of a big company or succeed abroad. It is to be bright enough to know that you become your best when you serve the people.

These are their stories. These are our stories. They make us see a time in their lives that defined them, they make us see a time in our lives that shaped us... They made us see what once was and could be again. They make us see."

One of the most heartbreaking stories was written by Roberto Verzola who was imprisoned for several years. He narrated the many times he was tortured in detail. Here is one of his experiences:

"Then they brought in the Machine. Two lengths of wire extended from it, both ending with bare wire, the insulation stripped. One end was tied around the handle of a spoon. The Machine is a field telephone generator. It has a wheel with a handle. The wheel turns a dynamo, which generates electricity that causes a distant telephone to ring. The field generator probably generates forty to sixty volts and if turned really fast may give as high as ninety volts or more. My interrogators tied the end of one wire around my right index finger and inserted the spoon into my pants, on my right waist, until it rested where the leg meets the lower abdomen near the crotch.

When I was young, I used to watch my uncle and older cousins whenever they slaughtered a pig. As soon as the pig realized something bad was going to happen, it would shriek for dear life. It was a grating shriek of helplessness, desperation and terror...it was that kind of scream that issued from my throat every time my torturers spun the wheel around."

The millennial generation must never forget the deplorable and cruel years of the Marcos martial law.

Creative writing classes for kids and teens  
*Young Writers' Hangout* on Oct. 6 and 13 (1:30pm-3pm; stand-alone sessions) fiction writing with Sarge Lacuesta on Sept. 22 (1:30-4:30 pm) at Fully Booked BGC. For details and registration, email [writethingsph@gmail.com](mailto:writethingsph@gmail.com).

Email: [elfrencruz@gmail.com](mailto:elfrencruz@gmail.com)



# FIRST PERSON

ALEX MAGNO

## Rehab

Perhaps the entire archipelago is in urgent need of a Boracay-style rehab.

The grotesque tragedy still unfolding in Itogon, Benguet underscores the extent of environmental degradation resulting from many years of weak governance. In many areas like Itogon, communities literally live under the shadow of sudden death.



The mountainsides around Itogon are honeycombed with innumerable tunnels dug by illegal mining activity. At some point, landslides cease becoming a possibility. They become a certainty.

As in Boracay, the local government abdicated the role of enforcer in order to ensure public safety. Local officials became partners in crime. Local executives often put up the capital for illegal mining operations.

Illegal small-scale mining activities "benefit" from evading registration. They do not have to go through the long and expensive process of acquiring a permit, including environmental compliance certification. They do not have to bring their loot to the formal market and thus evade taxation. The illegal miners and their partners in the local government retain the entire value of whatever they mine. All they need for capital is a shovel.

It is enticing business model. But it results in small-scale mining running amuck, producing the obvious environmental hazards.

Itogon is not an isolated case. The same chaos of informal mining activities happened in Paracale town in Camarines Norte. When the gold ran out, the erstwhile miners turned to a life of crime.

Then there is the case of Diwailwal, where a horde of powerbrokers from surrounding areas joined the gold rush. They brought in their private armies to protect their operations. Lawlessness was supreme. Wars broke out among the speculators. The situation deteriorated so much, the military was sent in and de facto military rule was imposed.

Much of the gold extracted from Diwailwal disappeared into the black market. In order to evade the taxes imposed by the state, gold was pilfered out through our southern backdoor. The political moguls who financed the illegal mining operations earned immense profits.

When gold is found in some illegal mine, people tend to flock to the area, build ramshackle communities in the places where they dig, and end up being most exposed to the environmental hazards the activity creates. It is hard to stop the horde of gold speculators - especially if the local government is in on the racket.

Controlling the large mining enterprises is easy. Government policies their methods and shuts down their operations if they violate the conditions of their mining contracts.

But small-scale and communal mining operations are a lot harder to control. They happen in the remotest areas where national government presence is nil. They are sometimes protected by private armed groups or rebel platoons seeking to take a cut from the racket.

The challenges to curtailing illegal mining activities may seem huge. But it must remain among the priorities of governance - for the sake of the environment and the poor communities too blinded by prospecting to look after their own safety.

### Absentee

The DILG is investigating at least ten mayors in the calamity zone reported to have abandoned their posts when the typhoon neared. The consequence of this is to make local governments not only figuratively but literally absent when they are most needed.

Local governments constitute the frontline both in the enforcement of environmental regulations and in disaster response. This is the reason why, over the past so many years, much has been invested in building capacity for our smallest political units to be effective.

When calamity strikes, the local chief executive transforms into the ground commander for the first responders. He orders the evacuation of his people when the situation requires. He orchestrates rescue teams and oversees the relief effort. He makes a quick assessment of the needs in his area and relays this assessment to higher authorities. When necessary, the local government declares a state of calamity over its jurisdiction.

An absentee mayor is therefore unforgivable. In the military, deserting one's post in the midst of battle is a crime of the highest order. The same severity of punishment should be reserved for mayors found to have abandoned their posts while the typhoon ravaged.

While at it, the DILG should take a closer, unforgiving look at the local executives who abetted rather than restrained those activities that rendered hazardous areas even more so. There will be a lot to uncover along this line of inquiry.

### P14 billion

Before Ompong struck, it was forecast crop losses could amount to P7 billion. Now, in the wake of this severe storm, the working estimate of crop losses is P14 billion - double the forecast.

The volume of crop destruction is understandable. The Cagayan Valley is a major corn and rice producer. Benguet, for its part, supplies much of the vegetables consumed in northern and central Luzon.

True enough, we saw a price spike in vegetable prices in the days following Ompong's onslaught. Crop damage was compounded by the blockage of roads coming down to the lowlands.

The crop damage will surely aggravate the inflation rate for this month. Over the past few months, food supply shocks played a major role in pushing up the inflation rate.

Our economic managers, however, seem confident the inflation rate will relax in the last quarter of this year. Increased remittance inflow from our migrant labor force and more tightening efforts of the BSP will help shore up the peso's exchange value. The onset of the harvest season, supplemented by increased importation of buffer stocks, should ease supply-side pressures on the inflation rate.

## POSTSCRIPT

FEDERICO D. PASCUAL JR.

### RTC judges' courage to rouse SC justices?

As in a reversal of roles, the justices of the Supreme Court appear being reminded of judicial independence and courage by their juniors handling sensitive cases in such Regional Trial Courts as in Bulacan and Makati.

The Supreme Court has had to contend with concerns that some magistrates might succumb to pressure in politicized disputes on which President Duterte had publicly stated his prejudgment. It did not help that some justices had wanted his nod as Chief Justice.

Contentious cases brought before the high court included the hero's burial in the *Libingan ng mga Bayani* of the preserved corpse of former President Marcos, who died in exile in Hawaii in 1989; and the removal last May 11 of Chief Justice Maria Lourdes Sereno via a never-before-used quo warranto petition, after she was marked for ouster by Duterte.

Pending before the SC acting as Presidential Electoral Tribunal is the protest of ex-senator Bongbong Marcos against Vice President Leni Robredo. Even while the case is *sub judice*, President Duterte has announced his preference for Marcos over Robredo as his successor.

In Bulacan on Monday, Judge Alexander Tamayo of the Malolos RTC Branch 15 sentenced retired Army major general Jovito "The Butcher" Palparan Jr., along with a colonel and a sergeant, to life in prison for kidnapping 12 years ago two University of the Philippines coeds.

The defendants were ordered to indemnify the family of the victims, who are still missing, with P100,000 in civil damages and P200,000 as moral damages. Palparan's lawyers said they would appeal.

Upon his sentencing, an enraged Palparan shouted at the judge, "*Duwag ka* (You're a coward)!" adding, "*Tarantado! Gagol!* (Jerk! Stupid!)." The convicts were escorted out under heavy military-police guard pushing through a raucous crowd of sympathizers.

The judge ordered Palparan et al. locked up in a regular prison, not at a military camp as his lawyers wanted.

Judge Tamayo had to ward off pressure from opposing directions, and evade possibly life-threatening situations. Unlike SC justices, local judges usually live in the same community as the parties tangling before them, so they face more risks.

In contrast, members of the high court enjoying better remuneration and protection lead more sedate lives and are exposed to other, more pleasant, pressure or influencing.

In Makati, Judge Elmo Alameda of RTC Branch 150 has delayed issuing the arrest warrant that President Duterte wants against Sen. Antonio Trillanes on the ground that he had voided the amnesty granted to the former navy officer in 2011.



Based on Trillanes' repeated failure to submit his original amnesty application and his sworn admission of guilt, Alameda could issue the warrant, if he had wanted to, but still gave the senator several days to produce the basic documents wanted.

At the end this Friday of the waiting period, will the judge be content accepting the authenticated copies of the documents as secondary evidence that Trillanes had indeed submitted valid amnesty papers?

The judge's action, based on the facts and the law, will show what kind of stuff he is made of, and if he has judicial independence and moral courage under pressure.

Whatever direction the Trillanes case in the RTC takes, it will eventually reach the Supreme Court, where the Big Boys lie in wait to play a higher-stakes game.

#### • 4% of US immigrants are Pinoy

FILIPINO legal immigrants in the United States, estimated at 1,942,000 in 2016, account for 4 percent of all immigrants there, according to a report published this week by the Pew Research Center.

The Philippines, the second-largest origin-country of immigrants in 1990, was overtaken by India and China during the early 2000s. Since 2010, it has dropped to fourth, after Mexico, China and India.

More than 40 million of the US population of 325.7 million were born in another country. As source of 4 percent of immigrants, the Philippines ranks fourth as country of birth, after Mexico, 11.6 million (26 percent); China, 2.7 million (6 percent); India, 2.4 million (6 percent); and followed by El Salvador, 1.4 million (3 percent).

Pew reported that roughly half of immigrants live in three states: California (24 percent), Texas (11 percent) and New York (10 percent). California had the largest immigrant population in 2016, at 10.7 million. Texas and New York had more than 4.5 million each.

The West Coast, notably California, is the preferred residence of most Filipinos because of its nearness to the home country, the more bearable weather, and the presence of friends and relatives. There are Philippine consulates-general in San Francisco and Los Angeles.

Research of other entities has shown that Filipino immigrants are better educated than average Americans and tend to have a household income higher than the national median. They speak English and adjust more easily to the American mainstream.

Pew reported that immigrants' being better educated is due in part to rising levels of schooling in their home countries and the influx of high-skilled workers in recent years, especially from Asia.

It said that since 1965, when immigration laws replaced a national quota system, the number of immigrants has more than quadrupled, now accounting for 13.5 percent of the US population.

Asians are projected to become the largest immigrant group by 2055, surpassing Hispanics. Pew estimates that in 2065, Asians will make up some 38 percent of all immigrants; Hispanics, 31 percent; whites, 20 percent; and blacks, 9 percent.

About one-in-four immigrants is unauthorized, with 76 percent of them being in the US legally. In 2015, 44 percent were naturalized citizens, 27 percent permanent residents and 5 percent temporary residents. Another 24 percent (11 million) were unauthorized.

## Mar resurfaces

**W**HY would anyone listen to advice from Mar Roxas about anything, least of all how to solve the rice crisis? What did Roxas do when he held the reins of power — or when he was so close to them that he could almost taste the top spot — to make him an authority on running



LOWDOWN

JOJO  
ROBLES

► RoblesA6

ROBLES FROM A1

## Mar resurfaces

a proper government?

And I didn't come away with any new understanding or insight, apart from the conviction that perhaps Roxas should have picked up a newspaper or two before posting his Facebook treatise, so that he could at least have been updated about what the Duterte administration has been doing to solve the crisis of increasing prices and the lack of stocks of cheap varieties of the staple for the poor.

More importations? President Rodrigo Duterte has been ordering that this be done since the beginning of the year, even if the National Food Authority Council has been repeatedly dragging its feet on the directive; even now, imported rice from the Indochinese countries where they were sourced are already in Manila and other local ports, with more in the pipeline.

Increasing the minimum access volume program? That ship has long sailed, since Duterte has already announced that he is em-

barking of a program of tariffication for importation by everyone, as long as they pay the proper fees to protect local producers.

Suspending the tax reform program because of its effect on the prices of rice? That's just plain wrong — and uninformed — because the twin problems of increasing prices and lack of supply of cheap rice have been hardly affected by the usual factors that have been causing food inflation.

Those, in a nutshell, are what Roxas has proposed. All of which leads me to suspect that perhaps giving constructive advice to the Duterte administration wasn't really the point of Roxas' social media peroration.

If you take a step backward, perhaps you'll see the bigger picture — and the real reason why Roxas, Vice President Maria Leonor Robredo, former Commission on Audit chief Heidi Mendoza and even Sen. Antonio Trillanes 4th seem to be making coordinated noises again these days. And it has to do with this annual Yellow gig that they're

calling this year the 46th anniversary of the declaration of martial law by the late President Ferdinand Marcos.

Robredo, of course, has done her bit by contrasting her supposed leadership style to Duterte's in the aftermath of the devastation caused by the recent Typhoon Ompong. In an interview with the Yellow house organ Rappler, Robredo said that a leader need not be loud and iron-fisted to command respect.

"For me, I'd like to show that there is a different kind of leadership and citizenship than what the present administration is showing us," Robredo said, channeling all the "soft power" she can muster. "For example, if they're doing things by force, by shouting, I want to show that you can have better results through calm and quiet courage."

As for Mendoza — who gained fame during the impeachment trial of the late chief justice Renato Corona by adding up all transactions in the chief magistrate's dollar account, counting even withdrawals as deposits — she has taken umbrage at Duterte's

expressed displeasure about government auditing regulations during times of calamity. All the way from the United Nations, where she reportedly got a cushy million-dollar-a-year job on the recommendation of her old boss Noynoy Aquino, Mendoza took up the cudgels for government auditors and their procedures — even if the President was not railing against what she did at CoA but about the here and now, because of complaints about the difficulty in accessing calamity funds.

And, finally, there's the long-running, two-week-long, uninterrupted press conference going on in the Senate, being conducted by Trillanes. Trillanes, in his last media outburst, has been warning daddily not only about his house and his staff being "cased" by supposed government agents but also about possibly joining the Yellow rally on September 21 — as if anyone really cared if he attended or not.

Thing is, you won't be able to understand Roxas' attempt at advising Duterte on rice if you don't take it in the context of the latest bid of the Yellows to gather a critical base

of mass support for their continuing campaign to, as one misguided University of the Philippines dean put it, "engineer the overthrow of Duterte." Of course, whether or not they are even able to attract enough people to join them in their cause is another kettle of galunggong altogether.

But that's what Roxas, Robredo and their crew do. They will seize any opportunity, no matter how spectral or fleeting, to bring down Duterte whose 2016 victory they still can't accept more than two years after the fact.

No one can say when these people will be convinced that theirs is a pointless task. Or when they will run out of funds that will make them stop doing what they've been doing since Duterte became president.

But Duterte will not be moved by these half-assed efforts at regime change simply because his greatest strength remains the people themselves. And as long as the people — who long ago realized that the Yellows have never worked to uplift their lives — remain solidly behind Duterte, the best-laid plans of these

remnants of the Aquino regime are bound to fail.

Of course, nobody can legally prevent the Yellows from doing what they want, as long as they aren't violating the law. But it helps to look deeper into what the anti-Duterte forces are doing in order not to fall into the trap that they're setting for those gullible enough to believe them.

After all, if Mar Roxas can't even properly explain why he chose those Mahindra police vans over the more reliable brands that our law enforcers have been using for decades now, how can he tell us how to solve the rice crisis? But that message (posted on Facebook, of all places) wasn't really for Duterte, or he wouldn't have written the President a letter or used other proper channels.

Mar is just making his presence felt, perhaps even to test the waters for a Senate run next year. But if Roxas thinks that he can just resurface with ideas that aren't really new or even well-thought-out because he thinks people have already forgotten what he and his confederates during the Noynoy years did, then he's in for a real surprise.

## We should move on

TO THE  
POINTEMIL P.  
JURADO

ON FRIDAY, September 21, the nation will mark the 46th anniversary of the declaration of martial law by strongman Ferdinand Marcos.

It was actually Defense Secretary Juan Ponce Enrile who wrote the details and implemented martial law.

I believe the implementation was a masterpiece. In one fell swoop, the nation was placed under the control of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

All media outlets were shut down and all means of transportation were canceled. Critics of the government and suspected members and supporters of the Communist Party of the Philippines were detained.

Prior to the 21st of September, there had been rumors about the declaration of martial law. But it was said that Marcos felt the number 7 and its multiples would be lucky for him.

In justifying martial law, Marcos claimed that the

communist movement was already knocking on the gates of Malacañang so he had to do something drastic.

According to Enrile, the last straw of Marcos was when he delivered his State

of the Nation Address at the old Legislative Building and protesters threw a replica of a coffin.

For the record, Marcos was then fighting on three fronts—the communist movement, the secessionist movement in Mindanao, and civil society assisted by militants and media sympathetic to Senator Benigno Aquino Jr.

Recall that the Supreme Court upheld martial law citing these threats that Marcos was facing.

The tragedy however was that those who were arrested and detained claimed atrocities were done on them.

This Friday, many will talk about these alleged atrocities while forgetting that martial law actually made a dent on the communist movement. If the communists had not been stopped, who knows what could have happened to our nation!

I do not mean to belittle the atrocities committed on those who suffered dur-

“It’s good to remember, but we should see the bigger picture.”

ing martial law. But I think we should remember the entire picture.

It is important for us now to move on as a nation. Sadly, many people, in pursuit of their own agenda, dredged out the past and lay the blame on Marcos' descendants.

Personally I believe the sins of the father should not be transferred to their children.

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In the same context, President Duterte is confronted with multiple challenges far worse than what Marcos faced in his time.

Aside from the communists, Duterte is fighting terrorism from ISIS-inspired fighters in the South who want to establish their own caliphate here.

Most importantly, the nation is facing gut issues like the soaring prices of food items, water, power and transport. And then, as if we were not suffering enough, last weekend Typhoon "Ompong" caused damage in the billions of pesos to the agriculture sector.

These could push people to the brink!

Band-aid solutions like the importation of meat and fish are just that—temporary. Just how Mr. Duterte will face all these is the question. How will he act, given that he is also waging a war against illegal drugs and corruption?

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Despite all the problems hounding our nation, some members of the House of Representatives have inserted their own projects into the P3.7-trillion national budget. All these insertions amounting to P55 billion constitute "pork barrel" in any language.

It's a good thing there is still the Senate, through which these insertions still have to go. Senator Panfilo Lacson, an avowed enemy of pork barrel, and Minority Leader Franklin Drilon, have vowed to oppose these insertions.

It's just despicable that amid all the country's problems, some House members would still make their own interests a priority.

Unless the anomaly of pork barrel funds is stopped, legislators will continue to take the people for fools.

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There is another proposal of the diversified San Miguel conglomerate to build a P3-billion bridge connecting Caticlan

A4

Turn to A5

**We...**  
From A4

in Aklan to Boracay. But it seems like government is dragging its feet.

SMC has another proposal—that P750-billion aerotropolis on 2,500 hectares of land in Bulacan. This is also being delayed.

SMC president and chief operating officer Ramon Ang said the bridge would enable the transport of waste

from Boracay island and hence prevent it from becoming a cesspool again. Continuous electrical power is also assured. The proposed bridge is 1.1 kilometers. Vehicles and pedestrians will pay user's fee.

The SMC proposal should provide synergy with the Caticlan airport, another SMC project.

All these could solve a lot of the government's problems!

[www.emiljurado.weebly.com](http://www.emiljurado.weebly.com)

## Justice served

**“ We remember how much pride he displayed every time he was referred to as “The Butcher” because of the many killings of activists.**

The conviction by a lower court of retired Army Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan for kidnapping and serious illegal detention came as a big surprise in a country where impunity of State agents has become the rule rather than the exception.

This columnist could not recall of any military general, retired or active, convicted of any crime by a civilian court, except Palparan. This what makes his conviction a first, thus a big deal.

Many would perhaps argue his conviction was misplaced because the act or the crime for which he was convicted of had to do with his duty as a commissioned officer of the armed services tasked with the responsibility of ensuring peace and order in line with the State's national security concerns.

It's possible Palparan may have this idea in mind about what a military man is, thus making him believe his action for which he got convicted of should have been accorded the presumption of regularity in the performance of his duties.

But it is in this regard that most State agents



**VOX POPULI**  
Jesse E.L. Bacon II

fail to know the difference between regularity in the performance of their duties and the lack of it. More often than not, State agents would like this presumption of regularity in the performance of their duties accorded them at all times even if the performance of such duty crosses the line already between what is legal and not.

Fighting the enemies of the State is a duty. Not performing such duty will even result in punishment such as dismissal from the service. In fact, zeal in performing such duty is expected. However, that zeal should not cross the line between the legal and illegal.

Zeal in the performance of one's duty is never an excuse to commit a crime. This is what Palparan had committed, as far as the court that meted him the conviction for the crimes he was charged with is concerned. Palparan in the eyes of the court did the illegal when in his zeal to stamp out communism he brazenly disregarded the law.

This decision of the court should serve as reminder to State agents never to transgress the law

in the process of performing their duty how noble their intention may be. Good intention can never be a justifying circumstance when the constitutional right to life, liberty and property is violated.

**“ This decision of the court should serve as reminder to State agents never to transgress the law.**

Palparan learned his lesson in this regard belatedly. We remember how much pride he displayed every time he was referred to as “The Butcher” because of the many killings of activists, human rights advocates and members of people's organizations that happened in his trail in all the places he was assigned to.

His track record shadowed him when the court found him guilty of the disappearance in 2016 of two University of the Philippines students, Shereen Cadapan and Karen Empeño, who up to his conviction still have not been found. The two happened to foray into Bulacan, Palparan's last place of assignment, doing community organizing work that the military, more often than not, is allergic to. Such work is almost always considered by it as organizing work for the rebel movement.

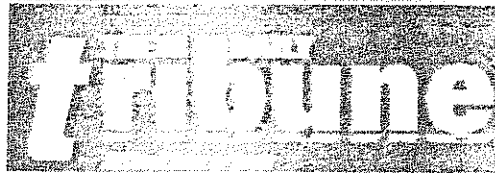
### Disdain vs tolerance

There is nothing wrong when people differ in their political views and as such engage in a healthy debate about pressing political issues of the day. That is what healthy democracy is all about. It is when partisanship drives people to have disdain over views that differ from theirs because logically this leads to intolerance.

It truly pains one's heart to witness such intolerance prevailing over reason because it does not promote healthy discourse of issues but even stifles the dynamics of democracy. This is dangerous because it will lead to bigotry and only adds to the muddling of the truth. Forgetting the very essence of democracy that we all profess to love undermines the very foundation of democracy.

For democracy to work in our favor, disdain and intolerance toward views that are opposed to ours should not be given any room to flourish. To love and embrace democracy is to love and embrace the very tenet that enables it to gain strength, healthy debate of issues. Debates that are not *ad hominem* in nature but reasoned ones whose arguments stand on logic.

It is, indeed, very pitiable about current debates that only foment division instead of unity anchored on reason.



# Sereno visited Trillanes to provoke a coup

“  
**The Supreme Court cannot be exempted from the legal prohibition against one state agency usurping the functions of another state agency.**

The Internet lists Maria Lourdes Sereno as a former *de facto* Chief Justice of the Supreme Court (SC). That’s because Sereno was ousted through *quo warranto* proceedings, which means that she was never qualified to hold office as chief justice in the first place. In legal language, Sereno was a usurper of public office.

A justice of the SC is expected to be non-partisan. As jurisprudence puts it, a justice of the High Court must not only behave impartially, but likewise be seen as someone who is impartial. Sereno failed in that regard. From the start, Sereno behaved as a highly politicized, partisan minion of her political patron, ex-President Benigno Aquino III.

Sereno’s devotion to Aquino III is only expected. From the relative anonymity of a private practitioner of Law, specializing in legal arbitration and of a professor of Law, Sereno was appointed to the highest court in the land by Aquino III, even if she had no prior experience as a trial court practitioner or as a judge or appellate court justice.

Her loyalty to Aquino III was manifested in the many instances she voted in favor of the Aquino III administration in cases brought to the High Court. The fate of Hacienda Luisita, the Tarlac sugarland owned by the Aquino-Cojuangco families, was one of those cases.

Another manifestation was the way she comported herself during the time then Chief Justice Renato Corona was impeached by the House of Representatives and set for trial before the Senate.

Corona sought an injunction from the SC and asked Sereno to inhibit in view of her public statements against him. Sereno refused to inhibit

and urged Corona to face the music.

Political observers opined that Sereno was probably promised by Aquino III the post of chief justice if Corona is ousted by the Senate.

After Corona was eventually sacked from office by the Senate, Aquino III appointed Sereno as Corona’s successor. Her appointment reeked of political patronage because she by-passed many more senior justices in the High Tribunal.

As chief justice, Sereno did not hesitate to publicly interfere in political issues before those issues could be properly brought to the High Court by way of appropriate cases.

For example, Sereno openly criticized human rights violations allegedly committed by the administration of President Rodrigo Duterte. That is the function of the Commission on Human Rights, not the SC. The High Court cannot be exempted from the legal prohibition against one state agency usurping the functions of another state agency.

Another example was when then House Speaker Pantaleon Alvarez locked horns with three justices of the Court of Appeals (CA) who refused to testify in a congressional investigation. After Alvarez scolded the justices and threatened to abolish the CA, Sereno made public statements against Alvarez and was reported to have advised the justices to disobey the Speaker.

As chief justice, Sereno should have waited

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**Trillanes faces arrest once it is judicially ascertained that an amnesty earlier given to him by Aquino III is legally void.**



for the appellate court justices to take their case to the SC. Sereno's suspicious interest in the case does not help preserve the image of the High Court as an impartial, non-partisan tribunal.

Sereno's instances of judicial adventurism are also questionable because they are not the official acts of the SC as an institution. Moreover, her acts give the general public the impression that they are with the consent or acquiescence of the rest of the justices.

When Sereno faced the twin threats of impeachment and removal by *quo warranto*, she converted both situations into political arenas where she accused Duterte of plotting her ouster so he can control the High Court and labeled her removal as a threat to the independence of the entire judiciary. Her favorite *non sequitur* mantra was that if the President can do that to her, the highest judicial official of the country, then the President can do anything to any employee in the government.

Upon taking a "wellness" leave, Sereno spoke in many private events and on television programs to denounce the moves to unseat her, despite the rule that forbids parties from to speak to the media about their pending cases.

On numerous occasions, Sereno used or encouraged the use of disrespectful language against the SC and its justices.

At the height of the controversy, the news media published photographs of Sereno publicly cuddling



## THE SCRUTINIZER

Victor Avencilla

up to Sister Patricia Fox, the troublesome Australian nun who was ordered deported by the Bureau of Immigration for her involvement in political activities in the country.

Sereno also associated herself with Leni Robredo, the purported vice president of the Philippines who desperately desires the ouster from office of President Duterte. Taking advantage of the free publicity, Robredo told the media that she is Malacañang's next target

if Sereno is removed from office.

By associating herself with Fox and Robredo, Sereno confirmed her alliance with Aquino III and everyone who is against President Duterte.

After Sereno was finally ousted from office, she continued appearing on television to decry her removal and to indirectly suggest that the Liberal Party ought to consider her as a candidate.

It was not surprising to learn that Sereno recently visited Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV, the haughty military mutineer, at his sanctuary in the Senate. As everybody by now knows, Trillanes faces arrest once it is judicially ascertained that an amnesty earlier given to him by Aquino III is legally void.

Using provocative language disguised as concern, Sereno spoke to the news media and practically urged the military establishment to support Trillanes and depose President Duterte.

Sereno and Trillanes deserve each other's company.

## Fool's gold

In 1519 the Spanish conquistador Hernan Cortez arrived at Tenochtitlan, the capital of the empire of the mighty Aztecs. The emperor, Montezuma II, thought the white men were gods. He was wrong.

Cortez and his soldiers eventually held Montezuma hostage and demanded a huge ransom of gold, although many of the treasures were lost when the Spanish forces had to fight their way to escape the fury of the Aztec warriors.

Greed for gold resulted in the tragic massacre of the Aztecs and the downfall of their empire.

A parallel can be drawn between that ancient history and the recent tragedy in Itogon, Benguet where half a kilometer of hillside collapsed after typhoon "Ompang" dumped over a month's worth of rain in a matter of hours.

The cascading mud, rocks and boulders buried a bunkhouse cum chapel where small-scale miners and their families sought refuge. At least 19 bodies have been dug up from the muddy grave and many more are feared buried.

It was a tragedy waiting to happen; the storm just triggered it.

The real culprit behind the deaths was greed for gold which allowed unrestricted proliferation of small-scale mining operations.

With numerous tunnels dug, the topsoil stripped, the vegetation cleared and nothing done to mitigate the desecration of the environment, the entire mountainside became unstable.

Small-scale mining operations mushroomed because everyone is getting their cut. Big mining firms allegedly looked

the other way and even encouraged their operations. By purchasing the gold output of small-scale miners, big firms not only masked their real earnings but also evaded a payment of billions in taxes to the government.

A study of the Oxford business group noted that when the government began strict imposition of 7 percent tax on gold mining in the third quarter of 2011, small-scale mining operators "quickly went underground and began operating in the black market, with smugglers shipping product overseas."

Likewise, a 2015 study of the National Tax Research Center said that instead of selling their gold to the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), as required by law, small-scale miners and traders opted "to sell their gold to the black market."

BSP's percentage share in terms of gold purchases to total gold production dropped by 38 percent in 2011, 94 percent in 2012, 46 percent in 2013, before it slightly recovered by 7.5 percent in 2014. These figures are tell-tale signs of shenanigans.

Of course, it follows that local officials must also have their cut. The provincial governor and the mayors are members of the board that grants small-scale mining contracts and licenses for mineral processing. Incidentally, it was reported that the wife of the mayor in Itogon is trading in gold herself.

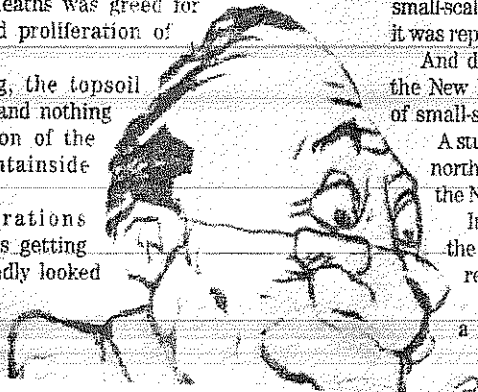
And despite their anti-mining rhetoric, the communist armed wing, the New People's Army (NPA) is also one of the beneficiaries not only of small-scale mining but also big mining operations.

A study of the University of Maryland estimated that mining industry in northeastern Mindanao pays between \$340,000 and \$45,000 per year to the NPA to ensure the rebel group won't disrupt the mining operations.

It was also reported that NPA raided small-scale mining site in the North, supposedly because it failed to heed the demands of the rebel group for the payment of the so-called "revolutionary taxes."

Everybody is happy, until tragedy pays a visit. To paraphrase a saying, big money has many fathers, tragedy is an orphan.

The local officials in Itogon insisted the victims were told to



evacuate but they refused. A big mining firm said many of the victims were illegally operating in the company's claims, tagging them as responsible for the degradation of the environment.

That is the height of hypocrisy! All the buck-passing and finger-pointing do not in any way wash the bloods in the hands of those who cashed in, one way or the other, on mining operations.

President Duterte himself now wants to stop the wanton destruction of mining operations, saying mining has created a monster in the country due to its ill effects on the environment.

"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.

The "People's Small-Scale Mining Act of 1991" has the noble intention of allowing ordinary people to benefit from extraction of the country's rich mineral resources. But while it provided safeguards to the environment, these are honored more in the breach rather than in the observance.

It could even be argued that compliance with environmental laws by big mining firms is easier to monitor and regulate compared to a plethora of small-scale mining operations.

At any rate, as the President suggested, Congress must take a new look at the country's mining laws to bring more sense into the rules and regulations on mining and prevent the unnecessary loss of lives like what happened in the Itogon landslide.

Otherwise, the curse that befell on many who succumbed to the greed for gold will haunt us again. All we would have is a fool's gold.

“  
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## ONLINE NEWS 20 SEPTEMBER 2018

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### **Sison: 'Duterte will fail in his ambition to crush the NPA'**

By: Delfin T. Mallari Jr. - @inquirerdotnet

Inquirer Southern Luzon / 09:23 AM September 19, 2018

LUCENA CITY – Exiled Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) founder Jose Maria “Joma” Sison on Wednesday said President Rodrigo Duterte was “delusional” and “pipe dreaming” by claiming that government would finish off the New People’s Army (NPA) rebels by next year.

“Duterte is delusional by claiming that he shall have destroyed the CPP-NPA and the entire revolutionary movement of the people by the middle of next year.” Sison said in an online interview from Utrecht, Netherlands.

Sison said Duterte was “taking too much of fentanyl. Thus, he is pipe dreaming.”

Duterte earlier admitted that he used to take fentanyl, an opioid pain reliever that is 50 to 100 times more potent than morphine, for the “perpetual pain” due to a spinal injury he suffered from a past motorcycle accident.

On Tuesday, Duterte made his bold prediction that the communist insurgents “will be over” by next year, as he claimed that more rebels were now surrendering to the government.

“I think, if God will have mercy, the CPP will be over by second quarter of next year,” Duterte told soldiers at Camp Melchor F. Dela Cruz in Gamu, Isabela.

The President said rebel surrenderees, including their leaders, have been going down from their mountain lairs and have turned over their firearms to the government.

But Sison retorted that the President was the one facing ouster next year as “he is now the target of people’s rising hatred.”

“It is more likely that Duterte would be ousted from power than that he could destroy the people’s revolutionary movement by the middle of next year,” Sison said.

“They reject the traitorous, tyrannical, murderous and corrupt character of his regime.”

“He forgets that the campaign of mass murder and mass intimidation and fake surrenders and fake encounters under Oplan Kapayapaan are angering the people and inciting them to intensify their resistance,” he added.

In its official news organ, *Ang Bayan*, issued early this month, the CPP mocked Duterte's failure to fulfill his earlier vow to crush the NPA before the end of this year.

"Duterte will fail in his ambition to crush the NPA because he is extremely isolated from the Filipino people. As his war of suppression become increasingly brutal and cruel, he is further inciting the people to take up arms and resist," the CPP said. /muf

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## **NPA rebels use mines, wound seven**

From the Manila Standard (Sep 19): **NPA rebels use mines, wound seven**

**New People's Army rebels set off a roadside bomb at a military convoy Tuesday, wounding seven army soldiers shortly after an encounter in Buenavista, Agusan del Norte the military described as a violation of International Humanitarian Law.**

**Maj. Gen. Ronald Villanueva, commander of the Army's 4th Infantry Division, said the NPA violated the provision of the IHL relating to the use of anti-personnel mines during hostilities.**

"NPA terrorists have again violated International Humanitarian Law by using landmines that cause severe damage to a person and may decapitate his body," Villanueva said.

**Troops from the 23rd Infantry Battalion were heading back to their barracks preceding an encounter with NPA rebels at Sitio Afga, Brgy Lower Olave, Buenavista town when NPA rebels detonated a landmine on their path.**

**Reports said the landmine exploded few minutes after troops and the NPAs from Alias Yolly from Guerrillas Front Committee 4A of Northern Central Mindanao Regional Command figured in a clash, wounding seven soldiers.**

Villanueva said the seven soldiers suffered minor bruises from shrapnel and were immediately evacuated to a nearest medical facility.

But Villanueva said such incident "will not shake our will to fight. In fact, it will push our troops to exert more effort."

He said the encounter occurred after a tip-off from individuals regarding the presence of NPAs in their area, prompting the 23rd IB "to launch combat operations," said **Lt. Col. Francisco Molina Jr., Commanding Officer of the 23rd IB.**

Prior to the incident, troops encountered the same NPA terrorist group of Alias Yolly in Sitio Bulak of the barangay and municipality.

The firefight lasted for 30 minutes with more or less 15 members of GF4A.

**After the encounter, troops found an NPA terrorist dead with his M4 rifle.**

**It was identified by the Rural Missionaries of the Philippines—Northern Mindanao Region as Rex Hangadon, 23 years old, and a Lumad farmer.**

Villanueva said: "Yes, unfortunately, the dead body (sic) was a Lumad and was identified by former rebels as Alias Ipit. On the other hand, operating troops were able to recover the following during scouring the encounter site: Four cellphones; seven SIM Cards; two memory cards with NPA pictures and videos; one short mag of M16 with 18 live ammos; subversive CNTs documents; and one small solar panel."

"Currently, forensics people are inspecting the recovered cellphones and sim cards," Molina added.

He said the 4th Infantry Diamond Division was saddened that there were Lumads who were "continuously deceived and recruited by the NFA terrorists to believe in their failed ideology."

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## **Army ups threat level in Davao amid incidents in neighboring areas**

From the Philippine News Agency (Sep 19): Army ups threat level in Davao amid incidents in neighboring areas

The Philippine Army has raised the threat level in Davao Region to three, indicating that a terrorist threat is imminent because of the region's proximity to Central Mindanao, where there is a notable presence of threat groups.

The threat groups include the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF), the Abu Sayyaf and the communist New People's Army (NPA), said Brig. Gen Ernesto Torres, commander of the Army's 1003rd Brigade, and Col. Nolasco Mempin, chief of the Task Force Davao, on Wednesday.

However, both officials clarified that although the threat is high, there are no confirmed reports on the presence of terrorist groups in the region.

Both Army officials attended the AFP-PNP press corps at Task Force Davao headquarters to brief the local media on the government's security measures, following the blasts that rocked several areas of Mindanao in recent weeks.

Torres explained that Security Alert Level 3 was raised because Davao Region is contiguous to areas, where security incidents, such as the bombings in Region 12 and terrorist activities in Central Mindanao, have recently occurred.

Outside of Davao City, Torres said Talaingod town in Davao del Norte continues to face challenges from the communist rebel group, although the government forces are gaining ground because of the recent surrender of a large number of NPA combatants and supporters.

"We are relentless in our effort in getting as much security personnel as possible," said Torres, whose brigade covers Davao City and parts of Davao del Norte.

In Davao City, Mempin assured that there are no ISIS-linked groups that have been monitored in the city. However, he added that "we do not let our guards down versus threat. We ensure the safety of the people, our visitors."

"Gusto natin i-secure lahat ng installation, strikto yong mga checkpoints natin, searches and inspections (We want all installations secured. We are strict in the checkpoints, our searches and inspections)," Mempin said.

The intensified security measures, he said, are designed to preempt terrorist activities or spillover of attacks from neighboring areas, he added.



"We cannot predict when or where they will strike," he added.

Capt. Jerry Lamosao, spokesperson of the Army's 10th Infantry Division, said troops have also been conducting military operations and security patrol in the hinterlands.

"We are prepared for the possible impact of the security incidents in neighboring areas," Lamosao said.

Police Chief Inspector Milgrace Driz, Police Regional Office-11 spokesperson, said the police force remains on full alert.

Driz said all police units in the region have been ordered to harden target areas and mobilize additional units to ensure the safety of the public.

Police Senior Supt. Andrew Cayad, Regional Maritime Unit-11 chief, said the maritime group has been conducting routine patrols in the region's coastal areas in coordination with other law enforcement units.

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## PAF assets help 'Ompong' relief missions

From the Philippine News Agency (Sep 19): PAF assets help 'Ompong' relief missions



(Photo courtesy: Air Force Public Affairs Office)

The Philippine Air Force (PAF) is using all its available assets to help the government in its ongoing relief efforts for Typhoon Ompong victims.

"As of to date, the PAF is continuously conducting reconnaissance missions and working hand in hand with other government agencies in support to the humanitarian assistance and disaster response duty of the 15th Strike Wing and the Philippine Air Force in general to the areas affected by Typhoon Ompong, specifically to the northern part of the country," PAF spokesperson Maj. Aristides Galang said in a statement Wednesday.

This includes the search-and-rescue operations conducted by the PAF 505th Search and Rescue Group, an aerial reconnaissance and rapid disaster assessment and needs analysis (RDANA) done by 15th Strike Wing AgustaWestland AW-109 helicopters in different typhoon-hit areas, such as Vigan in Ilocos Sur and the towns of Badoc, Pagudpud and Laoag City in Ilocos Norte.

"The team also made an aerial reconnaissance and RDANA to some areas of Baguio City particularly at Barangay Ucab, Itogon, which was known to be the most affected area in Benguet due to landslides and the most number of people reported missing," Galang noted.

Upon its arrival, the PAF team immediately addressed all the necessary requirements needed to respond to typhoon-affected areas, he added.

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**Panay Army to secure politicians vs. rebel extortion**

From the Philippine News Agency (Sep 19): **Panay Army to secure politicians vs. rebel extortion**

**The Philippine Army's 301st Infantry Brigade assured incumbent and would-be politicians that they will be protected against extortion by New People's Army (NPA) rebels.**

**Col. Benedict Arevalo, commander of the 301st IB, made the assurance less than a month before the filing of certificate of candidacy on October 11-17.**

**"Our preparation for the elections is to attack the NPAs. They cannot ask for extortion money from our politicians,"** he said in an interview Tuesday.

Soldiers in Panay continue with their patrol operations, particularly in areas where there are threats of extortion and sighting of rebels.

Arevalo said the pieces of evidence from the seven NPA leaders and members killed in a clash with government troops in San Jose, Antique last month, showed extortion activities of rebels.

Among those recovered from the encounters, he said, were four laptops, more than 20 cellphones and hard drives and four external hard drives.

"We got a lot of information there. We have names of companies and individuals who are giving (money)," he said.

"There are candidates but I do not want to name names," he added.

Aside from politicians, Arevalo also said they would protect private contractors of various projects on Panay Island and businessmen.

He urged those who are subjects of extortion to immediately report to them through 09281757208 and 09167663740.

"We will act on it. To all those contractors and businessmen, we will help you," he said.

<http://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1048517>