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NEWS CLIPPINGS

08 January 2018

Monday

8 January 2018

THE PHILIPPINE STAR
TRUTH SHALL PREVAIL

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PANAHON TV

DZRH NEWS
MONDAY - FRIDAY
11AM & 5PM
PILIPINAS KO
WEEKDAYS
6AM, 6:30PM & 9PM
WEEKENDS
6AM

AIR21
Panahon.TV

SUNRISE	SUNSET	MOONRISE	MOONSET
6:23 AM	5:42 PM	11:48 PM	11:23 AM

LOW TIDE	HIGH TIDE
MANILA SOUTH HARBOR	
9:40 AM -0.08 Meter	1:35 AM 3.90 Meter

TODAY'S WEATHER FORECAST JANUARY 08, 2018 | MONDAY

NORTHEAST MONSOON AFFECTING EXTREME NORTHERN LUZON AS OF 5:00 AM - JANUARY 7, 2018

LAOAG CITY 23 - 32 °C
TUGUEGARAO CITY 22 - 31 °C
BAGUIO CITY 17 - 25 °C
SBMA/CLARK 24 - 32 °C
METRO MANILA 24 - 33 °C
TAGAYTAY CITY 22 - 29 °C
LEGAZPI CITY 25 - 32 °C
TACLOBAN CITY 25 - 32 °C
ILOILO/BACOLOD CITY 24 - 31 °C
PUERTO PRINCESA 26 - 33 °C
METRO CEBU 25 - 32 °C
CAGAYAN DE ORO 25 - 32 °C
ZAMBOANGA CITY 24 - 34 °C
METRO DAVAO 24 - 30 °C

EXTENDED WEATHER FORECAST	JAN 9 TUE	JAN 10 WED	JAN 11 THU
METRO MANILA	24 °C 32 °C	23 °C 32 °C	23 °C 31 °C
TUGUEGARAO	22 °C 31 °C	24 °C 30 °C	23 °C 29 °C
LAOAG	24 °C 33 °C	23 °C 32 °C	22 °C 30 °C
BAGUIO	17 °C 25 °C	16 °C 24 °C	14 °C 23 °C
SBMA/ CLARK	24 °C 32 °C	24 °C 32 °C	24 °C 32 °C
TAGAYTAY	22 °C 28 °C	22 °C 29 °C	21 °C 28 °C
LEGAZPI	25 °C 32 °C	25 °C 32 °C	24 °C 31 °C

EXTENDED WEATHER FORECAST	JAN 9 TUE	JAN 10 WED	JAN 11 THU
PUERTO PRINCESA	25 °C 33 °C	26 °C 33 °C	26 °C 33 °C
ILOILO/ BACOLOD	25 °C 32 °C	25 °C 32 °C	25 °C 31 °C
METRO CEBU	26 °C 32 °C	25 °C 32 °C	25 °C 32 °C
TACLOBAN	25 °C 33 °C	25 °C 32 °C	24 °C 31 °C
CAGAYAN DE ORO	24 °C 32 °C	24 °C 31 °C	25 °C 32 °C
METRO DAVAO	24 °C 31 °C	25 °C 32 °C	25 °C 32 °C
ZAMBOANGA	24 °C 33 °C	24 °C 33 °C	24 °C 33 °C

Partly cloudy to at times cloudy with rainshowers

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

Cloudy skies with rainshowers and/or thunderstorms

08 January 2018

MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

Page: 1

All set for Nazareno vigil, traslacion

By CHRISTINA I. HERMOSO, AARON B. RECUENCO, LESLIE ANN G. AQUINO, ANNA LIZA VILLAS-ALAVAREN, and BETHEENA KAE UNITE

The stage is set, the roads are cleared, and security is air-tight as thousands of Catholic faithful stream into millions for today's "pahalik" and vigil, leading up to the "traslacion" or transfer of the revered image of the Black Nazarene from the Quirino Grandstand to Quiapo Church in Manila tomorrow.

Yesterday, about 90,000 people were present when the procession of the replicas of the Black Nazarene took place in Quiapo, said Manila Police District spokesperson, Supt. Erwin Margarejo.

Today, the crowd will begin to thicken at Rizal Park as thousands upon thousands of "Poong Nazareno" devotees from different parts of the country take part in the series of activities that will be held during the overnight vigil.

Devotees, who are mostly clad in maroon and yellow shirts, that include the elderly, the sick, and persons with disabilities traditionally line up for hours for the "Pahalik sa Poong Nazareno."

Quiapo Church rector Monsignor Hernando Coronel will preside over the Liturgy of the Hours and the holy mass at midnight. Manila Archbishop Luis Antonio Cardinal Tagle will serve as the homilist.

Msgr. Coronel said, they are "praying for a more peaceful and safer procession this year" as ▶6

he asked the faithful for prayers for a successful celebration. He has, repeatedly, appealed to the elderly, the sick, pregnant women, parents with small children, and the intoxicated not to attend the procession for safety reasons. "The Church," he said, "will instead be praying for their personal intentions."

Last mass

Meanwhile, the last of the nine-day novenario in honor of the Black Nazarene that began last Dec. 31 will be held at the Quiapo Church at 6 p.m. today. The theme for this year's celebration is "Poong Hesus Nazareno: Ang Daan, Ang Katotohanan at Ang Buhay."

Volunteers who are involved in the traslacion 2018 will have the opportunity to also get close to the Black Nazarene a day before the much anticipated annual procession of the image.

For the first time, a special Mass will be held for volunteers today at the Quirino Grandstand in Manila.

Security in Manila

Snipers and drones will complement the ground security for the traslacion as millions of devotees are expected to join the slow procession around Manila to Quiapo.

Director Oscar Albayalde, chief of the National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO), said the snipers will be on observer status who would monitor the ground activity from the top of the buildings along the procession routes.

"There will be drones all over the segments that would monitor the ground," said Albayalde.

On the ground, Albayalde said the more than 5,000 policemen are tasked to be on alert on their areas of assignments, focusing on suspicious-looking people.

He said operatives from the Special Weapons and Tactics and the Explosive and Ordnance Division will repeatedly conduct paneling of the procession routes.

"Our policemen were already told not to use their cellular phones and that they should not act as spectators. They should conduct random checks of backpacks," said Albayalde.

More than 5,000 policemen will be deployed in various areas of Manila, the cops will be reinforced by more than 1,000 soldiers and hundreds of volunteers and barangay security officers.

Quirino Grandstand and Jones Bridge will be highly-secured from the waterfront with the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) deploying 38 watercraft for monitoring and quick-reaction along Manila Bay and Pasig River.

Deployment has already started Sunday, said Captain Armand Balilo, PCG spokesman, "to cover the security at Quirino Grandstand and Jones Bridge."

BRP Pampanga, a rescue vessel, will also be deployed on the day of the procession to serve as a platform for quick reaction team medical, K9, and rescue personnel.

The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) said a total of 1,300 MMDA personnel will be fielded around Quiapo Church and along the procession routes to help in traffic management, public safety, and emergency response operations of the city government and other government agencies.

Roads cleared

The MMDA said roads in Manila where the Black Nazarene procession would traverse on Tuesday were already cleared of obstructions.

Bong Nebrija, MMDA operations supervisor, said illegally parked vehicles and vendors have been removed along affected roads to ensure the safety and security of the millions of devotees that would participate in the procession on January 9, Tuesday.

"We had a walk through the roads and inspected the areas to ensure there are no obstructions," said Nebrija.

He advised motorists not to attempt using the routes of the procession prepared by the Manila Police District to avoid being caught traffic on Tuesday.

"Some roads will be closed to vehicular traffic," said Nebrija.

The procession of the Black Nazarene image will start at 6 a.m. at the Quirino Grandstand.

From Independence Road, the procession will turn right to Katigbak Drive then straight to P. Burgos (westbound lane) going to P. Burgos (southbound lane) through Jones Bridge.

It will then turn right to Dasmariñas, turn right again towards Plaza Santa Cruz, turn left to Palanca St., turn left to Quezon Blvd, turn right to Arlegui St., turn right to Fraternal St., turn right to Vergara St., turn left to Duque de Alba, turn left to Castillejos St., turn left to Farnecio St., turn right to Arlegui St., turn left to Nepomuceno St. (counterflow), turn left to Aguila St., turn right to Carcer St., turn right to Hidalgo through Plaza del Carmen, turn left to Bilibid Viejo St. through Puyat, turn left to Guzman St., turn right to Hidalgo St., turn left to Bautista St. (Barbosa), turn right to Globo de Oro through under Quezon Bridge, turn right to Palanca St., then turn right to Villalobos St. through Plaza Miranda going to Quiapo Church.

Liquor, gun ban

The Manila Police District (MPD) yesterday reminded the public of the imposition of liquor and gun ban in the capital city starting today in line with the religious festivity.

Chief Superintendent Joel Coronel, MPD director, said the liquor ban will be implemented from 6 p.m. today to 6 a.m. on Wednesday.

"This will cover the temporary ban on the sale, distribution, and consumption of alcoholic beverages within the 500-meter radius of the vicinity of the route, Quirino Grandstand, and Quiapo Church," Coronel explained.

Meanwhile, Permits to Carry Firearms Outside of Residence (PTCFOR) will be suspended from midnight of Monday to midnight of Wednesday in the National Capital Region (NCR), Senior Inspector Albert Bucal of the MPD Public Information Office said. (With reports from Jaimie Rose R. Aberia and Leslie Ann G. Aquino)

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MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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New Bicol army chief preaches peace not war

By **RUEL SALDICO**

PILI, Camarines Sur — The newly installed general to head the Philippine Army in the Bicol Region said yesterday he is advocating peace with – not war against – the New People's Army (NPA).

Major General Jesus A. Manangquil Jr. said he is set on meeting with local chief executives and other stakeholders in the region to make a united call on rebel groups scattered across Bicol to return to the fold of the law.

He said peace and tranquility in the community should prevail and that the help and support of all Bicolanos, including those who have gone astray, are needed in order to attain further progress in the region.

Manangquil took over from Brig. Gen. Danilo Chad D. Isleta in a simple ceremony last Friday at Camp Elias Angeles – the headquarters of the army's 9th Infantry "Spear" Division in this town. Isleta is the new Philippine Army chief.

Prior to his assignment in Bicol, Manangquil was the commander of the Joint Task Force National Capital Region.

NEW COMMANDER—Lt. Gen. Rolando Joselito D. Bautista, commanding general of the Philippine Army, hands over the command saber of the 9th Infantry 'Spear' Division to Maj. Gen. Jesus A. Manangquil Jr. who is installed as the new army commander in Bicol at Camp Elias Angeles in Pili, Camarines Sur last Friday. (Ruel Saldico)

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08 January 2018

Remate

Pormal nang isinalin ni LTGen. Rolando Joselito D. Bautista (kanan), AFP Commading General, Philippine Army kay BGen. Perfecto M. Rimando Jr., AFP, ang bandila na simbolo ng kanyang pagiging Commanding General ng 5th Infantry (Star) Division, Philippine Army sa Camp Melchor F. Dela Cruz, Upi, Gamu, Isabela. JUN C. FUENTES

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08 January 2018 **The Manila Times** Page: A7

ARMY'S SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND GETS NEW CHIEF

MAJOR GEN. RONNIE EVANGELISTA, former commander of the Armed Forces' Civil Relations Service (CRS), has been designated to the Army's Special Operations Command (Socom) replacing Lt. Gen. Danilo Pamonag, who was assigned last month to the military's Southern Luzon Command (Solcom). Evangelista assumed the CRS post in November 2016, where he replaced Maj. Gen. Rhoderick Parayno, who is now the commander of the Philippine Army's 2nd Infantry Division based in Rizal. He was designated as deputy commander of the military's Davao-based Eastern Mindanao Command prior his CRS assignment. Evangelista belongs to the Philippine Military Academy "Sinagtala" Class of 1986, where Police Director General Ronald de la Rosa is also a member. A change of command will be held at Fort Magsaysay in Nueva Ecija this Monday with Lt. Gen. Rolando Joselito Bautista, Philippine Army's commanding general, presiding. **DEMPSEY REYES**

07 January 2018 **BusinessMirror** Page. B2

Military's psy-ops man now head of elite Army unit

BY VICTOR REYES

PRESIDENT Duterte has designated the top psychological operations officer of the Armed Forces as new commander of the Special Operations Command (Socom), an elite unit under the Philippine Army.

Maj. Gen. Ronnie Evangelista is due to assume his new post today during rites to be presided by Army chief Lt. Gen. Rolando Bautista at the Socom headquarters in Fort Magsaysay in Nueva Ecija.

Evangelista is outgoing commander of the AFP's Civil Relations Service, which is the military's psy-ops arm. The unit is based at the military's general headquarters in Camp Aguinaldo. There is yet no words as to who will be the new CRS chief.

A member of the Philippine Military Academy Class of 1986, Evangelista replaces Lt. Gen. Danilo Pamonag (PMA Class 1985) who assumed the post of commander of the Lucena City-based Southern Luzon Command last month.

Army spokesman Lt. Col. Rey Tiongson described Evangelista as a "warrior-diplomat" and an "innovative" officer.

He said that as Evangelista, as CRS commander, emphasized that CRS personnel "cannot literally kill the enemies through civil-military operations, but they can destroy their will to fight."

"His priority is attaining measure of effect rather than measure of performance. He deems that no matter how much effort is put into an endeavor, if the public does not benefit from it, then, it becomes a wasted effort," he added.

As the Socom commander, Evangelista will have control over subordinate elite units such as the First Scout Ranger Regiment, the Special Forces Regiment, and the Light Reaction Regiment.

Evangelista assumed the top CRS post in December 2016. Before that, he was deputy commander of the AFP's Eastern Mindanao Command based in Davao City (January to December 2016) and head of the Special Forces Regiment in Fort Magsaysay (January 2015 to January 2016).

He also served as commander of the 6th Special Forces Battalion that liberated Bohol from the New People's Army.

Evangelista is a recipient of three Distinguished Service Stars and many other medals and decorations, including Gawad sa Kaunlaran, a Bronze Cross Medal, and merit and commendation medals.

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08 January 2018

MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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NPA fighter slain in clash with Army in Bukidnon

CAMP BANCASI, Butuan City – A New People's Army (NPA) terrorist was killed, while undetermined numbers of other communist terrorists were believed critically wounded, when troops of the Army's 403rd Infantry Brigade clashed with the rebels late Saturday afternoon in Sitio Mahan-aw, Barangay Bulonay, Impasug-ong town, Bukidnon province.

In a flash report received here, the troops were able to seize an AK 47 rifle and live ammunition from the slain NPA.

The gunbattle between the 403rd Brigade troops and NPA terrorists happened at 5:30.m. on Saturday.

"We have been proactively monitoring their (NPA terrorists) activities in the area with the help of the concerned citizens and we caught them this time," explained 403rdBrigade commander Brig. Gen. Eric Vinoya, in a statement sent to The Manila Bulletin late Saturday afternoon.

"Sad to say that because of the selfish interest of the terrorists' leadership, who victimize and lure innocent people to join their money making group, one NPA has to die," the brigade commander added.

Capt. Joe Patrick A. Martinez, regional Army spokesperson, said the remains of the slain NPA will be turned over to the Impasug-ong local government for identification so that it could facilitate decent burial for the rebel.

As of press time, troops are still conducting pursuit and clearing operations in upper Bulonay area, also in Impasug-ong town of that same province. (Mike U. Crismundo)

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08 January 2018

Daily Tribune

Red killed, several wounded in Bukidnon encounter

By ZAIDA DELOS REYES-PALANCA

A SUSPECTED member of the New People's Army (NPA) was killed while several others were wounded in an encounter with government forces the other day in Bukidnon.

Army's 403rd Brigade Commander Brig. Gen. Eric Vinoya said the identity of the slain NPA rebel was not available as of press time while his body was turned over to the custody of the local government unit (LGU) in the area.

Reports reaching Camp Aguinaldo said the encounter occurred at around 5:30 p.m. at the outskirts of Sitio Mahanaw, Bgy. Bulonay, Impasugong, Bukidnon.

Reports added that government forces were conducting patrol operation in the area when they encountered an undetermined number of NPA rebels.

A firefight occurred and lasted for several minutes, resulting in the killing of one rebel and wounding of several others.

Recovered from the slain rebel was an AK47.

"We have been proactively monitoring their (NPA terrorists) activities in the area with the help of concerned citizens and we caught them this time," Vinoya said.

"Sad to say that because of the selfish interest of the terrorists' leadership, who victimize and lure innocent people to join their money making group, one NPA has to die," he added.

M/Gen. Ronald C. Villanueva, 4ID commander, congratulated the troops for a job well done.

"I congratulate our troops for successfully protecting this peaceful community against this terror group. This shall serve as a stern warning to all other NPA terrorists in Northern Mindanao and Caraga regions. Surrender now or face the consequences of your evil activities," he said.

"There will be no letup on our operation to hunt down the remaining terrorist members in this part of the country," he added.

07 January 2018 The Manila Times Page: A9

NPA rebel killed in Bukidnon clash

A MEMBER of the communist New People's Army (NPA) was killed in a clash with Philippine Army troops in Impasugong, Bukidnon, on Friday.

Capt. Joe Patrick Martinez, spokesman for the Army's 4th Infantry Division (ID), said troops from the 403rd Infantry Brigade (IB) were "proactively monitoring" the communist rebels' activities prior to the encounter.

Quoting Brig. Gen. Eric Vinoya, commander of the 403rd IB, he said the unit got information about the presence of NPA rebels in the area "and we caught them this time."

The firefight with about 10 rebels happened at about 5:30 p.m. and lasted for more than 10 minutes.

Martinez said the communist fighters were extorting money from residents and g recruiting members in the community, based on reports from the civilians in Sitio Mahan-aw, Barangay Bulonay of Impasugong.

He added that the body of the slain rebel was turned over to local government unit officials for burial if no one will come forward to claim it.

Maj. Gen. Ronald Villanueva, 4th ID commander, said the incident should serve as "stern warning" to the communist rebels based in Northern Mindanao and Caraga region.

"Surrender now or face the consequences of your evil activities. There will be no let-up in our operation to hunt down the remaining terrorist members in this part of the country," Villanueva added.

The military forces were conducting pursuit and clearing operations at the encounter site as of Sunday. **DEMPSEY REYES**

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8 January 2018

THE PHILIPPINE STAR
TRUTH SPEAKS. EVERY DAY.

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NPA slain in Bukidnon encounter

A suspected New People's Army (NPA) guerrilla has been killed while several others were believed wounded in an encounter with government security forces in Bukidnon, the military said yesterday.

The Army said troopers recovered an AK-47 rifle after the firefight that occurred in Barangay Bulonay, Impasugong on Friday afternoon.

"We have been monitoring their activities in the area and we caught them this time," Brig. Gen. Eric Vinoya, chief of the Army's 403rd Brigade, said referring to the rebels.

The body of the rebel will be turned over to local authorities for identification, Vinoya said.

Maj. Gen. Ronald Villanueva, chief of the Army's 4th Infantry Division, commended the troops for the successful operation against the rebels.

"There will be no let up in our operation against the insurgents," Villanueva said.

A pursuit operation has been launched for the fleeing rebels.

– **Michael Punongbayan**

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08 January 2018

THE DAILY tribune
Without Fear or Favor

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9 BIFF men killed as troops foil attack on military detachment

By Mario J. Mallari

Nine members of the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) were reported killed following a clash with government forces in Maguindanao province on Saturday night.

Capt. Arvin Encinas, spokesman of the Army's 6th Infantry Division (ID), said that the firefight erupted at around 7:23 p.m. along Barangay Maitumaig in Datu Unsay town.

Encinas said that elements of the Army's 64th Division Reconnaissance Company (DRC) engaged more or less 50 BIFF members under commander Karialan.

"The enemy sustained not less than nine casualties but we only have five bodies accounted," Encinas said.

On the other hand, Encinas said that one soldier was wounded during the encounter.

According to Encinas, the BIFF rebels were plotting to harass another detachment in the area when engaged by the Army troops.

"(There was) security operation in the area when our troops engaged the group which was plotting to harass our detachment," Encinas said.

He said the ground troops were provided with close air and artillery support.

Meanwhile, in Lanao del Sur, the military is imposing a total gun ban to address the conflict between two warring clans.

Col. Romeo Brawner, deputy commander of Joint Task Force Ranao, said they will strictly enforce gun ban in their operational area as soldiers implements the extended Martial Law.

"The JTF Ranao will strictly implement the total gun ban in its area of operation as it applies the full force of martial law in Mindanao," Brawner said.

Lt. Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr., commander of the Western Mindanao Command (Wesmincom), also ordered the filing of charges against those who were found carrying illegal firearms in the area.

Galvez also ordered the Joint Task Force Ranao to disarm members of the warring Amanodin and Dipatuan clans and other armed families and groups in Mindanao to refrain from creating trouble.

"Henceforth this will be our template. The warring parties will be immediately disarmed and charged in order to prevent the unnecessary loss of innocent lives and strictly observe the rule of law," he said.

Members of the Amanodin and Dipatuan clans fought on Friday in Barangay Gandamato, Bacolod Calawi, Lanao del Sur that resulted in the wounding of six members of the two clans.

The fighting caused temporary disruption in the flow of traffic along the highway in the municipality.

Maj. Gen. Roseller Murillo, commander of the Joint Task Force Zampelan (Zamboanga peninsula and Lanao), said soldiers were deployed to pacify the two clans, but they were fired upon by armed men, prompting them to fire back.

The clash subsided after more than an hour of fighting.

"Our soldiers acted immediately since we received reports that there were civilian casualties and many civilians in the area panicked due to the fighting," Murillo said.

"We would not tolerate any incidents of *rido* anywhere in our area of operation and we will continue to conduct support to law enforcement operations together with the PNP," he added.

Subsequent clearing operations by soldiers in Barangay Madanding in Bacolod Kalawi on Saturday resulted in the seizure of nine assorted firearms.

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08 January 2018

Remate

10 PATAY SA BAKBAKAN

TINATAYANG siyam na bandido ang umano'y napatay at isa sa panig ng pamahalaan kasunod ng engkuwentro sa pagitan ng mga sundalo at mga miyembro ng Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) kamakalawa ng gabi.

Ayon kay Capt. Arvin Encinas, tagapagsalita ng 6th Infantry Division ng Philippine Army, lima sa mga napatay na bandido ay narekober ng militar ang mga bangkay.

Isa rin ang napatay sa panig ng Army at isa ang nasugatan sa bakbakan.

Pasado alas-siyete ng gabi nang sumiklab ang sagupaan sa Barangay Maitumaig, bayan ng Datu Unsay sa Maguindanao at sinabayan din ng air strike ang ground troops na humahabol sa tinatayang limampung mga bandido.

Nagpapatuloy pa ang clearing operations ng militar sa lugar na pinangyarihan ng labanan.

Samantala, dead-on-the-spot ang 41-anyos na jeepney driver nang barilin nang malapitan ng isang hindi natukoy na suspek sa bayan ng Malvar, Batangas kahapon ng madaling araw.

Natukoy ng pulisya ang pagkakakilanlan ng biktima na si Benigno Castillo, residente ng Barangay Bagong Pook.

Batay sa imbestigasyon ni PO3 Roswell Sadicon, kaalis pa lamang ni Castillo sa kanyang tahanan pasado alas-4 ng madaling araw sa kanyang unang araw ng pamamasada nang tumigil ito sa kalsada dahil sa paglambot ng gulong ng kanyang jeep.

Habang kinakabit ng biktima ang gulong na reserba hindi kalayuan sa kanyang bahay nang lapitan ito ng armadong lalaki at malapitang binaril sa ulo.

Tumakas ang salarin sakay ng motorsiklo.

Napag-alaman na ang wallet at cellphone ni Castillo ay nawawala.

Inaalam na rin sa imbestigasyon kung pagnanakaw ang motibo sa pagpatay sa biktima. **JEFF GALLOS**

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06 January 2018 BusinessMirror Page. 1

9 BIFF men, 1 soldier dead in clash in Maguindanao

BY VICTOR REYES

NINE members of the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters and a soldier were killed while another soldier was wounded in a firefight in Datu Unsay town in Maguindanao on Saturday, the military reported yesterday.

Capt. Arvin Encinas, spokesman of the Army's 6th Infantry Division based in Maguindanao, said a group of about 50 BIFF men was planning to attack a military detachment when they met soldiers from the Army's 64th Division Reconnaissance Company, who were conducting security patrol in Barangay Maitumaig at around at 7:20 p.m. Saturday.

Encinas said the encounter BIFF group belongs to the faction of BIFF leader Kagui Karialan but could not immediately say if Karailan was among those engaged by the operating troops.

Encinas said soldiers and the BIFF men traded fire until around midnight when the enemy withdrew. He said aircraft and artillery assets conducted fire missions in support of the soldiers during the firefight.

Encinas said soldiers recovered at the encounter site five bodies of BIFF members. He said four other BIFF men were reported killed, based on intelligence information

See 9 BIFF ➤ Page B3

9 BIFF

and reports from civilians.

"We were able to hit the group that is planning to harass our detachment," said Encinas of the encountered BIFF group, without elaborating on the unit which is supposed to be attacked by the BIFF men.

Government forces have stepped up operations against the BIFF since August last year, in collaboration with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front which signed a peace accord with government in 2014.

The military classifies the BIFF as a terrorist organization. Along with the Abu Sayyaf and the Maute Group, it has pledged allegiance to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria a few years ago.

08 January 2018 The Manila Times Page: A3

9 BIFF, 1 soldier killed in Maguindanao clash

BY DEMPSEY REYES

NINE members of the Islamic State-linked Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) and a member of the Philippine military died on Saturday night in a gunfight at Barangay Maitumaig, Datu Unsay, Maguindanao, the Philippine Army reported on Sunday.

Capt. Arvin Encinas, spokesman for the Army's 6th Infantry Division, cited body count for the five BIFF deaths and intelligence reports for the other four.

Encinas said a soldier was killed and another wounded in the clash.

He added that the BIFF terrorists whom the 64th Division Reconnaissance Company encountered and who numbered at least 50 were under the leadership of Imam Karialan.

The firefight happened at about 7:23 p.m. and lasted until midnight.

Philippine military units launched air strikes during the clash.

"We cannot determine if Karialan was there during the encounter but he released a statement confirming that his men were the ones who engaged in a firefight with our troops," Encinas said.

"We have an ongoing pursuit operations in the area of the encounter," he added.

The BIFF bandits were believed to be planning to harass an Armed Forces detachment in the area.

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THE DAILY tribune

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P25B set aside for 2018 AFP modernization program

The government has set aside for 2018 some P25 billion for the modernization program of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) that will include the acquisition of brand new attack helicopters, tanks and other military hardware.

Maj. Gen. Restituto Padilla Jr., AFP deputy chief of staff for plans and programs, said the acquisition of new military hardware was long overdue for the country's national security.

For several years now since the enactment of the AFP Modernization Act in 1995, the AFP modernization has been at snail pace because of budgetary constraints.

Padilla said that the amount for the AFP's modernization program was allocated in the General Appropriations Act (GAA) for 2018.

Padilla said President Duterte was giving top priority to the AFP's modernization program during his term of office.

He pointed out that the modernization program was long overdue.

Padilla also assured the public that all transactions or dealings in the acquisition of new military equipment would be above board.

He said the President was keen on the modernization program so that the Philippines would earn the respect of other nations.

At the same time, he said Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana and AFP chief of staff Gen. Rey Leonardo Guerrero gave their full support to the military's modernization program.

Out of the P25 billion for 2018, the AFP would procure brand new attack and utility helicopters for the Philippine Air Force (PAF) and tanks for the Philippine Army, Padilla said.

He said other armaments would be acquired also to modernize the AFP.

The PAF had recently acquired a dozen brand new FA-50 jets from South Korea for P18.9 billion.

But this was still a far cry from its inventory years back when PAF was second to none in Southeast Aisa in defense capability with squadrons of jet fighters such as F-5s, F-8s, and Sabre jets, but all of these warplanes had been retired long ago.

There was also a time when the PAF had in its inventory over 140 helicopters but had drastically reduced over the years due to wear and tear.

PAF pilots are looking forward to an Air Force that will soon acquire supersonic jet fighters to boost the air defense capability of the Armed Forces.

Aside from planes acquisition, the Philippine Navy is also in dire need of brand new ships to secure the country's long sea lane which is twice as long as that of the United States.

The Navy used to have a large number of ships but through the years many of them have been mothballed due to old age. **PNA**

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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Clan wars testing Du30 martial law

'Rido' brings out firearms amid total ban on guns in Mindanao

ILIGAN CITY—A clan war that had wounded four people in a Lanao del Sur town is testing President Duterte's martial law in Mindanao, which supposedly bans carrying of firearms except for law enforcers on duty.

An investigation of the deadly feud between two clans in the town of Bacolod-Kalawi now included the possibility of police involvement in the clashes or lapses on their part, according to a top police official.

Chief Supt. Graciano Mijares, police chief of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), said cases would be filed against members of the Bacolod-Kalawi police who either harbored gunmen from the warring clans or were themselves involved in the fighting.

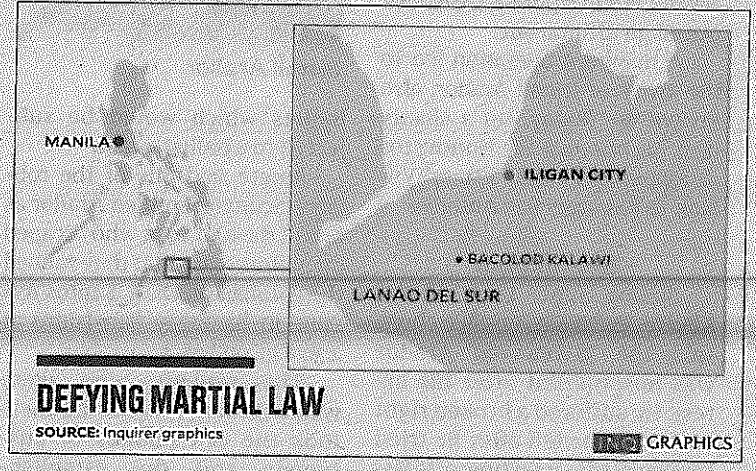
Raids

Mijares, in a phone interview, said searches would also be conducted on houses of those involved in the clashes to track down firearms used by the warring clans.

The ARMM police chief also directed the Lanao del Sur provincial police office to coordinate with the military for a "focused operation" against members of the warring clans involved in the armed clashes.

No arrests have been made as a result of the clashes, which took place amid a total gun ban in Mindanao under Mr. Duterte's martial law.

Col. Romeo Brawner Jr., deputy chief of the anticrime Joint Task Force Ranao, said police and military follow-up operations in Bacolod-Kalawi yielded high-powered firearms and ammunition.



In a statement, the Western Mindanao Command (Westmincom) based in Zamboanga City said as of Saturday, soldiers had seized nine firearms believed to be owned by the warring clans—three M-14 assault rifles, three M-16 assault rifles, two M-653 assault rifles and a .22-caliber rifle. Also seized were bullets and magazines.

Recently fired

Lt. Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr., Westmincom commander, said an inspection of the seized firearms showed they had been recently fired. He said prints were being taken from the guns and efforts were being made to trace the firearms' origin.

"Henceforth, this will be our template," Galvez said. "The warring parties will be immediately disarmed and charged," he said.

At least four members of the Amanodin clan were wounded in an hourlong clash with the Dipatuan clan in the village of Gandamato in Bacolod-Kalawi on Friday.

Brawner said the clash disrupted traffic on the highway. He said soldiers from the 65th Infantry Battalion were forced to open fire in self-defense.

To end the clans' clash, soldiers fired on both sides and enforced a ceasefire.

Clan wars had been among the most serious threats to Lanao del Sur's peace and order for years.

Among the cases attributed to clan war, or "rido," was the 2015 ambush in the town of Lumbaca-Unayan, which killed seven people and wounded 11 others. —REPORTS FROM DIVINA SUSON AND JULIE S. ALIPALA INQ

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MNLF, MILF form alliance vs ISIS-inspired groups

BY RAMIL BAJO

PALIMBANG, Sultan Kudarat. – Two major Islamic groups which have signed peace agreements with government -- the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) -- agreed here on Saturday on a joint action against ISIS-inspired militant groups reportedly operating in the Central Mindanao region.

Officials of the two groups expressed belief that unity and closer cooperation could prevent the militants from penetrating Bangsamoro communities found in the "Biwang" territory.

Biwang localities are found in the provinces of South Cotabato, Sarangani, and Sultan Kudarat. The Biwang area covers the towns of Sto. Niño and Lake Sebu in South Cotabato; Bagumbayan, Senator Ninoy Aquino, and Palimbang in Sultan Kudarat; and Maitum, Maasim, and Kiamba in Sarangani.

Mohaqher Iqbal of the MILF and Datu Muslimin Sema of MNLF announced on Saturday

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MNLF

afternoon the formation of "Biwang Bangsamoro Unified Coordinating Council (BBUCC)" after signing a unity agreement.

Iqbal was chairman of the MILF's peace negotiating panel and is a member of the Bangsamoro Transition Commission. The MILF and government signed a peace accord in March 2014. Sema, chair of the MNLF's Bangsamoro People's National Congress, represents one of the factions of the MNLF which signed a peace agreement with government in 1996 then under founding chair Nur Misuari who now heads another faction.

Among other attendees at the event held at the Da'wah Center in Barangay Malisbong were representatives of royal sultanates in Mindanao and descendants of Mamalu clan. Representatives of the International Monitoring Team witnessed the unitary meeting of the MNLF and MILF.

Under the agreement, the MILF and MNLF will conduct joint intervention measures, share information, and provide forces, if necessary, to prevent ISIS-inspired armed groups from penetrating the Biwang localities.

"This is purely an act of unity and cooperation between the MNLF and MILF," said Sema.

Sema said the aim of the BBUCC is to ensure the safety and protection of the people against "bad elements" who want to sow terrorist acts in areas covered by Biwang.

Iqbal described the BBUCC as a "good key" to establishing sustainable peace and order.

"We don't want the peace efforts we are forwarding with the government to be spoiled by the so-called ISIS-inspired groups. Everybody should be vigilant, including the MNLF, MILF and other peace stakeholders," Iqbal said.

Former Palimbang mayor Labualas "Samrod" Mamansual, now a consultant of the Office of the President Adviser on the Peace Process, said he is planning to talk with MNLF and MILF officials of other provinces for the purpose of extending the agreement to other areas.

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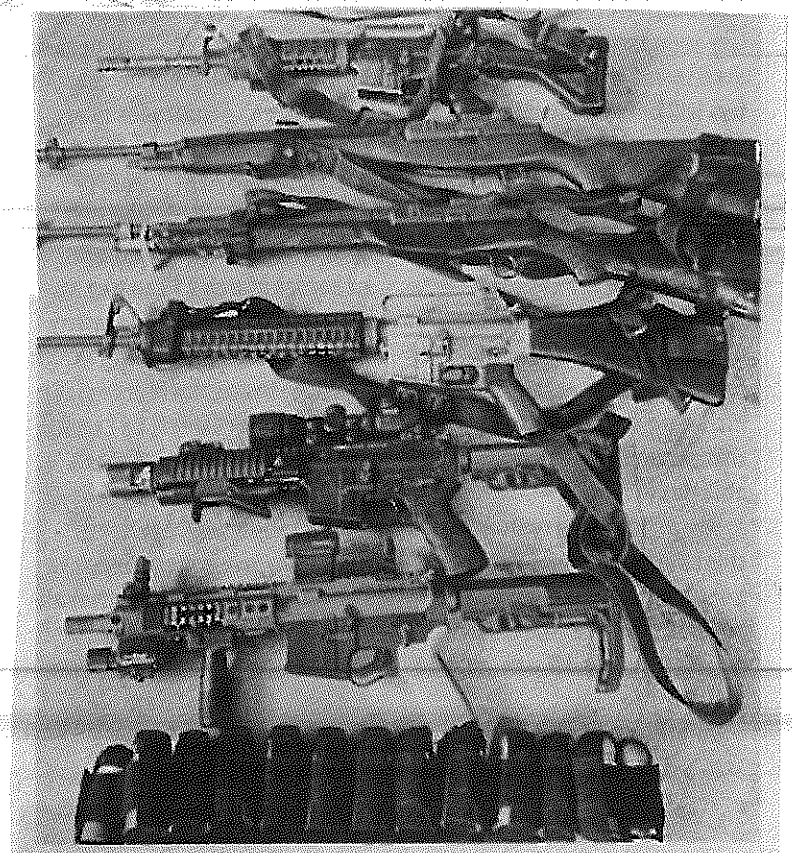

DEADLY WEAPONS The Western Mindanao Command released on Sunday this photo of weapons that troops recovered in Bacolod Calawi, Lanao del Sur, after clashes between two warring Muslim clans.
PHOTO BY AL JACINTO

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Lanao Sur clan war linked to Iligan ambush

BY AL JACINTO AND TED KHAN R. JUANITE

MARAWI CITY: Police in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) are looking into the possibility that a "rido" or clan war that wounded five people in Lanao del Sur is linked to the ambush of a barangay (village) chairman in Iligan City in 2017.

An earlier report said six were killed in the Lanao del Sur "rido."

Chief Supt. Graciano Mijares, ARMM police regional director, said they are investigating if the clash on Saturday is connected to the attack on Azuhry Dipatuan, chairman of Barangay Dipatuan, whom armed men ambushed outside a restaurant in Pala-o, Iligan City, last November 15.

He said Dipatuan, 35, is a member of a clan involved in the fight with the Amanodin family on Saturday in the town of Bacolod Calawi some 20 kilometers northwest of Marawi City.

Col. Romeo Brawner, Joint Task Force Ranao (JTFR) deputy commander, confirmed that only five were wounded in the clash between the Amanodin and Dipatuan clans.

The gunfight disrupted traffic flow along the highway for about an hour.

The JFTR identified the wounded as Hisam Pukunum Dipatuan, 34; Abdulbarie Macaborod, 22; Samsudin Malawad, 41; Casain Pangcoga, 55; and Jamel Panggoga, 35.

Vice Mayor Jaafar Dipatuan of Bacolod Calawi confirmed that the wounded victim was from the Dipatuan family.

Brawner said the joint task force is also investigating claims of some quarters that there was an exchange of M-203 rifle grenade and M-79 grenade launcher gunfire between the warring families.

The armed clash that lasted for about six hours happened near the coastal waters of Lake Lanao in Barangay Gandamato.

Senior Supt. John Guyguyon, head of the Police Provincial Office, said his men and soldiers of the 65th Infantry Battalion (IB) under Maj. Gen. Roseller Murillo responded but unidentified armed men fired upon them, triggering a clash.

Police said a long-running family feud is a possible motive for the clash, although authorities are looking for other possible angles.

Murillo said the military will not tolerate acts of violence based on family feuds anywhere in Lanao del Sur specially since martial law is still imposed in the whole of Mindanao.

Meanwhile, Army Captain Joann Petinglay, spokesman for the Western Mindanao Command (WesMincon), said responding soldiers recovered three M14 rifles; three M16 rifles; two M653 rifles; a caliber .22 rifle; and assorted magazines and ammunition.

There were no reports of arrests, but Petinglay quoted Murillo as saying there were civilian casualties.

"Our soldiers acted immediately since we received reports that there were civilian casualties and many civilians in the area panicked due to the fighting. We would not tolerate any incidents of 'rido' anywhere in our area of operation and we will continue to conduct support to law enforcement operations together with the PNP [Philippine National Police]," Murillo said.

It was unclear how the warring clan members managed to pass through military and police checkpoints in the town or whether authorities were unaware or failed in their intelligence gathering, which could have prevented the fighting.

Petinglay also quoted Lt. Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr., WesMincom commander, as saying that the "warring parties will be immediately disarmed and charged in order to prevent the unnecessary loss of innocent lives and to strictly observe the rule of law."

WITH DEMPSEY REYES

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SPEAKING OUT

Outstanding teachers, soldiers, and police officers

By IGNACIO R. BUNYE

METROBANK Foundation (MBFI) is off to an early start in 2018 as it launched on the very first working day its annual search for outstanding teachers, soldiers, and police officers.

"Launched 38 years ago, the annual search for Metrobank Foundation's Outstanding Filipinos is Metrobank Group Founder Dr. George S.K.Ty's way of paying tribute to the sacrifices of these extra-ordinary individuals in the service to fellow Filipinos," explains MBFI President Aniceto M. Sobrepeña.

The 10 Metrobank Foundation Outstanding Filipinos represent what MBFI identifies as "key pillars of society" – the academe and the peace and security sectors.

Four members of the academe will be selected under the teacher component of the search.

Three soldiers and three police officers will also be selected from the peace and security sectors.

Each awardee will receive a ₱1 million cash incentive, a trophy, and a gold medallion.

Teachers, soldiers, and police officers who are eligible to join must have a minimum of 10 years of service with at least "very satisfactory" rating in the last 10 years of service to their profession.

Those who are set to retire must have at least 3 remaining years of service.

Qualified elementary and secondary teachers must have completed academic requirements for Master's Degree while Higher Education teachers must have a doctorate degree.

Qualified AFP commissioned officers (Captain to Colonel) must have completed a Bachelor's Degree while AFP enlisted personnel (Corporal to Chief Master Sergeant) must have completed a High School degree.

PNP commissioned officers (Police Inspector to Police Senior Superintendent) and non-commissioned officers (Police Officer 2 to Senior Police Officer 4) must have completed a Bachelor's Degree.

"By giving them due recognition, we hope to inspire the Filipino nation further in our collective task of building a strong and progressive society," Sobrepeña added.

"We recognize that the task of nation-building has become crucial more than ever. Public servants need to embody more than exemplary values, and be more than outstanding in their professional service, hence the theme 'Beyond Excellence,'" Sobrepeñaexplained.

The search is held in partnership with the Department of Education and Commission on Higher Education; Rotary Club of Makati Metro and the Armed Forces of the Philippines; Rotary Club of New Manila East, Philippine Savings Bank, and the Philippine National Police.

Nomination forms and detailed guidelines are now available via the Metrobank Foundation Outstanding Filipinos Facebook page.

Deadline for nominations to be sent to the MBFI Secretariat is on March 1, 2018.

Last year's awardees, whose work were adjudged to have transformed their communities with a lasting positive impact on people and to the country, were the following:

• Jennifer M. Rojo (Master Teacher II, Neogan Elementary School, Tagaytay City) – Tagaytay's visionary science teacher

• Edgar T. Elago (Teacher III, Magallanes National High School, Magallanes, Agusan del Norte) – Agusan del Norte's culture coach

• Dr. Esperanza C. Cabrera (Full Professor and University Fellow, De La Salle University, Malate, Manila) Manila's master microbiologist

• Dr. Alonzo A. Gabriel (Professor and University Scientist, University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City) Diliman's food security advocate

• S/SGT. Narding N. Pascual (Squad Leader, Bravo Company, 26th Infantry Battalion, 4th Infantry Division (PA), Talacogon, Agusan del Sur) Caraga's Lumad hero

• Lt. Col. Elmer B. Suderio (Assistant Chief of Staff for Operations, 1st Infantry Division (PA), Labangan, Zamboanga del Sur) Basilan's soldier-trailblazer

• Lt. Col. Ricky P. Bunayog (Assistant Chief of Staff for Operations, 6th Infantry Division (PA), Datu Odin Sinsuat, Maguindanao) Central Mindanao's warrior-peacekeeper

• PO3 Shiela May S. Pansoy (Investigator, Women and Children's Protection Desk, Digos City Police Station, Davao del Sur) Davao del Sur's anti-abuse advocate

• P/CInsp. Rosalino P. Ibay, Jr. (chief, District Police Intelligence and Operation Unit, Manila Police District, Manila) MPD's finest officer

• P/Ssupt. Joel B. Doria (City Director, Cebu City Police Office) Cebu's Pokemon groundbreaker

Note: You may email us at totingbunye2000@gmail.com. You may also "like" us on Facebook at "Speaking Out."

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ONLINE NEWS

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www.pna.gov

P25 B set aside for 2018 AFP modernization program

By Ben Cal January 7, 2018, 6:45 pm

MANILA -- The government has set aside for 2018 some PHP25 billion for the modernization program of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) that will include the acquisition of brand new attack helicopters, tanks and other military hardware.

Maj. Gen. Restituto Padilla Jr., AFP deputy chief of staff for plans and programs, said the acquisition of new military hardware was long overdue for the country's national security. For several years now since the enactment of the AFP Modernization Act in 1995, the AFP modernization has been at snail pace because of budgetary constraints.

Padilla told the Philippine News Agency Sunday that the amount for the AFP's modernization program was allocated in the General Appropriations Act (GAA) for 2018. Padilla said President Rodrigo Roa Duterte was giving top priority to the AFP's modernization program during his term of office.

He pointed out that the modernization program was long overdue. Padilla also assured the public that all transactions or dealings in the acquisition of new military equipment would be above board.

He said the President was keen on the modernization program so that the Philippines would earn the respect of other nations. At the same time, he said Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana and AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Rey Leonardo Guerrero gave their full support to the military's modernization program.

Out of the PHP25 billion for 2018, the AFP would procure brand new attack and utility helicopters for the Philippine Air Force (PAF) and tanks for the Philippine Army, Padilla said. He said other armaments would be acquired also to modernize the AFP. The PAF had recently acquired a dozen brand new FA-50 jets from South Korea for PHP18.9 billion.

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Aside from planes acquisition, the Philippine Navy is also in dire need of brand new ships to secure the country's long sea lane which is twice as long as that of the United States.

The Navy used to have a large number of ships but through the years many of them have been mothballed due to old age. ***(PNA)*** 22

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AFP adds 500 more personnel to secure 'Traslacion'

By Priam Nepomuceno January 7, 2018, 8:53 am

MANILA -- The number of military personnel, tasked to secure this year's "Traslacion" or Black Nazarene Procession in Quiapo, Manila, has climbed to 1,000, doubling the original 500, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) announced late Saturday.

These troops will augment the 5,613 police officers deployed to secure the festivities on January 9.

The soldiers are under the AFP's Joint Task Force-National Capital Region (JTF-NCR) commanded by Brig. Gen. Alan Arrojado.

Arrojado, in a statement, said that they have activated Joint Task Group (JTF) "Nazareno" to help the police in ensuring the peaceful celebration and conclusion of the "Traslacion".

"JTG 'Nazareno' includes combined personnel from the Army, Air Force, Navy, NOLCOM (Northern Luzon Command), SOLCOM (Southern Luzon Command) and AFP Reserve Command. They will form part of the forces for Security, Medical, K-9, Explosives and Ordnance Disposal, and Chemical Biological Radiological and Nuclear Explosives (CBRNE) Teams," he added.

The JTF-NCR chief said these units will be deployed from Quirino Grandstand to St. John the Baptist Church, Quiapo, Manila starting Monday.

"As the Metro Sentinel of the National Seat of Government, the JTF NCR, AFP will actively support the Philippine National Police in ensuring a safe and peaceful celebration of the Feast of the Black Nazarene 'Traslacion' 2018. At the same time, our forces will remain alert in thwarting threat groups that may take advantage of the celebration," he added. ***(PNA)***

www.pna.gov

Lorenzana welcomes Año's appointment as DILG OIC

By Priam Nepomuceno January 6, 2018, 11:10 am

MANILA -- Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana welcomed the appointment of former Armed Forces chief-of-staff Eduardo Año as officer-in-charge of the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), saying he believes the military official would bring his dedication and professionalism to the agency.

"I congratulate Ed Año on his designation as OIC DILG. I am sure that with his dedication to duty, professionalism and experience in the military, he will succeed as the head of DILG," Lorenzana said.

Año, a member of Philippine Military Academy Class of 1983, retired last Oct. 26 after reaching the mandatory retirement age of 56.

Prior to his retirement as Armed Forces chief, the military successfully liberated Marawi City from the hands of the Maute Group terrorists who controlled the area for five months.

During Año's retirement ceremony, President Rodrigo Duterte named him as DILG's incoming chief.

"I am sure we will have an excellent work(ing relationship). It would have been better if he is now full-time Secretary but the law does not allow it until after one year from retirement date," Lorenzana added.

Año's appointment as DILG officer-in-charge was signed by Duterte on January 4. ***(PNA/Photo courtesy of AFP)***