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

HUKBONG KATIHAN NG PILIPINAS

TEAM ARMY

Serving the people. Securing the land.

oacpa.army2012@gmail.com

**OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS**

# NEWS CLIPPINGS

## 30 January 2019

## Wednesday

*Honor. Patriotism.Duty*

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

# TABLE OF CONTENTS
# 30 JANUARY 2019


| Weather Forecast-http://pagasa.dost.gov.ph/weather/daily-weather-forecast | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Page Nr.** | **Title** | **Source** |
| **NATIONAL NEWS** | | |
| 1-3 | Rody: 2 suicide bombers behind cathedral attack | P Star-1 |
| 4-5 | Lacson slams pork insertions by senators | PDI-A1 |
| **AFP/ SECURITY RELATED NEWS** | | |
| 6 | PH, Japan mull joint exercises to boost ties, enhance stability | M Standard-A3 |
| 7 | Palace grateful for world support to combat terror | P Star-10 |
| 8 | Calida says Mindanao rebellion persists | D Tribune-7 |
| 9 | Leaders of 'lumad' farmers missing | PDI-A9 |
| 10 | NPA landmine kills cop, wounds 7 others | PDI-A5 |
| 11 | Peace talks with Reds: Du30 changes mind again | PDI-A5 |
| 12 | Cop killed, 7 hurt in N. Cotabato blast | P Star-13 |
| 13 | Cotabato police car attacked; cop killed, 8 others wounded | M Standard-A1 |
| 14 | Cop killed, 8 others injured in NPA ambush in Cotabato | Malaya-B2 |
| 15 | AFP overruns NPA camp in Surigao del Norte | M Bulletin-16 |
| 16 | 2 NPAs nabbed | M Bulletin-16 |
| 17 | Police officer dead, 8 wounded in Magpet roadside bombing | M Bulletin-16 |
| 18 | Army hunts down NPAs after Magpet bombings | M Times-A7 |
| 19 | Duterte again shuts door on peace talks with Reds | M Times-A3 |
| 20 | Rody changes tack, slams door to peace gab revival | M Standard-A2 |
| 21 | Troops find evidence of APM blast in NPA camp | Tempo-4 |
| 22 | BI on alert vs foreign terrorists | P Star-1 |
| 23 | Abu bomber shot dead; bomb materials seized | P Star-13 |
| 24-25 | 'Jolo bombing justifes ML extension in south' | P Star-6 |
| 26 | Palace on CBCP apology for silence: Just pray | PDI-A5 |
| 27-39 | Duterte says Abus behind church blasts | PDI-A2 |
| 30-31 | Int'l community condemns Jolo attacks, conveys solidarity with PH | M Bulletin-A1 |
| 32-33 | Hunt on for 'Kamah' 2 others in Jolo blast | M Bulletin-14 |
| 34 | Keep civilians safe-Duterte | M Bulletin-1 |
| 35-37 | 'Suicide bombers behind Jolo blasts' | M Times-A1 |
| 38 | Muslim religious leaders condemn Jolo carnage | M Times-A7 |
| 39 | ASG bomber slain in Zamboanga | M Times-A7 |
| 40-41 | 'Destroy ASG, Ajang-Ajang' | M Standard-A1 |
| 42 | UN condemns Jolo bomb attacks | M Standard-A1 |
| 43-44 | Jolo, Lamitan blasts identical-PNP Chief | D Tribune-1 |
| 45-46 | Allies brace PH vs Daesh | D Tribune-1 |
| 47-48 | Suicide bombers behind Sulu blasts? | Malaya-B3 |
| 49 | 2 airstrikes unleashed on Sulu towns | M Standard-A2 |
| 50 | Duterte okays air strikes on Abu Sayyaf | Tempo-2 |
| 51 | Manhunt against 'Kamah', 2 other bomb suspects | Tempo-4 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 52 | Du30: all out war vs Sayyaf! | PM-2 |
| 53 | Jolo bombers tinutugis | PM-2 |
| 54 | 'Kamah', 2 pa tinutugis sa Jolo bombing | Balita-5 |
| 55 | Utos ni Digong vs. Abu Sayyaf: Bombahin 'yan! | Balita-2 |
| 56 | Pulbusin ang Abu Sayyaf!-Digong | Ngayon-2 |
| 57 | Sulu bombing, banta sa kapayapaan | Balita-2 |
| 58 | Former MILF camp to be converted into P8-B banana farm | M Bulletin-16 |
| 59 | Reparation of 16,000 OFW pushed | D Tribune-A7 |
| 60-61 | ADB renews commitment to Mindanao peace process | P Star-1 |
| 62 | PCID call | M Bulletin-16 |
| **EDITORIAL/OPINION/COMMENTARY** | | |
| 63 | Heartbreak and bashing | PDI-A9 |
| 64-65 | Jolo twin bombings an affront to MILF | P Star-9 |
| 66-67 | The challenges of waging peace | M Bulletin-9 |
| 68 | The Jolo bombing-one big question mark | M Bulletin-8 |
| 69 | IS claims on Jolo blast need thorough vetting | M Times-A4 |
| 70-71 | Honoring our martyred dead | M Times-A1 |
| 72-73 | Back to square one? | M Standard-A5 |
| 74-75 | Elusive peace in Mindanao | M Standard-A4 |
| 76 | A challenge for everyone | M Standard-A4 |
| 77 | A critical look at the Jolo blasts | D Tribune-4 |
| 78-79 | Constitutional danger | D tribune-4 |
| 80-81 | Dark shadows lurk | D Tribune-4 |
| 82 | Ang Jolo bombing-isang malaking katanungan | Balita-6 |
| 83 | The Jolo bombing-one big question mark | Tempo-6 |
| **EDITORIAL/OPINION/COMMENTARY** | | |
| 84 | Jolo blast an isolated case: AFP | www.pna.gov.ph |
| 85-86 | Security lapses eyed in Jolo blast: Lorenzana | www.pna.gov.ph |

30 January 2019 THE MANILA STAR Page: 1

# Rody: 2 suicide bombers behind cathedral attack

By CHRISTINA MENDEZ
and MARC JAYSON CAYABYAB

**A couple set off the explosions at the Jolo cathedral that killed 21 people – mostly churchgoers – and wounded about 100 others, President Duterte suggested yesterday.**

Citing intelligence information from the military, Duterte said the "brazen attack" was carried out by a woman and her husband who blew themselves up at the Our Lady of Mount Carmel Cathedral during a Sunday morning mass.

The unidentified woman reportedly detonated the bomb inside the church while her "husband" detonated his explosive outside.

Slung around the woman's neck was a crucifix, Duterte told reporters after the groundbreaking of the San Lorenzo Ruiz

*Palace grateful for world support in fight vs terror. Story on Page 10.*

General Hospital in Barangay Panghulo, Malabon yesterday.

Duterte's comments run counter to statements by military and police officials yesterday, who said the bombs inside and outside the church in Jolo appeared to have been detonated remotely.

Security camera footage of suspects

Turn to Page 10

# Rody From Page 1

believed to have planted the bombs has been shown to media.

If confirmed, it would be one of the first known cases of a suicide attack in the Philippines and would be consistent with details of a claim of responsibility by Islamic State via its *Amaq* news agency early on Monday.

Asked separately about Duterte's comment, Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said it was possible the second blast "may have been a suicide bomber."

"The first bomb that exploded inside the church was apparently left behind by a certain woman," he said.

"The second bomb that exploded at the entrance about a minute and a half after, may have been a suicide bomber as indicated by body parts strewn all over," Lorenzana said.

The bombings came six days after a referendum on autonomy for the mainly Muslim region returned an overwhelming "yes" vote.

Judging from the magnitude of the explosions, the commander-in-chief said there's a possibility the terror act was the handiwork of the Abu Sayyaf.

"Nobody, but nobody, can perpetuate that kind of terrorism, thereabouts in that area. I have no doubt, that is what the military told me, and that is what the police relayed to me," Duterte said.

"That is always my order – destroy the Abu Sayyaf, destroy the NPA and destroy the drug organizations. If destroying is killing, if you are interested to know yet... better," he stressed.

The Chief Executive also said he is willing to match the brutality of Abu Sayyaf terrorists. "Do not ever think you have a monopoly of evil in this planet. *Hindi mo solo ang kababuyan* (You're not alone in depravity)," Duterte said.

The possible involvement of suicide bombers in the Jolo bombing was also raised earlier yesterday by Interior Secretary Eduardo Año in an interview with *CNN* Philippines.

"We are not discounting that because I have some information also, but not yet validated, that a couple were involved in the bombing," he said.

"We are going to take punitive action," Duterte declared. "It's always a touch and go for us, we go there, we fight and look for the enemies of the state."

He added that he is "guided" in his judgment by information provided by his security officials two days after the blasts.

The military, he said, is also looking at the possibility that a cellular phone device triggered the explosions. He also cited eyewitness accounts indicating the perpetrators had "support system."

He admitted responsibility for "failure of governance" that led to loss of lives, saying authorities had been forewarned of impending terror attacks in Sulu by their intelligence counterparts in Indonesia and other allies.

"We were already warned, not only by Indonesia, by the rest of the... that is why there were roving military there," he said.

"It's not known in this country, *magkapkap ka ng babae... sa simbahan lalo na* (to frisk a woman, especially inside a church)," he said.

Duterte said the female suicide bomber may have breezed through the security cordon around the church as women are usually spared from frisking or body check.

But he insisted there were no lapses in security because the male bomber blew himself up outside the church.

"No, I don't think so. No lapses, because the other bomber was outside, there was no reason for him to be frisked, either he was just passing by before blowing himself up," he added.

"The woman was wearing a big cross on her chest, who would ever think... that would be Murphy's Law 'if anything can go wrong, it can go wrong'," he said.

"(Any) misapprehension, misappreciation... but we are not washing our hands," Duterte said.

"Every time there is death of a Filipino by violence – unless of course you fought it out with the military – that is a failure of governance to protect the people and the Filipino, and we admit on those lapses and our responsibility," he explained.

Duterte said there were conflicting reports that the bombers were "foreigners." "Indonesian, while the looks of it... no part of the body can be found. It exploded. It's really suicide (bombing)," he said.

"When it's rigged all over the body, and she would appear fat... you could see all around bits and pieces of flesh. We were even stepping on (small flesh), we were shy to walk around," Duterte said, who inspected the blast site last Monday.

"What I get is from my briefer which comes from the intelligence people," the President added, saying he read the briefer as early as 3 a.m. yesterday.

Duterte justified anew the implementation of martial law in Mindanao, criticizing Sen. Francis Pangilinan first for hitting his decision to declare martial law and ordering the suspension of the writ of habeas corpus.

## Bounty

Earlier yesterday, Secretary Lorenzana said President Duterte is offering an undetermined amount of reward for the immediate capture or "neutralization" of the perpetrators of what officials considered as terror attacks.

"The President will give reward to anyone who can provide information that can lead to the arrest or elimination of those people (suspects)," Lorenzana said in Filipino in an interview over *dzRH*. He added the amount of the reward would be announced soon.

After inspecting the blast site at the Our Lady of Carmel on Monday, Duterte ordered the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) to destroy the Abu Sayyaf.

He also lashed out at the Middle East-based Islamic State, which he called "a movement of evil men" deserving of harsh treatment.

"It's not even an ideology. The only way to fight them is to become evil also," the President said during his visit.

The bombs went off some 15 seconds apart during a morning mass, killing at least 20 people – mostly churchgoers – and injuring over a hundred.

The violence prompted the defense chief to place Jolo on lockdown.

Also on Monday, Duterte ordered security forces to do whatever it takes to crush the perpetrators of the bombings.

He said the military and the police should take no prisoner. "You go out, you kill them. Period. I can't accept surrender because that will mean having to feed you (expletives) – and you will just return to your old ways," he said in Filipino.

He ordered the military to deploy the bulk of its arsenal to Jolo and destroy the Abu Sayyaf "by whatever means."

"I order you to destroy the organization," he said. "Don't think you're the only one capable of sowing evil. If you can do it, I can do it."

At Malacañang yesterday, presidential spokesman Salvador Panelo defended Duterte's call for an all-out war.

"When you say against the enemies of the state, (we refer to) those who use violence against the state. Those who want to destroy the democratic institutions of this country," Panelo said at a press briefing.

"Those who kill, who sow terror, who bomb civilians, soldiers and policemen. These are the enemies of the state that the President is referring to, not the critics," he added.

Panelo said nobody can undermine the President's resolve to handle the Jolo bombings, citing his fervor in going after the terrorists behind the Marawi siege.

"Look at what he did to Marawi. That's a classic example of how this President can crush the enemies of the state," he added.

He also justified the implementation of martial law which is being defended by the solicitor general anew before the Supreme Court.

He claimed the situation could have been worse without martial law.

"What's important is, we can locate who the criminals are. It's for them and I don't think the people there will mind if the ultimate (goal) would be to catch them so there will be no danger," he said.

AFP public affairs office chief Col. Noel Detoyato said based on initial investigation, ammonium nitrate may have been the primary ingredient of the improvised explosive devices that exploded in Jolo.

Lorenzana, meanwhile, revealed intelligence reports on possible attacks on Catholic churches in Jolo, Basilan and Zamboanga as early as August 2018.

"Since then, the Jolo Cathedral was guarded by soldiers 24 hours a day. We will never know how the bombers got in or near the church as the soldiers guarding the main door all died," he said. – **With Michael Punongbayan, John Unson, Roel Pareno, Edith Regalado, Jess Diaz, Emmanuel Tupas, Reuters**

30 January 2019 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER Page: A1

# LACSON SLAMS PORK INSERTIONS BY SENATORS

STORY BY MARLON RAMOS AND DJ YAP

**The lawmaker says some of his colleagues have resorted to reciprocal concessions so that P23 billion of their pork allocations will remain in the P3.8-trillion spending bill for 2019, which the conference committee is finalizing.** A4

FROM A1

**By Marlon Ramos and DJ Yap**
@Team_Inquirer

Some senators have introduced "individual amendments" or "insertions" to the proposed budget of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) for 2019 that might be considered pork as spelled out in a Supreme Court decision, Sen. Panfilo Lacson said on Tuesday.

The senators, according to Lacson, have resorted to reciprocal concessions to ensure that P23 billion of their pork allocations would remain untouched in the P3.8-trillion draft spending bill for 2019, which is being finalized by the conference committee.

Pork allocations are lump sums given to legislators to fund specific projects that they themselves determine, the Supreme Court said in a decision in 1993 that declared the Priority Development Assistance Fund, a pork barrel, unconstitutional.

Asked if the senators' "individual amendments" in the 2019 spending bill could be described as pork, Lacson said: "That is a very fair statement. If something was allowed, then there was horse trading. That's unfortunate in our budgeting process."

Lacson insisted that most of the P190 billion in budget adjustments that the Senate had made were not pork but were "institutional amendments" based on the request of state agencies.

### All revisions

Rep. Rolando Andaya Jr., chair of the House appropriations committee, said on Tuesday that the Senate amendments were still considered "insertions" to the bill.

"These are all amendments, whether you call it institutional or individual or agency-requested, these are all revisions or, in layman's terms, insertions in the national budget," said Andaya, who also heads the House panel on the conference committee.

Lump-sum amendments introduced by the Senate exceeded P190 billion, while the House of Representatives' proposals involved only P51 billion, Andaya told reporters.

"Those were not their only amendments. We are talking about a bigger total," he said.

Andaya said the Senate amendments had not been broken down into specific items and were thus lump sums. "So we have to get the details."

The House, he said, was prepared to release in public an itemized listing of its proposed amendments to the National Expenditure Program. He wished the Senate would do the same.

### No moral ascendancy

Lacson said he wondered whether the Senate could fairly call out House members if they could point out that senators had P23 billion in individual amendments, which would be deemed pork.

"Neither [the Senate nor the House] has moral ascendancy over the other," he said.

In a text message to the Inquirer, Lacson said all changes made by the Senate in the DPWH budget involved flood control projects.

Sen. Loren Legarda, Senate finance committee chair, agreed to remove P2.5 billion worth of flood control projects of the DPWH upon his request, he said.

The Senate panel will formally introduce the adjustment at the resumption of the conference committee meeting on Tuesday night.

"These projects were included in the Senate version with the intervention of the senators. How can the DPWH implement these if the department was not part of the planning?" Lacson said.

"That's what we call pork barrel as defined by the Supreme Court ruling because these are whimsical and arbitrary. There was no consultation or consent [of the implementing agencies] before the senators put the funds," he said.

### 'Whimsical'

Lacson said he stumbled upon the questionable allocation when he moved for the deletion of the additional P75 billion in the DPWH budget, which Public Works Secretary Mark Villar admitted was not part of his department's request.

He said the presence of pork in the proposed expenditure program would make it difficult for senators to take members of the House to task for allocating pork funds in their districts.

Members of the Senate and House panels have agreed to remove funds from various desilting and dredging programs of the DPWH.

As pointed out by Senate Minority Leader Franklin Drilon, Lacson said dredging projects had become a major source of kickbacks for certain public officials.

"Sadly, at least 40 percent [of

the project cost] goes to the deep pockets of corrupt proponents and implementors," he said.

Drilon noted that there was no standard in measuring the volume of mud removed from bodies of water after a dredging project.

Instead of awarding contracts for dredging projects, he said it would be more prudent for the DPWH to just buy dredgers.

**Conference postponed**

In a statement released late Tuesday, Andaya said the Senate sought to postpone what was supposed to be the fourth meeting of the conference committee that day to comply with the House request for an itemized listing of amendments.

"They have yet to finalize the complete details of institutional and individual amendments requested by the House conferees," Andaya said.

The conference committee will resume session at 2 p.m. on Wednesday at Manila Polo Club in Makati City.

Congress approval of the national budget for this year has been delayed because the House took some time to submit its version of the bill to the Senate.

The national government is currently operating on the reenacted 2018 budget. INQ

January 2019 Manila Standard TODAY Page: A3

# PH, Japan mull joint exercises to boost ties, enhance stability

MILITARY authorities said on Tuesday that Manila and Tokyo are planning to conduct a joint naval exercises in a bid to boost defense ties and enhance regional stability.

A Japanese destroyed had actually docked in Manila even before the planned exercise.

Enemies during World War II, Japan and the Philippine aim to take their bilateral relationship "to the next level," according to Capt. Mardonio Navarro of the Philippine Navy.

A joint military exercise will improve ties and "contribute to the regional stability," added Capt. Ryoko Azuma, commander of the Japanese Escort Division One.

Azuma is in the country to lead the contingent that brought Japanese destroyer JS Ikazuchi to Manila on a three-day goodwill visit, which includes a coordination meeting with the Philippine military.

Both the Philippines and Japan are locked in maritime disputes with China.

Both Beijing and Tokyo claim ownership of uninhabited islets in the East China Sea, known as the Senkaku in Japan and Diaoyu in China.

China, meanwhile, also claims as its own most of the South China and has built bases on reefs and shoals it reclaimed despite partial claims by the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan.

A UN-backed tribunal, acting on a Philippine plea, invalidated Beijing's sweeping claims over the strategic waterway that boasts of a rich fishing grounds, as well as oil and gas deposits. **With PNA**

30 January 2019 THE STAR Page: 10

# Palace grateful for world support to combat terror

By CHRISTINA MENDEZ

With the outpouring of support from the international community after the twin blasts that killed 21 people in Jolo, Sulu last Sunday, the Palace welcomed Russian President Vladimir Putin's offer to help fight terrorism in the country.

Presidential spokesman Salvador Panelo yesterday cited the importance of international cooperation in the fight against terrorism.

"So did US, and so did other governments – we welcome all of them. All of them have offered support in fighting terrorism," he said, noting that the United States, United Kingdom and other countries also expressed concern over the recent developments in Mindanao.

He was referring to US Ambassador Sung Kim, United Kingdom Ambassador Daniel Robert Pruce and many others.

"In other words, terrorism is a worldwide problem, hence all the countries of the world must unite and help each other in fighting it and stopping it," Panelo said.

Panelo said Russia and other countries have not notified the Philippines about the form of support they want to provide but the doors are open. He added the support usually comes in the form of military hardware and intelligence-sharing.

"They have not said, but they are offering maybe, in terms of military equipment... Intelligence, if they have intelligence report which we don't know, they will share," he said.

In his statement shortly after the Jolo bombings, Putin reiterated Russia's readiness to further step up interaction with Philippine partners in combatting the terror threat in all its forms and manifestations.

Putin expressed shock over the twin blasts at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Mount Carmel.

France condemned the deadly terrorist attack in Jolo on Sunday as it assured the Filipinos that it stands alongside the Philippines in the fight against terrorism.

"France extends its condolences to the victims' families, as well as to the Filipino people. It stands alongside the Philippines in the fight against terrorism," the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs said in a statement.

– With Pia Lee-Brago

30 January 2019 tribune Page: A7

# Calida says Mindanao rebellion persists

He added that rebellion in Mindanao is not over and is far from over

By Alvin Murcia

Solicitor General Jose Calida yesterday chided petitioners seeking to stop the third extension of martial law and the suspension of the privilege of habeas corpus in Mindanao.

Calida, who represents the government in the petition against the third extension, told the Supreme Court justices during the oral arguments, that the recent attack in a cathedral in Jolo was a clear proof that peace remains elusive in the restive region.

He added that rebellion in Mindanao is not over and is far from over.

"The treacherous attacks of the rebels not only on the security forces but also on innocent civilians continue," he said.

He argued that no facts have been advanced (by the petitioners) to refute the factual basis for the extension of martial law and the suspension of the writ of habeas corpus.

CALIDA

Calida pointed out that what the petitioners have presented were mere conjectures and theories that seek to sow fear of martial law.

"Yet, there is a disconnect between the existence of rebellion and the supposed abuses the petitioners are alleging to delegitimize martial law," Calida elaborated.

Citing Article 134 of the Revised Penal Code, Calida said rebellion exists when there is public uprising and taking arms against the government and the purpose of the uprising is either to remove from the allegiance to the government or its laws.

Calida said the opportunity to end rebellion and terrorism is at hand and the chance to procure for the people and generations to come a lasting peace.

"In their present suit, they resurrect the issue of the supposed lack of actual rebellion in Mindanao, ignoring the determination by the Executive department of the existence of rebellion and the concurrence to such determination by the Legislative department," he noted.

"Our resolve to protect the people must be even greater than the will of those who seek to destroy the peace-loving Filipinos' way of life," he explained.

"Let us not be lulled into complacency by thinking that the rebels have finally laid down their arms and realized that only peace can move the country forward and bring lasting benefits for everyone," Calida stressed. A7

30 January 2019 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER Page: A9

# Leaders of 'lumad,' farmers missing

## Colleagues lose contact with duo after they failed to attend Bukidnon meeting

By Mart Sambalud
@inqmindanao

DAVAO CITY—Two leaders of militant groups left their base in Cagayan de Oro City for Bukidnon province on Monday to meet with a group of "lumad" (indigenous peoples) who sought their help in setting up a dialogue with the military.

But Datu Jomorito Goaynon, regional chair of the lumad group Kalumbay, and Ireneo Udarbe, chair of Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) in Northern Mindanao region, did not reach their destination in Talakag town that day.

They also failed to return home, according to Fr. Allan Khen Apus, who is speaking for human rights group Karapatan in Northern Mindanao.

Datu Jomorito Goaynon

Ireneo Udarbe

### Harassment

Apus said Goaynon and Udarbe were last seen at 10 a.m. on Monday leaving the village of Bulua in Cagayan de Oro for a meeting with members of Pig-uyonan, a chapter of Kalumbay, in Bukidnon.

"We learned that the purpose of their meeting with Pig-uyonan members ... was to look into the reported harassment and threats that members of the group were [receiving] from the military. It was on the same day (Jan. 28) that a dialogue was set between Pig-uyonan and the military's 65th Infantry Battalion (IB), which was to be facilitated by the Commission on Human Rights," Apus said.

The Inquirer's calls to military officials in Northern Mindanao went unanswered on Tuesday.

Michael Pineda, spokesperson for the regional KMP, said the last information that his group received from Goaynon and Udarbe came at 11 a.m. on Monday, advising them that they were stuck in traffic on the way to the meeting.

"The two never got to their meeting place. None of their relatives or friends had seen or heard from them afterward," Pineda said.

"Twice, calls to Datu Jomo were picked up but no one answered. His phone can no longer be reached [on Tuesday]. Udarbe's phone was still ringing but no one was picking it up," he added.

Pineda said Goaynon and Udarbe had been subjected to monitoring by suspected military personnel.

Apus said the leaders earlier informed their colleagues that they noticed two men on a motorcycle following them after they attended a meeting in Bukidnon on Jan. 24.

"We appeal to the public to help us find them. Right now, their safety ... is our utmost concern," Apus said.

On Jan. 22, Goaynon filed a complaint against the 65th IB for harassment. Earlier, a tarpaulin featuring a photograph of Goaynon was put up in Talakag and accused him of recruiting his fellow lumad to the New People's Army.

### Fighting martial law

The Moro group Suara Bangsamoro asked authorities to find Udarbe and Goaynon, one of the founding leaders of Sandugo Alliance of Moro and Indigenous Peoples for Self-Determination.

"Goaynon led his tribe's struggle to defend their ancestral land from encroachment. Peasant leader [Udarbe] is in the forefront of their community's assertion against the proposed conversion of their farmlands to oil palm plantation. Both of them have publicly deplored martial law and the horrors it casts upon the people of Mindanao," Jerome Aba, chair of Suara Bangsamoro, said in a statement. INQ

30 January 2019 INQUIRER Page: A5

**NPA land mine kills cop, wounds 7 others**

A police officer was killed and at least seven others were wounded in a roadside bombing perpetrated by communist New People's Army (NPA) rebels on Monday. The North Cotabato police, in a report, said two patrol cars loaded with policemen were at a checkpoint when a remotely detonated land mine exploded in Magpet town. Senior Insp. Rolando Dillera, Magpet police chief, said a PO1 Anadon, who was A5 driving one of the patrol cars, died of severe wounds at a hospital in Kidapawan City. Four other officers were being treated for blast injuries. The blast came after government soldiers claimed they killed an NPA rebel in a clash also in Magpet. Police said the roadside bombing was a retallatory act by NPA. —EDWIN O. FERNANDEZ

30 January 2019 INQUIRER Page: A5

**Peace talks with Reds: Du30 changes mind again**

President Duterte appears to have changed his mind again about resuming peace talks with communist rebels. The President said he would "never talk" to communist rebels again after declaring he would never negotiate with terror groups. "Same with the NPA. I will never talk to you. I can't do anything about it," Mr. Duterte said. He made the remarks during his visit to Jolo to condole with families of victims of the bombings there. Earlier this month, the President said he had not shut the door to peace talks with communist rebels.

—JULIE M. AURELIO

30 January 2019 THE PHILIPPINE STAR Page: 13

# Cop killed, 7 hurt in N. Cotabato blast

By JOHN UNSON

**NORTH COTABATO – A police officer was killed and seven of his colleagues were wounded when a bomb exploded in Magpet town at past 6 p.m. on Monday.**

The fatality was identified as Police Officer 1 Christopher Anadon.

SPO1 Michael Mariano Escano, PO2 Marinerl Pastores and PO1s Eliezer Langcuban, Darrell Ferolino, Phil Jan Ray Canarejo, Mark Vincent Capilitan and Franz Deo Lechago were brought to a hospital for treatment.

Superintendent Aldrin Gonzalez, Soccksargen police spokesman, said the victims, all with the North Cotabato Provincial Mobile Force Company, were returning to their camp from a security mission when the bomb exploded in Barangay Poblacion.

Police said New People's Army (NPA) rebels were believed to have set off the bomb.

The explosion came two days after two NPA rebels were killed in an encounter with personnel of the 19th Infantry Battalion in Barangay Bagumbayan, also in Magpet.

In Agusan del Sur, the body of Rolando Insayoy, a barangay *kagawad* who was snatched from his home in Purok 2, Barangay Valentina, Esperanza on Friday was found in a shallow grave in nearby Barangay Mantuganoy, San Luis yesterday.

Maj. Rodolfo Cordero Jr., 401st Infantry Brigade commander and civil-military officer, said Insayoy's brother received a phone call from suspected NPA rebels on where to get the remains of the victim.

The rebels reportedly killed Insayoy because he convinced his nephew, an NPA fighter, to surrender.

In Samar, two communist guerrillas were killed in an encounter with soldiers of the 63rd Infantry Battalion in Barangay Carolina, Matuguiano yesterday.

Lt. Gen. Noel Clement, Central Command chief, said soldiers recovered the guns of the slain rebels. – **With Ben Serrano, Michael Punongbayan**

13

12

30 January 2013 Standard TODAY Page A1

# Cotabato police car attacked; cop killed, 8 others wounded

By Francisco Tuyay

TWO New People's Army rebels and a policeman were killed while several others were wounded in a roadside blast and skirmishes in Cotabato and Samar Tuesday.

In Cotabato, a police patrol along the stretch between Barangay Dolores and Barangay Poblacion in the town of Magpet hit a roadside bomb at 9:20 a.m., said Sr. Supt. Maximo Cawas Layugan, director of the Cotabato Police Provincial Office.

Layugan said the explosion wounded all policemen on board and killed one of them.

The blast was followed by a burst of gunfire from the NPA rebels, prompting the police to return fire.

Layugan identified the slain policeman as P01 Christopher Anadon while the injured were P01 Stephenson Batoon Parreno; SP01 Michael Mariano Escano; P02 Marinerl Pastores; P01 Eliezer Langcuban; P01 Darrell Ferolino; P01 Phil Jan Ray Canarejo; P01 Franz Deo Lechago and P01

Mark Vincent Capilitan.

In Samar, a firefight between troops of the 63rd Infantry Battalion and 10 communist rebels broke out in Barangay Carolina, Matuguianao, leaving two NPA rebels dead at about 10 a.m. Tuesday.

Maj. Abel Potutan, Public Information Officer of the military's Central Command, said the clash erupted after soldiers responded to information of NPA extortion activities in the village.

Next page

"Troops were able to catch up with these terrorist, and were able to push them out of the community leaving two of their dead comrades behind with one M16 rifle, one KG9 and one shotgun," Lt. Col. Rizaldo Laurena, commander of the 63rd Infantry Battalion.

In Rizal, meanwhile, three rebels surrendered to the military and handed over an M1 carbine and a caliber .22 rifle.

28 January 2019 Malaya Page: 12
The National Newspaper

# Cop killed, 8 others injured in NPA ambush in Cotabato

**BY VICTOR REYES**

A POLICEMAN was killed while eight other lawmen were injured in an ambush staged by communist New People's Army rebels in Magpet town in Cotabato on Monday night.

Cotabato Provincial Police Director Senior Supt. Maximo Cawas Layugan identified the slain cop as PO1 Christopher Anadon, detailed with the Cotabato Police Mobile Force Company.

PO1 Stephenson Batoon Parreño was seriously wounded and was confined at a hospital in Kidawan City.

Seven others incurred minor injuries but chose to remain on duty. They were identified as SPO1 Michael Mariano Escaño, PO2 Marinerl Pastores, PO1 Eliezer Langcuban, PO1 Darrell Perolino, PO1 Phil Jan Ray Canarejo, PO1 Franz Deo Lechago, and PO1 Mark Vincent Capilitan

Layugan said the cops were aboard two police vehicles on patrol when the rebels detonated an improvised bomb on a road in Barangay Poblacion at around 6 p.m. Monday.

He said the explosion was followed by a volley of fire from the rebels and policemen fought back. No one was reported killed or injured on the side of the rebels who retreated after a brief firefight.

Two NPA rebels were killed in clash with soldiers in Matuguianao town in Samar yesterday morning, according to Maj. Abel Potutan, spokesman of the AFP's Central Command.

Potutan said troops from the Army's 63rd Infantry Battalion conducted security operation in the area after residents complained about the presence of rebels engaged in extortion activities.

Potutan said soldiers caught up with the rebels in Barangay Carolina at around 10 a.m. yesterday, leading to a firefight.

"Troops were able to catch up with these terrorists and were able to push them out of the community leaving two of their dead comrades behind with one M16 rifle, one KG9 and one Shotgun," said 63rd IB commander Lt. Col. Rizaldo Laurena.

20 January 2019 MANILA BULLETIN THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER Page: 16

# AFP overruns NPA camp in Surigao del Norte

By MIKE U. CRISMUNDO

CAMP BANCASI, Butuan City – Military troops overran an encampment believed to belong to the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army (CPP-NPA) in Sitio Little Baguio, Barangay Payapag, Bacuag, Surigao del Norte, Maj. Ronald C. Putol, Civil Military Operation (CMO) officer of the Army's 402nd Infantry (Stingers) Brigade based here told The Manila Bulletin on Tuesday.

He said the seized CPP-NPA encampment could accommodate 50 persons, with makeshift huts and listening posts. It was said to be the hideout of Guerilla front Committee 16 of the guerilla Northeastern Mindanao Regional Committee (NEMRC).

Earlier, while conducting peace and security operations, elements of 30th Infantry (Python) Battalion (30thIB) encountered some 30 CPP-NPA terrorists in the Little Baguio area for an hour that resulted in the killing of two NPAs and wounding of an undetermined number of other rebels, Putol said.

The fierce gunbattle happened last January 25, and the pursuit operation spilled over the weekend that resulted in the discovery of the CPP-NPA hideout in Little Baguio, he said.

"Pieces of human flesh were found in the area where anti-personnel mines were planted indicative that the CNTs may have mistakenly detonated their anti-personnel mine (APM)victimizing their own comrades, which APM are banned by the Ottawa Treaty," the 402nd CMO officer further claimed.

Operating troops of the 30th IB under the command of Lt. Col. Allen Raymund Tomas seized in the Little Baguio encounter an AK47 rifle, an M16 Armalite rifle and three long magazine clips for M16 rifle with 40 rounds of 5.56mm live ammunitions, a rifle scope, and other materials belonging to the rebels.

Brig. Gen. Franco Nemesio M. Gacal, commanding general of the Army's 402nd "Stingers" Brigade also told The Manila Bulletin on Tuesday that their focused operation will continue "without let up" against the rebels through proactive measures to prevent the CNTs from conducting harassment, extortion and other atrocities.

16

15

20 January 2019 MANILA BULLETIN THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER Page: 14

## 2 NPAs nabbed

BUTUAN CITY – Two alleged New People's Army (NPA) members were captured after a brief gunbattle on Monday with government security forces in Purok 6, Sitio Mapising, Barangay Tagnanan, Mabini, Compostela (ComVal) province, First Lt. Jhocell D. Asis, Civil Military Operation (CMOC) officer of the Army's 71st Infantry (Kaibigan) Battalion (71st IB) said. In a statement sent to The Manila Bulletin late Monday afternoon, the 71st IB CMO officer said joint intelligence operation with the team of the Second ComVal Mobile Force Company, Mabini Municipal Police Station (MPS) and 71st IB, were conducting focused military operation (FMO) when they figured in a briefed two-minute gunfight with Communist rebels. "The two-minute encounter resulted to the capture of two NPA members whose identities are temporarily withheld as tactical investigation is still ongoing," said Asis. The rebels were brought to the PNP Mabini station while awaiting the filing of appropriate charges against them. (Mike U. Crismundo)

20 January 2019 MANILA BULLETIN THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER Page: 16

# Police officer dead, 8 wounded in Magpet roadside bombing

By **ZEA C. CAPISTRANO** and **JOSEPH JUBELAG**

DAVAO CITY – A police officer died while being treated for his injuries, while eight other officers were wounded following an attack by suspected rebels in Magpet town, Cotabato, Monday.

The Magpet Police said PO1 Christopher Anadon, a resident of Parang, Maguindanao sustained serious injuries, and was later declared dead on-arrival at hospital, after a convoy of two police vehicles were hit by two landmine explosions along the highway in Barangay Poblacion, Magpet town at around 5:45 p.m. Monday.

The police report also said PO1 Stephenson Batoon Parreño, 27, was rushed to Kidapawan City with Anadon for medical treatment.

Those who sustained minor injuries were SPO1 Michael Mariano G. Escaño, 42; PO2 Marinerl R. Pastores, 38; PO1 Eliezer D. Langcuban, 27; PO1 Darrell E. Ferolino, 26; PO1 Phil Jan Ray C. Canarejo, 27; PO1 Franz Deo A. Lechago, 25; and PO1 Mark Vincent Capilitan, 30.

Capt. Teresita Cansancio, spokesperson of 4th Infantry Division, said the policemen were assigned with the Provincial Police Mobile Force Company.

Chief Insp. Rolando Dillera, Magpet police chief, said the police convoy was on its way home to their headquarters in Kidapawan City when the incident happened.

Dillera said New People's Army (NPA) rebels belonging to the Guerrilla Front 53, under an alias Commander Alon, as the culprits. The NPA has not yet issued a statement claiming responsibility for the attack.

Cansancio said security forces have tracked down the perpetrators who withdrew towards Barangay Inac, Magpet.

She said the landmine attacks could be a retaliatory offensive against government forces after an NPA member was killed while another was wounded during a fire fight with Army troops in Barangay Bagumbayan, Magpet last Sunday. (With a report from Armando Fenequito, Jr.)

30 January 2019 The Manila Times Page: A7

# Army hunts down NPAs after Magpet bombings

BY JULMUNIR I. JANNARAL

COTABATO CITY: The Philippine Army launched massive manhunt operations against the New People's Army (NPA) communist rebels, who set off two roadside bombs that killed a police officer and wounded eight others on Monday night in Magpet, North Cotabato.

Col. Erlich Noel Paraso, commander of the Army's 19th Infantry Battalion (19IB) on Tuesday said the operation was ongoing in the mountains of Magpet, particularly near the country's highest peak Mount Apo.

Senior Insp. Rolando Dillera, Magpet town police chief, identified the slain officer as Police Officer (PO)1 Christopher Anadon of the North Cotabato police mobile force.

Anadon, 29, of Parang, Maguindanao, who was driving one of the police cars, died at a hospital in Kidapawan City.

The victims were on board a convoy of two police cars on their way back to the police station when two anti-personnel mines exploded in Barangay Poblacion of Magpet at about 6 p.m.

Also wounded were PO1 Stephenson Batoon Parreño, 27, of Carmen, North Cotabato; Senior Police Officer 1 Michael Mariano Escaño, 42, of Kidapawan City; PO2 Marinerl Pastores, 38, of Midsayap, North Cotabato; PO1 Eliezer Langcuban, 27, of Aleosan, North Cotabato; PO1 Darrel Ferolina, 26, of Midsayap; PO1 Phil Jan Ray Canarejo, 2, of Aleosan; and PO1 Mark Vincent Capilitan, 30, of Kidapawan City.

Paraso said the roadside bombing was the NPA's retaliatory attack against government forces after a rebel was killed and his son was wounded during an encounter in Barangay Bagumbayan, Magpet on Sunday morning.

"We are hunting them down, we will get them; we know exactly where they are, it's just a matter of time that justice will be served," Paraso vowed.

Paraso also challenged the NPA sympathizers like the militant groups Karapatan and Bayan Muna to issue statements condemning the bombing against police officers.

"I challenged you to condemn the rebel atrocities, much as you condemn when there is military operation," he added.

Paraso assured that no civilians were affected in the on-going military offensive.

30 January 2019 The Manila Times Page: A3

# Duterte again shuts door on peace talks with Reds

PRESIDENT Rodrigo Duterte again declared that he would not talk peace with communist rebels amid their continued attacks on government troops and civilians.

In a speech during his visit to Jolo, Sulu on Monday, Duterte assailed the communist group's armed wing, the New People's Army (NPA), for attacking military and police personnel.

*"Hindi na ako makipag-usap sa inyo. Eh walang magawa. Magpakabuti ka, pasunud-sunuran ka lang.* You practically begged (I will never talk to you. I can't do anything. You do something good to them, you follow their whims. You practically begged)," Duterte said.

*"Tapos in return ito ang ibigay ninyo sa akin. Mga kabaong puti iyong mga naputol mga paa. Ay p***** i**. Hindi ako... 'Di na bale ako makulong pagkatapos nito.* (In return you give me coffins and dismembered limbs. Son of a bitch. Not me... Never mind if I go to jail after this," he added.

Duterte made the statement on the day that rebels detonated a bomb in Magpet, North Cotabato, killing a police officer.

The peace talks between the government and the communist group broke down in November 2017.

In November 2018, Duterte formally ended the peace negotiations and ordered the military to "destroy" the rebel group.

The NPA rebels have been waging war against the government for the past 50 years, which is considered as the world's longest-running communist rebellion.

CATHERINE S. VALENTE

30 January 2018 Standard TODAY Page: A2

# Rody changes tack, slams door to peace gab revival

By Nat Mariano

PRESIDENT Rodrigo Duterte on Monday again shut the doors on the possible resumption of the peace talks with the communist rebels after saying early this month he could not afford to lose all channels of communication with them.

In his speech during his visit to the site of the bomb explosions that killed 21 people in Jolo, Sulu, Duterte said the rebels' continuing attacks on the armed forces negated the very purpose of resuming the peace negotiations.

"It's the same with the New People's Army. I will not talk to you anymore. There's nothing we can do. You try to be straight, follow, there's a story. You practically begged... We'll just make a story... We won't," Duterte told soldiers in Jolo on Tuesday afternoon.

"And then in return, you will give me this. Coffins, dismembered legs. Son of a b***h. Not me... Doesn't matter if I land in jail after this. It's all mine, all mine."

Two weeks ago, the former head of the Philippine Coconut Authority Avelino Andal claimed that Duterte ordered him to conduct backchannel talks with the Communist Party of the Philippines.

After Andal made headlines for his revelation, the Palace refuted his claim, saying he was not authorized to represent the government in the negotiating table.

In December last year, Duterte signed Executive Order 70 directing the creation of a national task force to ensure an efficient and effective strategy to address the decades-old communist insurgency in the country.

The peace talks between the government and the communist rebels bogged down in November 2017 after Duterte walked away from the negotiating table, repeatedly blaming the rebels for violating the ceasefire agreements.

Since then, the armed forces have pursued offensives against the communist rebels across the country.

Duterte had previously imposed conditions before the revival of the peace talks, but CPP founding chairman Jose Maria Sison shrugged off the government's push for localized peace talks, calling it a "cheap trick" that had failed many times. A2

30 January 2019 Tempo Page: 4

# Troops find evidence of APM blast in NPA camp

By MIKE U. CRISMUNDO

BUTUAN CITY – Troops found traces of human flesh in an abandoned New People's Army (NPA) camp in Sitio Little Bagulo over the weekend, indicating a possible accidental detonation of anti-personnel mines, according to Maj. Ronald Putol yesterday.

"Pieces of human flesh were found in the area where anti-personnel mines were planted indicative that the CNTs (Communist New People's Army Terrorists) may have mistakenly detonated their anti-perso·. mine (APM) victimizing their own comrades, which APM are banned by the Ottawa Treaty," said Putol of the Army's 402nd Infantry (Stingers) Brigade.

Putol said the encampment can accommodate 50 persons and features makeshift huts and listening posts.

It was near the site of an hour-long firefight last Jan. 25 between the 30th Infantry Batallion and a band of 30 suspected communist rebels. Two rebels were killed and undetermined number were wounded, according to Putol.

Troops, under Lt. Col. Allen Raymund Tomas, seized from the camp one AK47 rifle, one M16 Armalite rifle and three long magazine for M16 rifle with 40 rounds of 5.56mm live ammunitions, one rifle scope, APMs, 100 meters of electrical wires, 40 ponchos, 25 backpacks with personal belongings, 20 hammocks, seven pairs of rain boots, nine cooking pots, two gallons of cooking oil, two flashlights, one stethoscope, assorted medicines and medical supplies including contraceptive pills and several subversive documents.

Brig. Gen. Franco Nemesio Gacal, commanding general of the Army's 402nd Brigade, said their operation will continue without let up against the rebels. 4

30 January 2019 STAR Page: 1

# BI on alert vs foreign terrorists

By EVELYN MACAIRAN

Not discounting the possibility that foreign terrorists might attempt to enter the country, Bureau of Immigration (BI) Commissioner Jaime Morente yesterday placed personnel at international ports on heightened alert.

In a statement, the BI commissioner also ordered the beefing up of security after the twin blasts in Jolo, Sulu last Sunday.

"I have instructed our port operations division to alert all its personnel and be on the lookout for suspected foreign terrorists

Turn to Page 7

## BI From Page 1

who might attempt to enter the country," Morente said.

Morente added that foreigners who cannot satisfactorily explain their purpose in visiting the country would be returned to their port of origin.

BI Port Operations Division chief Grifton Medina said he has directed all immigration officers to be meticulous in performing their tasks.

"They were reminded to make sure that only aliens who are properly documented and are legitimate travelers with valid reasons in coming here are admitted," Medina said.

Medina added that frontline personnel were also told to be careful in scrutinizing travel documents.

Aside from BI officers performing primary line duties, Medina said members of the travel control and enforcement unit and border control and intelligence unit have also been alerted.

"The intelligence community has been very helpful. This is a shared fight to protect our country," Medina said.

– With Rudy Santos

30 January 2019 THE STAR Page: 13

## ACROSS THE COUNTRY

### Abu bomber shot dead; bomb materials seized

ZAMBOANGA CITY – A suspected Abu Sayyaf bomber was killed in a shootout with police officers in this city on Monday.

Chief Superintendent Emmanuel Luis Licup, Zambbanga peninsula police director, said Mohamar Lungbos Hasilun, alias Weng-Weng, 21, fired at personnel of the 904th Mobile Company and intelligence unit of the Regional Mobile Force Battalion 9 who spotted him in Barangay Sto. Niño.

Senior Superintendent Joseph Thomas Martir, city police chief, said the suspect tried to escape, but was cornered at an abandoned building.

A caliber .45 pistol that Hasilun reportedly used and his bag, which contained a bottle of ammonium nitrate fuel oil, a hand grenade, a detonating cord, a cellular phone and electric wires, among other bomb materials, were recovered.

"Maybe he brought them here because the situation in their area is tight," Martir said.

Authorities beefed up security in the city following the deadly bombings in Jolo.

13

– Roel Pareño

20 January 2019 THE STAR Page: 6

# 'Jolo bombing justifies ML extension in south'

By EDU PUNAY

The bombing of Jolo cathedral in Sulu last Sunday is proof that Mindanao remains under threat and justifies the extension of martial law in the southern island, Solicitor General Jose Calida said yesterday.

In oral arguments at the Supreme Court on petitions challenging the third extension of martial law declaration, Calida said the twin bombings that killed 21 people and wounded over 100 only strengthened the factual basis for the extension of Proclamation 216 for another year or until December 2019.

"That's part of the ongoing rebellion. But even without the Jolo bombing we already have factual basis," he stressed. "There is still need to extend martial law because of the ongoing threat to public safety and the rebellion not only by communist groups but the local terrorist groups as well, especially those Daesh-inspired groups."

Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) deputy chief for intelligence Major Gen. Pablo Lorenzo supported Calida's statement and told the SC justices that the attack was a clear evidence of the need for public safety, which is a requirement in the Constitution for the declaration of martial law.

He presented to the Court the AFP report on the bombing at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Cathedral that killed five military personnel, a Coast Guard member and 15 civilians.

But Albay 1st District Rep. Edcel Lagman disagreed as he argued that the Jolo bombing could not be used to justify martial law extension in Mindanao because the administration categorized the incident as a terrorist act.

During the hearing, Calida cited the AFP data on the number of active members of the terrorist groups Abu Sayyaf, Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters and Saulah Islamiyah as well as those identified as Maguid group and Turaifie group.

He also cited the influx of foreign terrorists in the country "who are responsible for training local terrorist fighters."

"Numerous lives have been lost because of the atrocities committed by the rebels. The rebellion poses a clear and present danger to the lives and limbs of the public. A single bomb that is undetected because of diminished military activity in Mindanao could potentially produce catastrophic results," he warned during his argument.

Associate Justice Benjamin Caguioa scrutinized the AFP report and, during interpellation, questioned why in the numerous incidents cited, authorities were able to identify the perpetrators and established their motives in only seven of the cases.

He also asked why the AFP cited as factual basis for rebellion the incidents like an Abu Sayyaf member shooting a fellow member, a harassment incident in Basilan due to family feud and the kidnapping of a pump boat driver in Sabah. These were aside from eight incidents that were categorized as either politically motivated or because of a family feud.

Caguioa likewise asked how could the government tell if rebellion no longer persists in Mindanao and if it would already warrant the lifting of martial law.

Lorenzo replied: "It's not the killing of every single rebel our there, rather it is the attainment of the level of security whereby the groups cannot impose their will on the people or they are no longer effective as far as fulfilling their political goals."

## 'Beyond judicial review'

Apart from demonstrating the factual basis for the extension of martial law, the solicitor general also argued that the decision of Congress to approve the President's request is beyond judicial review.

"Congress has the sole prerogative to extend the proclamation of martial law and the suspension of the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus. The 1987 Constitution does not limit the period for which Congress can extend them, and prohibit Congress from granting further extensions to the proclamation or suspension," he pointed out.

He also cited the high court's earlier ruling that upheld the previous extension of martial law, which held that there are sufficient legal safeguards against human rights abuses raised by petitioners.

With these arguments, he

asked the Court to dismiss four similar petitions filed by opposition lawmakers led by Lagman, the Makabayan bloc led by Bayan Muna party-list Rep. Carlos Zarate, the group led by former Commission on Elections chair Christian Monsod and the *lumad* teachers and students represented by the Free Legal Assistance Group.

"The extension of martial law was not declared on a mere whim. It is founded on the harsh reality that rebels and terrorists continue to operate openly, planning, plotting and attacking military and civilians alike in Mindanao... We cannot for a moment think that the war has already been won. The price of victory is vigilance. We cannot let our guard down even for a moment," Calida said.

For Sen. Panfilo Lacson, the existing martial law in Mindanao has no additional power but a mere "psy ops" (psychological operations), referring to planned operations to convey selected information to influence the emotions, motives, objective reasoning, and, ultimately, the behavior of organizations, groups and individuals.

Senate President Pro Tempore Ralph Recto said the bloody Sulu cathedral bombing is the first leadership test for the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) leaders who are set to assume the reins of the Bangsamoro autonomous government.

"The participation of rebels-turned-government-officials is a must... Nothing prevents the MILF, which is a government-in-waiting, from being a government in action," he added.

Meanwhile, the Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches (PCEC) yesterday asked Duterte to defend peace and order in Mindanao.

PCEC national director Bishop Noel Pantoja said in a statement that they decry in the strongest terms the two explosions at the cathedral in Jolo just days after the plebiscite on the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL).

He believes the bombing was "clearly an attempt by lawless persons to subvert the majority's will and the sincere desire of the Bangsamoro people for genuine peace, harmony, security and development in Mindanao." ⊙

**– With Cecille Suerte Felipe, Evelyn Macairan, Jose Rodel Clapano**

30 January 2019 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER Page: A5

# Palace on CBCP apology for silence: Just pray

**By Christine O. Avendaño and Tina G. Santos**
@Team_Inquirer

Instead of attacking the administration, which already has "enough critics," the Church should pray for the success of President Duterte and focus on the spiritual needs of the people.

Presidential spokesperson Salvador Panelo made the statement on Tuesday, a day after the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) said it would meet the President's attacks against the Church with "silence and prayer" but would not stop speaking out against his policies.

Asked whether the Church's criticisms against the government were considered interference in the affairs of the state, Panelo said: "What [the President is] saying is the Church is supposed to be in spiritual side."

"Since [the Church] is concerned with the spiritual, just pray. Teach people what is right and wrong," he said.

### Breaking silence

In a rare move, the largest group of Catholic bishops in the Philippines has sought forgiveness for its lengthy silence over "disturbing issues," such as the President's bloody war on drugs and his attacks on the Church and its doctrines.

"Forgive us for the length of time that it took us to find our collective voice," the CBCP said in a pastoral letter issued late on Monday.

"We, too, needed to be guided properly in prayer and discernment before we could guide you," it said.

In the letter headlined "Conquering Evil with Good," the bishops admitted silence over "disturbing issues about which you may have felt you urgently needed our spiritual and pastoral guidance."

It opposed efforts led by Mr. Duterte's allies to lower the age of criminal liability for children, and said it had seen a "culture of violence has gradually prevailed in our land," referring also to a deadly church bombing on Sunday.

### Hate cycle

Catholic bishops also denounced the "cycle of hate" in the country, citing as the latest example the bombings in Jolo which killed and wounded scores of people.

Mr. Duterte's tirades against the Catholic Church are now famous.

Claiming sexual abuse by a priest, Mr. Duterte had called God "stupid," characterized as "silly" the doctrine of the Holy Trinity and accused bishops of concealing their homosexuality.

The CBCP said bishops understood the need to fight crime and drugs, but were concerned "when we started hearing of mostly poor people being brutally murdered on mere suspicion of being small-time drug users and peddlers," while bigger players were left alone. A5

Police said more than 5,000 drug suspects had been killed for fighting back while being arrested.

—WITH A REPORT FROM REUTERS INQ

30 January 2019 INQUIRER Page: A2

# Duterte says Abus behind church blasts

**By Christine O. Avendaño and Jeannette I. Andrade**
@Team_Inquirer

President Duterte on Tuesday night said the Abu Sayyaf terrorist group was behind the twin blasts at a Catholic church in Jolo, Sulu province, that killed more than 20 people and wounded nearly 100 others on Sunday and that the attack was carried out by two suicide bombers.

Speaking to reporters in Malabon City, Mr. Duterte said he was sure the Abu Sayyaf was responsible for the attack on the Cathedral of Our Lady of Mount Carmel on Sunday morning.

"There is no one else. Nobody but nobody can perpetuate that kind of terrorism thereabout in that place. I have no doubt. That is what the military told me and that is what the police relayed to me," Mr. Duterte said.

**Couple carried out attack**

The President said a couple carried out the attack.

The wife detonated her bomb inside the cathedral and the husband set off his outside the church, he said.

Asked whether the couple were foreigners, Mr. Duterte said the reports were "conflicting."

"They said it's Indonesian. Others say from the looks of it, it was ... nothing could be found. No part of the body ... Because it exploded. It's really terrorism and it's suicide bombing—unless it was placed there," Mr. Duterte said.

Told that the military had ruled out suicide bombing in the attack and the explosions were remotely triggered, Mr. Duterte said: "Yes, that's a possibility. But the eyewitnesses said it's the other way around. [The suicide bombers] probably had companions or support system."

Earlier on Tuesday, the military ruled out suicide bombing in the Jolo blasts, belying the claim of the Islamic State (IS) jihadi group in Iraq and Syria that it was responsible for the attack.

A 14-year-old girl wounded in the explosion in the church died in hospital on Monday, bringing to 21 the death toll from the attack that investigators described as the work of terrorists.

Authorities expected the death toll to rise as other blast victims were battling for their lives in various hospitals.

IS claimed on its news site Amaq on Sunday that two suicide bombers carried out the attack, killing more than 120 people.

**Bomb deployment**

But Col. Noel Detoyato, chief of the Armed Forces of the Philippines' public affairs office, said on Tuesday that two survivors had spoken about seeing a woman leaving a bag in a pew in the fifth row from the back of the nave then hurriedly getting out of the church.

"That is the method of deployment [of the bomb] so it's not a suicide bombing," Detoyato told reporters at a news

'PERSONS OF INTEREST'. The military has identified four teenagers as "persons of interest" spotted by security cameras acting suspiciously before and after explosions rocked the Cathedral of Our Lady of Mount Carmel on Sunday. —AFP VIDEOGRAB

conference at the military's headquarters in Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City.

The Philippine National Police, however, has not dropped the suicide bombing angle, according to Interior Secretary Eduardo Año.

"But we cannot know for sure until we complete the interview of survivors and gather sufficient information," Año said in a statement on Tuesday.

Año, however, dismissed the IS claim of responsibility, saying local terrorist groups were likely behind Sunday's attack.

Detoyato cited intelligence from as early as August last year that indicated the bandit group Abu Sayyaf had plans to bomb Catholic churches in Jolo, Basilan and Zamboanga.

Priests at the Mount Carmel cathedral in Jolo had also received threats, Detoyato said.

**Security relaxed**

The cathedral and its surroundings had been under tight security since August, he said, but this was relaxed on Sunday on a request from some businesses in the area.

Detoyato explained that the tight security had hurt businesses in the area and that some of the traders had asked for an easing of the security on Sundays, when people flocked to the church, so they could do better business.

The lowering of the guard enabled the carrier of the first bomb to get past the security perimeter and a possible lapse in security at the cathedral, according to Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana, enabled the carrier to enter the church.

The first blast ripped through the nave as Mass was being celebrated, shattering pews and glass windows, and hurling bodies and body parts around.

As people stampeded out of the church and government forces rushed in, the second bomb, located somewhere in the compound, went off, causing more deaths and injuries and flinging human remains and debris across the square in front of the cathedral.

"We will never know how the bombers got in or near the

church, as the soldiers guarding the main door all died," Lorenzana said in a message to reporters.

"Other soldiers who were getting in to rescue the victims of the first explosion inside the church were also hit by the second bomb," he said.

Later on Tuesday, Lorenzana said the first bomb was left by a woman in a pew inside the church, agreeing with Detoyato's account.

But the second bomb, which exploded at the entrance to the church, may have been set off by a suicide bomber, "as indicated by body parts strewn all over," Lorenzana said.

He said police investigators were trying to establish the identity of the second bomber.

**Military version**

Detoyato had a different take on the second bomb.

He said it was not left in the utility box of a parked motorcycle, as earlier reported, because the area in front of the cathedral was a no-parking zone.

Detoyato said no one could have ascertained how the second bomb, which went off two minutes after the first one had exploded, had been placed outside the church because commotion broke out after the first explosion.

The military is looking into the possible involvement of the Ajang-Ajang, an Abu Sayyaf subgroup composed of men in their 20s and 30s who run errands for the bandits in urban centers, after four teenagers were spotted by security cameras acting suspiciously in the church zone before and after the explosions.

Detoyato said the teenagers were persons of interest to investigators and that they had been identified, but he did not disclose their identities. A2

Col. Gerry Besana, spokesperson for the AFP Western Mindanao Command, said on Tuesday the military was hunting a bomb maker known only as Kamah, the man seen by security cameras riding a motorcycle in the church zone before the explosions on Sunday.

—WITH REPORTS FROM JAYMEE T. GAMIL AND JULIE ALIPALA INQ

30 January 2019

MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

Page: A1

# Int'l community condemns Jolo attacks, conveys solidarity with PH

By ROY C. MABASA

The governments of France, China, Russia, and Japan condemned the attack against the Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Cathedral in Jolo on January 27 that resulted in the deaths of 21 people and the wounding of dozens of others and extended their condolences and sympathies to the victims' families and to all those affected by the twin bombings. ▶5

**FIGURES OF INTEREST – Footage from a surveillance camera near the Jolo Cathedral shows three men lurking near the church moments before the two explosions last Sunday. Police identified the man in blue-green jacket as the one who detonated the bombs.**

# Int'l community condemns... ◂1

They renewed their commitment to support and step up engagement with the Philippines in fighting violent extremism and terrorism.

China Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Geng Shuang said Beijing "strongly condemns" the violent attacks in Sulu province and condoles with the bereaved families of those killed.

"China opposes all forms of terrorism and stands ready to work with the international community including the Philippines to jointly combat threats and challenges posed by terrorism and safeguard international and regional peace and stability," he said in a press conference in Beijing Monday night.

Russian President Vladimir Putin, in a telegram sent to President Rodrigo R. Duterte, stated Russia's "readiness to further step up interaction" with Philippine partners in combating terrorist threat in all its forms and manifestations.

"A crime committed against civilians who had congregated for church services is shocking in its cynicism and cruelty. I expect that the masterminds and perpetrators of this crime will sustain the punishment they deserve," he said.

"People in Russia share the grief of the victims' friends and families and hope for a prompt recovery of the injured," he added.

In a statement Tuesday, the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs said it is one with the Philippines in its fight against terrorism.

"France utterly condemns the attack against the cathedral in Jolo Island last January 27, for which Daesh has claimed responsibility and which killed some 20 people and injured around 100 others, according to the information available," its statement reads.

"France extends its condolences to the victims' families, as well as to the Filipino people. It stands alongside the Philippines in the fight against terrorism," it added.

**'Expressing solidarity'**

The Japanese Embassy in Manila on Tuesday also offered "sincerest condolences" to the victims of the explosions.

"Such terrorist attacks shall never be tolerated. Japan firmly condemns this terrorist act in the strongest terms," Ambassador to Manila Koji Haneda said as he expressed solidarity with the Philippine government.

Meanwhile, he reiterated Tokyo's support to the peace process in Mindanao and the recently ratified Bangsamoro Organic Law.

"Japan will continue to support the Philippines in achieving sustainable peace and stability in Mindanao in accordance with the ongoing political transition process under the Bangsamoro Organic Law," he stressed.

Further joining the international community in deploring the terror act, considered the worst in recent years, was United Kingdom Asia and the Pacific Minister Mark Field.

"Our prayers are with all the victims and their loved ones. The UK stands with the Philippines against terror and hatred," he said in a tweet on his official account.

Twin explosions on Sunday morning ripped through the Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Cathedral in Jolo, Sulu in the middle of a church service, killing 20 and injuring 112.

The entire Jolo is currently on lockdown as the perpetrators remain at large.

Earlier, Armed Forces of the Philippines spokesperson Brig. Gen. Edgard Arevalo dismissed the claims made by the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) it is responsible for the cathedral attack, describing it as "propaganda."

**Travel advisories**

Department of National Defense (DND) Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said it is the prerogative of other countries to warn their citizens from traveling to areas they deem unsafe.

The United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) issued a travel advisory following the bombing in Jolo, Sulu.

"We cannot question other countries' duty to warn their nationals. (It's the) same as it is our own prerogative to give similar warning to our citizens," he said in message to reporters late Monday.

Earlier, the United Kingdom FCO advised against all travel to western and central Mindanao and the Sulu archipelago because of terrorist activity and clashes between the military and insurgent groups.

It also advised against all kinds of travel, except for essential ones, to the remainder of Mindanao (excluding Camiguin, Dinagat and Siargao Islands) and to the south of Cebu province, up to and including the municipalities of Dalaguete and Badian, due to the threat of terrorism. (With PNA)

30 January 2019 MANILA BULLETIN THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER Page: 14

# Hunt on for 'Kamah,' 2 others in Jolo blast

By MARTIN A. SADONGDONG

Police are now hot on the trail of a person identified only as alias "Kamah" and two other persons-of-interest behind the deadly bomb attack at a church in Jolo, Sulu which left at least 21 people dead and 112 wounded.

Philippine National Police (PNP) chief, Director General Oscar Albayalde confirmed the identity of one of the persons-of-interest as Kamah, in a text message to the Manila Bulletin late Monday night.

The PNP Chief said Kamah was the person seen wearing a blue green jacket near the cathedral moments before the explosion.

In a closed-circuit television (CCTV) video obtained by authorities, a young man wearing a blue green jacket was seen along with two others near the Jolo Cathedral.

At one point, the man was seen giving something to his companion who was wearing a cap and bag but the video was abruptly interrupted when the first blast occurred.

In another CCTV footage, the man was seen successfully passing what he intended to pass to his companion.

Panic ensued and the people started running away including the three men. However, the man in blue green jacket ran to the opposite direction.

According to authorities, the young man in the blue green jacket was Kamah who detonated the bombs.

Albayalde said that Kamah belongs to the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) sub-group Ajang-Ajang, which was earlier tagged by the military as the one behind the Jolo Cathedral blast last Sunday.

"Ajang-Ajang is no different from the Abu Sayyaf Group. The ASG is using younger fighters to carry out offensive attacks. The members of Ajang-Ajang are either the orphans of the ASG or their relatives," Albayalde said in a separate television interview Tuesday.

No other details have been disclosed as to the identity of Kamah but a report from radio DZMM said he is the brother of slain ASG leader Surakah Ingog.

"This group [Ajang-Ajang] is originally from Sulu, that is where their lair is. We only know his alias but the investigators said he is known in the community because he lives there," Albayalde added.

Albayalde said they have yet to establish if the item Kamah was trying to pass to his companion was the trigger of the bombs.

"Our EOD [Explosive Ordnance Division] believes the bombs were electronically-detonated so we have to determine whether it was the cellphone that he was giving to his companions," Albayalde noted.

He also appealed to residents of Jolo to inform the authorities about the real

identity of Kamah and his two companions.

"They are considered persons-of-interest because we're trying to establish here whether it's only a coincidence that they were near the church when this incident happened or they have something to do with it," Albayalde explained.

'Act of terror'

The police have yet to establish the motive behind the attack but Albayalde said they couldn't see any link between the incident and the recently held Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL), which seeks to establish a new Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM).

Although the BOL was deemed ratified, Sulu province rejected the BOL according to the Commission on Elections (Comelec).

However, Albayalde said one thing is for sure now – that the Jolo Cathedral blast was an "act of terror."

"We see it as a plain act of terror. We couldn't see anything that would link this incident to the plebiscite," he said.

Earlier, the Islamic State (ISIS) has claimed responsibility for the Jolo blast.

The Abu Sayyaf Group, meanwhile, has pledged its allegiance to the ISIS, according to the military and police.

**Death toll**

The country's top cop also raised the possibility that the number of casualties will rise as dismembered parts were found by the investigators underneath the rubbles.

"We are still identifying at least two [victims]. There were dismembered parts that our men on the ground have discovered," Albayalde disclosed.

As of this writing, the death toll has already reached 21. An injured civilian who was brought to a hospital in Zamboanga died Monday afternoon, Albayalde said.

Of the 112 injured, only 54 are still confined in different hospitals.

30 January 2019 MANILA BULLETIN THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER Page: A1

# Keep civilians safe – Duterte

## Military may use land, sea, air assets to go after Abu Sayyaf

By GENALYN D. KABILING

In the wake of the deadly twin bombings in Jolo, Sulu, President Duterte has authorized the military to drop bombs on the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) but reminded them to avoid collateral damage.

"I ordered you to destroy the organization. I'm ordering you now: Pulpugin ninyo ang Abu Sayyaf [crush the Abu Sayyaf] by whatever means," Duterte said during his visit to Jolo Monday.

The President said the government troops could use land, sea and air assets to "destroy" the ASG but must let the civilian community leave the conflict zone to avoid casualties ▶5

## Keep civilians safe... ◀1

or injuries.

"Meron man tayong helicopter, may eroplano, may mga barko. Eh iyong mga bala natin diyan sa mga kanyon ninyo... Paputukin na ninyo. I-bomba muna ninyo lahat, magbili na tayo nang bagong stock. Ngayon kung may inosente mamatay, iwasan ninyo [We have helicopters, airplanes and ships. Launch the canons and bomb everything. We will buy new stocks. Now if there are innocents who might be killed, you should avoid it]," he said.

Duterte said once the military finds a target area, the civilian community must be allowed to leave the area for their own safety. He assured that the government was ready to provide food and other assistance to the people who might be displaced by the military operations.

"Sabihin ninyo pagka-bobombahin mo 'yang lahat, paalisin mo iyong mga tao. Paalisin mo 'yung mga tao, ilagay mo dito kung saan ako ang mag – ako ang maggastos ng pagkain, lahat [Tell them if you're going to bomb everything, let the people evacuate. Let the people leave. Put them in a safe place, I will spend for the food, everything]," he said.

"Kunin ko 'yung lahat ng inosenteng tao. Halikayo dito, ako ang magpakain muna. Magsakripisyo ako. Hanap ako pera. Tapos pulpugin mo 'yang teritoryo nila. So pagkatapos wala nang magtindig. Ke aso, ke manok, ke lahat, pati tao. Giyera man kaya ito [I will get all the innocent people. Come here and I will feed you. I'm ready to sacrifice and find funds. Then you can crush their territory. After that, no one will be left standing, no dog, chicken, person, nothing. This is war]," he added.

Accompanied by top security officials, the President first visited the Jolo cathedral, the site of the deadly bombing that claimed 21 lives.

Duterte then commiserated with the wounded soldiers and civilians, giving them financial aid. He also visited the wake of the blast victims and offered his condolences and support to the families.

Authorities had earlier said a subgroup of the Abu Sayyaf, known as Ajang-Ajang, could be behind the twin explosions in the church in Jolo last Sunday.

In his speech, the President told the military not to be afraid of launching attacks on the ASG or else risk losing the battle.

"Pero kung sabihin mo lang takot ka mag-attack kasi makapatay ka ng inosento, p***** i** talo ka. Eh kung nandiyan 'yan sila palagi? [But if you say you're afraid to attack because the innocent might be killed, son of a b*tch, you will lose. What happens if they are always there?]," he added.

The commander-in-chief also said he was also prepared to deploy more troops to the area to run after the Abu Sayyaf elements.

"Ang sabi ko 'pag may target kayo, paalamin mo lang ako, hanap ako ng pera, maglagay tayo ng unit there, sabihin natin six months lang. Tapos bantayan ng Intelligence 'yung sumasama. Pagkatapos bombahin ninyo. Para magbili tayo mga bagong bomba [I said if you find a target, let me know. I will look for funds, we will put a unit there for six months. The intelligence will monitor the recruits then you can bomb them. We can buy new bombs]," said.

As the government steps up the campaign against the terror elements, Duterte also appealed to the Jolo community to cooperate with authorities in the campaign against the Abu Sayyaf. He urged them to shun any ASG member in their place or report to authorities for appropriate action.

"'Pag hindi, 'pag nahulog 'yang bomba sa ulo ninyo, inyo 'yan [If not, once the bomb falls, that's your problem]," he said.

"'Pag hindi, mawawala itong Pilipinas pati Jolo. Balang araw hindi na ito parte ng Pilipinas [If not, the Jolo and rest of the Philippines will be go. This will no longer ber part of the Philippines]," he said.

He said if Jolo is lost to the Islamic State-linked militants, his government would have failed its mandate to protect the people and preserve the nation.

34

30 January 2019 The Manila Times Page: A1

DUTERTE, LORENZANA:

# 'Suicide bombers behind Jolo blasts'

BY DEMPSEY REYES

PRESIDENT Rodrigo Duterte on Tuesday said the twin blasts in Jolo were likely the handiwork of suicide bombers, as he ordered the military anew to crush the Abu Sayyaf terrorists said to be responsible for the attack on Jolo Cathedral.

»BombersA2

35

BOMBERS FROM A1

# Suicide

Speaking to reporters, Duterte said there was no doubt the terror and kidnap group Abu Sayyaf was behind the blasts, whose death toll rose to 21 on Tuesday.

Two suspects, a woman and a man, carried out the suicide mission, he said.

"Nobody can perpetrate that terrorism except for [the Abu Sayyaf group]. That is what the military told me," he said following a hospital groundbreaking ceremony in Malabon.

On Monday, Duterte said he would fight fire with fire as he ordered soldiers to crush the group "by whatever means."

"You go out, you kill them. Period," he said.

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana backed Duterte, and said at least one suicide blast likely occurred at the cathedral during the 8 a.m. Sunday Mass.

"The first bomb that exploded inside the church was apparently left behind by a certain woman. This is according to the hazy recollection of a survivor sitting four pews behind the explosion," the Defense chief told reporters in a text message, when asked to comment on Duterte's statements.

"The second [bomb] that exploded at the entrance about a minute and a half after may have been a suicide bomber as indicated by body parts strewn all over including half a face and neck and two feet," Lorenzana explained.

The identity of the supposed suicide bomber is still considered as a "mystery" by authorities and is being investigated by the Philippine National Police's crime scene operatives.

Lorenzana said investigators also found a soldier with severed torso.

"It is more likely that the second bomb was caused by a suicide bomber," he said.

Col. Noel Detoyato, military public affairs chief, however, dismissed the possibility that the blasts were the handiwork of suicide bombers, disclosing that a black bag was planted by a woman inside the church and was detonated through a mobile phone.

The Islamic State (IS) had claimed that two individuals with suicide belts blew themselves up at the cathedral as the Sunday liturgy was underway.

Based on the military's initial report on Sunday, the first explosion was recorded at 8:28 a.m.

As for the second explosion, Detoyato said there were no leads yet, but said three suspects and responders met at the entrance of the church.

Security footage from the military's Western Mindanao Command (WestMinCom) showed one of the suspects detonating the first bomb.

In the video, one of the three suspects was seen pressing a device and pointing it to the direction of the church, seconds before the first explosion transpired.

## Motive: Revenge?

Detoyato reiterated that security forces were eyeing the subgroup "Ajang-Ajang" under the Abu Sayyaf group as behind the deadly explosions.

The Ajang-Ajang, which means "orphans" in the Tausug language spoken in Sulu, is composed of young subordinates or children of Abu Sayyaf members and is under the command of Hatib Sawadjaan, father in law of Malaysian terrorist Amin Baco.

The military was eyeing four to six suspects, all under the Ajang-Ajang group, Detoyato said.

Rommel Banlaoi, chairman of the Philippine Institute for Peace, Violence and Terrorism Research, said "There are high-level law enforcement operations against them (Ajang-Ajang)."

"It evolved into a revenge group," he said.

While the Abu Sayyaf had sworn allegiance to Islamic State, that was not necessarily true for the motley members of Ajang-Ajang.

"Not all members of Ajang-Ajang group are pro-ISIS, but all of them are Abu Sayyaf group," said Banlaoi using another acronym for IS. "It's not IS-affiliated."

## Lapses admitted

Security officials on Tuesday admitted there were lapses on their part ahead of the twin explosions at Jolo Cathedral, with Lorenzana confirming that intelligence reports had indicated as early as five months ago that terrorists were out to bomb the church.

Lorenzana told reporters that in August 2018, the Armed Forces had received information that Catholic churches in Jolo, Basilan and Zamboanga areas would be bombed.

As a result, the Defense chief has ordered tighter security in all Catholic places of worship in all three areas.

The Our Lady of Mount Carmel Cathedral, now under 24/7 watch by authorities, and its vicinity have been prone to terror attacks since 2000, according to the military.

"We will never know how the bombers got in or near the church as the soldiers guarding the main door all died. Other soldiers who were getting in the rescue the victims of the first explosion inside the church were also hit by the second bomb," Lorenzana said.

Asked if there were lapses in security, the Defense chief said: "Was there a lapse? While we were briefed that all people going inside were searched, it is possible that there may be lapse in the procedure."

This time, Detoyato backed Lorenzana. "Terrorism is a very complex crime that even in nations with very advanced technology, there will still be lapses," he added.

The military had recommended the third extension of martial law in Mindanao until the end of the year to crush terrorism in the restive region.

## ADB to continue support for Mindanao

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) on Tuesday committed to support the Philippine government in pursuing peace in Mindanao even after the twin explosions in Jolo.

In a statement, ADB Vice President Stephen Groff also extended the bank's "deepest sympathies to the people of Jolo, Sulu and to the families of the victims."

"ADB stands ready to support the Government of the Philippines in the peace process and provide assistance as needed," Groff said.

In 2017, ADB approved a $380-million loan to improve 280 kilometers of national road and bridge networks in Mindanao. The project was the first Mindanao-specific loan granted by ADB in 16 years.

The European Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines (ECCP) however, said investors could respond negatively following the blasts.

"It is holding the limelight in international newspapers. We received many calls from companies asking ... Of course, this is not a positive or encouraging companies to come to the Philippines ...," ECCP President Nabil Francis said.

"What we need is stability, those things are of course scaring investors," Francis added.

While the incident may create "negative impressions," ECCP Executive Director Florian Gottein said the organization would work on building the reputation of the Philippines and helping increase companies' confidence on the country.

"As ECCP, it is our role to improve the reputation of the Philippines," he said.

## Putin sends condoloences

Russian leader Vladimir Putin sent condolences to President Duterte in connection with the tragic aftermath of the terrorist attack in Jolo.

"A crime committed against civilians who had congregated for church services is shocking in its cynicism and cruelty. I expect that the masterminds and perpetrators of this crime will sustain the punishment they deserve. I would like to reiterate our readiness to further step up interaction with our Philippine partners in combating the terrorist threat in all its forms and manifestations. People in Russia share the grief of the victims' friends and families and hope for a prompt recovery of the injured," Putin said in a statement.

Putin also expressed Moscow's readiness to "further step up interaction with our Philippine partners in combating the terrorist threats in all its forms and manifestation."

**WITH ANNA LEAH E. GONZALES AND LISBET K. ESMAEL**

30 January 2019 The Manila Times Page: A7

# Muslim religious leaders condemn Jolo carnage

**MARAWI CITY, Lanao del Sur:** Muslim religious leaders condemned the twin bombings on Sunday of Mount Carmel Cathedral in Jolo, Sulu that killed 21 people and wounded 112 others, which the Islamic State (IS) claimed responsibility.

Aleem Said Ahmad Basher, chairman of the Organization of the Imam Council of the Philippines, said the Muslim community was saddened about the inhuman attack on a house of worship like the cathedral in Jolo.

"We strongly condemn these inhuman atrocities because of its barbaric nature and which is forbidden in Islam," Basher stressed.

"This barbaric act is not accepted in Islam because it does not only destroy the living of peace, but demolishes the tranquility of a sound society," he added.

Imam Kamil Unda, leader of the Ahlul Bait in the Philippines, another sect of Islam, said such an act was barbarous and must be condemned in the strongest terms.

"Based on Quran 22:40, houses of worship of the Jews and Christians must be protected," Unda added.

He said the Prophet of Islam strictly forbade the killing of civilians, children, women and the elderly in time of war.

Both the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF)-Jikiri Faction have condemned the bombing.

MILF chairman Al-Haj Murad Ebrahim, in a statement, said the MILF leadership joined peace-loving individuals in strongly condemning the twin bombing of the Cathedral.

"The MILF commits to assist in gathering information that can lead to the identification of the perpetrator and their eventual arrest. We are very willing to coordinate with the security sector and the local government officials of Sulu in the investigation of this terroristic act," Ebrahim said.

Yusop Jikiri, chairman of a breakaway MNLF faction, also condemned the bombings "for the great loss of innocent lives and for causing pain and suffering to the big numbers of the injured."

Jikiri's faction joined the MILF in the pursuit of peace in the Philippine south through the framing of the Bangsamoro Basic Law, which Congress enacted into law as the Bangsamoro Organic Law.

Meanwhile, Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao Vice Gov. Haroun Alrashid Lucman Jr. believed whoever did it had political motive that had nothing to do with local issues.

"Religion has never been an issue in Sulu. Christians in that province have lived well with the Tausug for centuries," Lucman stressed.

## PRO3 condemns attack

Meanwhile, Police Regional Office 3 (PRO3) condemned in the strongest terms the bombing of Jolo Cathedral of Our Lady of Mount Carmel on Sunday.

"While we are outraged by the tragic attacks on our Christian brothers and sisters and reiterate our unequivocal condemnation of the bombing of churches not only in Jolo but in the different places of worship, we are not pointing fingers on any faith community. Rather, we assure that we will use the full force of the law to bring to justice the perpetrators behind this incident," Chief Supt. Joel Napoleon Coronel, PRO3 director, said.

Coronel encouraged every Filipino to keep on upholding the spirit of unity and continue to pray for those who would seek to sow discord and enmity in the country and destroy the peace.

He added that the police were collectively taking steps to ensure that every one feels safe and secure, knowing that their freedom to worship is protected.

"We continue to appeal to the public to help us in our goal of maintaining peace and order in Central Luzon," Coronel said.

**MASIDING NOOR YAHYA AND FREDERICK SILVERIO**

30 January 2019 The Manila Times Page: A7

# ASG bomber slain in Zamboanga

**ZAMBOANGA CITY:** Police commandos killed a suspected Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) bomber in a firefight here, officials said Tuesday.

Officials said Admar Asilon, an alleged member of the ASG's urban terrorist group (UTG) under Marzan Ajijul, traded gunfire with the police in Barangay San Jose, where he was tracked down late on Monday.

Asilon, 35, was cornered in a building where he was eventually killed.

A police report said Asilon was also a member of City Hunter, a gun-for-hire syndicate operating in Zamboanga City and neighboring Basilan province.

The operation against Asilon was launched by the 904th Mobile Company of the Regional Mobile Force Battalion 9.

Asilon's death came barely a day after two Islamic State suicide bombers blew themselves up at Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Jolo, Sulu.

Zamboanga Mayor Maria Isabelle "Beng" Climaco urged residents to "be very vigilant against the presence of suspicious-looking persons and unattended packages in their community, and report them immediately to the authorities."

She said security here had been heightened with police and military personnel now on full alert.

"Multiple layers of checkpoints have been established, particularly in thickly populated areas and at the borders or entry and exit points of the city," Climaco said.

The police recently captured an ASG bandit, Daud Isnani, 33, in Barangay Talon-Talon.

Chief Supt. Emmanuel Luis Licup, regional police commander, said Isnani was linked to multiple kidnappings in Basilan.

It was not immediately known whether the operation against Asilon was connected to the capture of Isnani, who was tracked down by members of the Regional Anti-Criminality Task Group of the Police Regional Intelligence Division 9.

AL JACINTO

39

30 January 2019 Standard TODAY Page: A1

# 'Destroy ASG, Ajang-Ajang'

## *Take no prisoners, Du30 orders AFP in wake of blasts*

**By Nat Mariano and Francisco Tuyay**

A CELL group within the terrorist Abu Sayyaf Group is now the target of authorities looking for those responsible for the twin explosions that claimed 21 lives and wounded 100 others in Jolo, Sulu.

Authorities said the so-called Ajang-Ajang faction of the Abu Sayyaf is a small band of several dozen that most likely carried out the bombing, the worst in years, in an act of revenge.

"Last year their [Ajang-Ajang] leader was killed. There have been persistent reports that they will retaliate," regional military spokesman Lt. Col. Gerry Besana said.

"We saw them in the CCTV. It was the brother of the leader who was killed," he said referring to footage from outside the cathedral. "He was seen with two other members of Ajang-Ajang."

Security forces say the group is composed of relatives of Abu Sayyaf kidnap-for-ransom group members who have been killed in clashes with the government.

This developed as President Rodrigo Duterte said Tuesday he would take no prisoners in the all-out war he declared against the ASG and the communist New People's Army.

Duterte ordered the country's armed forces to destroy the Islamic State (ISIS)-inspired militant group following Sunday's bomb attack on a Catholic church in Jolo.

The President is also convinced the attack was carried out by suicide bombers—a couple at that, citing warnings

*Next page*

# 'Destroy ASG,...

From A1

from Indonesian intelligence. The wife entered the cathedral to activate the first bomb, then the husband triggered the second bomb outside the church, Duterte said.

"I have no doubt. That is what the military told me, that is what the police relayed to me, and I am guided by what the government workers would tell me," he added at the sidelines of a groundbreaking ceremony of a new government hospital in Malabon City on Tuesday.

"I order you to destroy the organization. I'm ordering you now: batter the Abu Sayyaf by whatever means," he earlier told the Armed Forces of the Philippines during a visit to the blast site Monday afternoon.

Abu Sayyaf, which is based on Jolo island, has been blamed for the Philippines' deadliest attack, a 2004 ferry bombing in Manila Bay that claimed 116 lives.

"There are high-level law enforcement operations against them [Ajang-Ajang]," said Rommel Banlaoi, chair of the Philippine Institute for Peace, Violence and Terrorism Research. "It evolved into a revenge group."

But while Abu Sayyaf have sworn allegiance to Islamic State, that is not necessarily true for the motley members of Ajang-Ajang.

"Not all members of Ajang-Ajang group are pro-ISIS, but all of them are Abu Sayyaf group," said Banlaoi using another acronym for IS. "It's not IS-affiliated."

Duterte said he was ready to house and feed civilians who should leave the area as he ordered the military "to pulverize the terrorists' territory."

"Our duty is to protect the Filipino people. And second is that we have to preserve the nation. If we lost Jolo, even just a small island there, well, we have failed in our mission to preserve the territory of the Republic of the Philippines," he said.

"I don't like that 'surrender-surrender.' It'll just be my obligation to feed you then you will go back [to your group]," he said. "I'm telling this to the enemies of the state, f*ck you!"

"Don't ever think that you're the only one who can do evil things. If you can do it, I can do it, too," he said, directly addressing the terrorists.

He said if they wanted bloodshed, that was what the government would give them.

The President differentiated the ASG from groups such as the Moro National Liberation Front and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, saying the ASG was a "movement of evil men" without an ideology.

"We have rebels like Nur Misuari and Murad, but their revolution is purely territorial... Nur is okay, Murad is okay," he said, referring to the leaders of the MNLF and MILF.

The problem, he said, stemmed from groups like the Abu Sayyaf that "only follow ISIS."

"I've been saying before that ISIS will become our problem," he said, describing the terrorist group as a "global insurgency."

On Monday, the military said they are convinced that the ISIS-inspired ASG was behind the bomb attack.

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said the attack was an act of terrorism aimed at bringing back a religious war.

On Sunday, a bomb ripped through the Our Lady of Mount Carmel Cathedral as Mass was being celebrated, while the second bomb detonated at the parking lot in front of the church as security forces responded, causing more deaths and injuries.

The death toll climbed to 21 after a high school student who was taken to Zamboanga for treatment died from his wounds Tuesday.

The ISIS claim, in a formal communique, said two suicide bombers had detonated explosive belts, according to the SITE Intelligence Group, which monitors jihadist activities.

But a military report said a second bomb that went off at the cathedral was left in the utility box of a motorcycle in the parking area outside and detonated remotely through a cell phone.

Security forces have sealed off the island of Jolo in an attempt to intercept the bombers.

"They are still in Jolo and we are tracking them now," said Besana.

The authorities believe six people were behind Sunday's attack, including a certain Kamah, a bomb maker and brother of a slain bandit leader.

Checkpoints were set up allong potential escape routes while navy vessels patrolled the coastline of Jolo and Zamboanga.

Police and military officials identified the civilian fatalities in Sunday's bomb attack as Leo Herbolario; Bibing Perpetua; Reynaldo Pescadera Sr., Ridzmar Mukadil; Romolo Reyes; Albacora Perpetua; Niseria dela Cruz; Cecilia Sanchez; Daisy P. Delos Reyes; Dolores Tan; Fe, Non; Juliet Jaime; Leah Angelica Reyes and Chenly Rubio.

Also killed in the blast were Army Sgt. Mark Des Simbre; Corporals John Mangawait Jr. and Minard Jann Ocier; PFC Alizon Ayoman; Private Hernan Bulaybulay; and Coastguard SN2 Jaypee Galicha.

Col. Noel Detoyato, spokesman for the AFP, said a wounded victim inside the church saw a woman leave a bag on the fifth pew from the back. She left quickly seconds before the explosion, the witness said.

Detoyato also disputed the ISIS claim that it was a suicide attack.

"That is the method of deployment of IED, it was remotely detonated so that would dispel the reports that it was a suicide bombing," Detoyato said.

Lorenzana admitted Tuesday there were security lapses that allowed the terrorists to sneak the bombs into the church, which was guarded by soldiers.

He said that while they were briefed to search everyone who entered the church, there could have been "a lapse in procedure."

He also said there were bomb threats against churches in Jolo as early as August 2018, and that the cathedral was guarded by soldiers 24 hours a day.

Concern was growing Monday over the impact the bomb attack would have on a decades-long push for peace that culminated last week in voters approving expanded Muslim self-rule in the south.

The vote was the result of negotiations started in the 1990s with the nation's largest rebel group, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, and will give it considerable power over the so-called Bangsamoro region.

"This is a big challenge for the Bangsamoro government," said Banlaoi.

The former rebels need to show they will be able to pull the region toward peace in order to attract much-needed investment to alleviate poverty and counter extremism, he said.

"MILF needs to prove it can make a difference... the gravity of the problem faced by MILF is wow, so overwhelming," he added.

The church attack came despite the imposition of martial law in Mindanao after pro-ISIS militants seized the southern city of Marawi in May 2017. **With AFP, PNA**

## WHO ARE THE 'AJANG-AJANG'?

- A cell within the terrorist organization Abu Sayyaf
- Composed of relatives of Abu Sayyaf kidnap-for-ransom group members who have been killed in clashes with the government
- Active within the southern Philippines
- Specializes in attacks using two bombers
- Trained in terrorist cells abroad
- Evolved into a 'revenge group'
- Not all members of group are pro-ISIS

30 January 2019 Manila Standard TODAY Page: A1

# UN condemns Jolo bomb attacks

THE United Nations Security Council condemned the bomb attack on a Catholic Church in Jolo, Sulu Sunday, calling it a "heinous and cowardly terrorist attack."

The members of the Security Council also reaffirmed that "terrorism in all its forms and manifestations constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security."

The Security Council said "any acts of terrorism are criminal and unjustifiable, regardless of their motivation, wherever, whenever and by whomsoever committed," and said that all states must combat threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts.

*Next page*

## UN...

*From A1*

The Chinese, Russian, and French governments renewed their commitment to support and step up engagement with the Philippines in fighting violent extremism and terrorism following the deadly blasts in Jolo.

China Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Geng Shuang said Beijing condemns the violent attacks in Sulu province and condoles with the bereaved families of those killed.

"China opposes all forms of terrorism and stands ready to work with the international community including the Philippines to jointly combat threats and challenges posed by terrorism and safeguard international and regional peace and stability," he said in a press conference in Beijing Monday night.

Russian President Vladimir Putin, in a telegram sent to President Rodrigo R. Duterte, stated Russia's "readiness to further step up interaction" with Philippine partners in combating terrorist threat in all its forms and manifestations.

"A crime committed against civilians who had congregated for church services is shocking in its cynicism and cruelty. I expect that the masterminds and perpetrators of this crime will sustain the punishment they deserve," he said.

"People in Russia share the grief of the victims' friends and families and hope for a prompt recovery of the injured," he added.

In a statement Tuesday, the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs said it is one with the Philippines in its fight against terrorism. **Vito Barcelo, Joel E. Zurbano with PNA**

tribune



# Jolo, Lamitan blasts identical–PNP Chief

**By Kathleen Mae Bulquerin and Elmer Manuel**

Seeing similarities with last year's Lamitan bombing, a top Philippine National Police (PNP) official yesterday declared Sunday's Jolo Cathedral attack as unrelated to the recent plebiscite for the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL).

Gen. Oscar Albayalde, the

*Turn to page 6*

Abu Sayyaf commanders Furudji Indama, Radzmil Janatul and Jobel Abdullah, who operate in Basilan, were said to have coordinated the attack with the Moroccan suicide bomber who drove the white van until it exploded

*From page 1*

PNP Director General, claimed a pattern between the two bombings although he did not elaborate what these are.

Albayalde referred to the 31 July 2018 attack of the Magkawit detachment, a security checkpoint in the boundaries of barangays Bulanting, Colonia and Maganda in Lamitan, where a bomb-filled white van driven by a foreign Daesh fighter rammed into a group of Civilian Armed Forces Geographical Unit (CAFGU) and killed 10 people, including four civilians who were relatives of the CAFGU personnel.

Abu Sayyaf commanders Furudji Indama, Radzmil Janatul and Jobel Abdullah, who operate in Basilan, were said to have coordinated the attack with the Moroccan suicide bomber who drove the white van until it exploded.

No Filipino extremist has yet to figure in a suicide attack although the Lamitan bombing was made to confuse the public into believing that it was carried out by a Filipino Daesh fighter.

"It seems that (the Jolo attack was like that) in Lamitan before," Albayalde said. "Remember the Lamitan bombing?"

There had been at least 10 bombing attacks on the Cathedral of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Jolo, Sulu since 3 June 2000.

It has been under tight security by state security forces since then. Some of those who died in the recent attack were members of the Philippine Army and the Philippine Coast Guard.

At Camp Crame, PNP spokesman Senior Supt. Bernard Banac said the lockdown in Jolo, Sulu will be lifted once the investigation is finished.

Banac said the PNP security force in Jolo is enough to secure the area, along with two battalions of the PNP Special Action Force.

Department of National Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana also revealed receiving reports about terror plans prior to the attack.

"There were reports that churches in Jolo, Basilan and Zamboanga would be bombed. They came as early as 2018, with Jolo as most probable target," Lorenzana said.

"Since then, the Jolo Cathedral was guarded by soldiers 24 hours a day," he said.

Lorenzana, however, believed lapses may have been committed in the sneaking of the two bags of bombs, which the terror group detonated in the middle of a Sunday Mass.

**No Filipino extremist has yet to figure in a suicide attack although the Lamitan bombing was made to confuse the public into believing that it was carried out by a Filipino Daesh fighter.**

"While we were briefed that all people going inside (had to be) searched, it is possible that there may have been a lapse in the procedure," he added.

Twenty people died in the attack, while more than a hundred were injured.

Banac also said the Jolo bombing could not be related to the BOL, but is "a clear act of terror."

"Based on our investigation, there is no connection between the two (bombing and BOL). This

thing that happened, the bombings, is just a clear and simple act of terrorism. It has nothing to do with the plebiscite," Banac said.

The PNP spokesman also belied Daesh claims that suicide bombers were responsible for the twin blasts. He clarified that initial investigations show that the blasts were caused by electronically-triggered improvised explosives.

"We have not seen any indication that this is a suicide bombing," said Banac. "All indicators point to detonation by an improvised explosive device."

The PNP released footage from a CCTV that showed the alleged perpetrators who are suspected to be members of the Ajang-Ajang group linked with the Abu Sayyaf.

"We need to find a more solid evidence and direct witnesses before we can come up with any resolution regarding the matter," Banac said.

"Our security preparations are already in place. We will be focusing on heightened and intensified checkpoints to make sure people will not carry firearms or even explosives," he added.

Meanwhile, the Armed Forces of the Philippines on Tuesday announced that additional troops have been deployed to the southern villages that will participate in the 6 February BOL plebiscite.

According to Western Mindanao Command spokesman Col. Gerry Besana, the military's 103rd Infantry Brigade was tasked to focus on these areas and implement security measures together with the police and Commission on Elections.

The plebiscite next week is expected to have voters from 39 barangays in North Cotabato and Lanao del Norte to decide on their inclusion in the Bangsamoro.

"We've learned a lot from the previous plebiscite. We will strive to make the upcoming Bangsamoro Organic Law plebiscite more peaceful and successful," Besana said.

30 January 2019

The Daily Tribune

Page: 1

# Allies brace PH vs Daesh

By Mario J. Mallari, Kristina Maralit, Kathleen Mae Bulquerin and Perseus Echeminada

As probers now center their investigation on the possibility of foreign terror involvement in Sunday's Jolo Cathedral bombing in Sulu, ally governments yesterday renewed their support to help the Philippines counter violent extremism and terrorism in battle-scarred Mindanao.

The governments of China, Russia and France have joined forces in declaring their partnership with the Philippines against the suspected presence of foreign terrorists working for the Daesh, the Islamic acronym

*Turn to page 2*

95

We have a helicopter, planes, ships and cannons. Fire them! Bomb them all! Then, we'll buy new stocks of ammunition

**From page 1**

for Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), which has claimed responsibility for the attack which killed 21 and injured more than a hundred Catholic churchgoers.

Names of the victims obtained by Daily Tribune included several soldiers who died in the Sulu blast. They are Sgt. Mark Des P. Simbre, Cpl. John B. Mangawit Jr., Cpl. Minard Jann P. Ocfer, Pvt. Alizon L. Ayoman and Pvt. Hernan U. Bulaybulay, all from the Philippine Army

Also killed was SN2 Jaypee M. Galicha of the Philippine Coast Guard.

Civilians who died included Leo Herbolario, Bibing Perpetua, Reynaldo Pescadera Sr., Ridzmar Mukadil, Romolo B. Reyes, Albacora Perpetua, Nisoria Dela Cruz, Cecilia Sanchez, Daisy P. de los Reyes, Dolores S. Tan, Fe Non, Juliet Jaime, Leah Angelica Reyes and Chenly Rubio.

One more victim has yet to be identified.

President Rodrigo Duterte on Monday vowed no letup in the government's chase of the terrorists responsible for the attack. He visited Jolo Cathedral on the day the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) allowed the release of a video footage showing very young members of a terror cell believed to be linked with the Ajang-Ajang faction of the Abu Sayyaf.

**This is not a religious war. This is an act of terrorism.**

The Abu Sayyaf have allied itself with the extremist Al Qaeda until the death of its leader Osama bin Laden in a US military operation in Pakistan on 2 May 2011.

The Al Qaeda had quickly shifted its radicalism through the Daesh after Bin Laden's death and it included the Abu Sayyaf, whose members carry themselves in the style of the foreign terror group, including the adoption of its flags, symbols and signs to gain international financial support.

The AFP claimed the Sulu bombers were teenagers, proof of its earlier claims that the Abu Sayyaf employs child fighters.

But Mr. Duterte vowed to crush terror as he renewed his declaration of war against the 400-man strong Abu Sayyaf. Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana was with the President in his visit to Jolo. Lorenzana named Abu Sayyaf commander Hatib Sawadjaan as behind the bombing.

Mr. Duterte ordered the AFP "to destroy and pulverize" the Abu Sayyaf.

"That's what they want. They have weapons," the President said. "We have a helicopter, planes, ships and cannons. Fire them! Bomb them all! Then, we'll buy new stocks of ammunition."

The President, however, told the soldiers to "avoid hitting the innocent ones."

"This is not a religious war. This is an act of terrorism," Lorenzana said.

Sawadjaan is believed to be hiding in the jungles of Patikul, a third-class municipality just 26.8 kilometers away from Jolo. He is being tagged for the kidnapping for ransom and beheading of several hostages, including two Canadian men in the past years.

The attack came as majority of Mindanao was to cast its vote for the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL) plebiscite. There are various claims as to whether the attack was related to the BOL.

The United Nations denounced the attack and the UN Security Council condemned the terror act as "heinous and cowardly" and "underlined the need to hold perpetrators, organizers, financiers and sponsors" accountable.

"ISIL is part of a global insurgency," Mr. Duterte said. "I've long said it is a big problem. But if it is capable (of fighting), I am too."

"You (ISIL) asked for it, I will crush you," a seething President Duterte said.

Reliable Daily Tribune sources revealed a wider probe that will include the possibility of looking at "foreign interest and hands" that worked out the attack.

"There are still foreign interests that do not want Mindanao to become peaceful," one of them said. "That's apparently for their own selfish interests."

Former Special Assistant to the President Christopher Lawrence "Bong" Go urged sobriety and vigilance of the public following the attack.

"The threat in the region remains. The public must be aware, alert and vigilant," Go said. "President Duterte said this is not a war between Christians and Moslems. This is an act of terror. Let us help bring justice to the victims."

Former Senate President Juan Ponce-Enrile, meanwhile, said the Daesh or ISIL had long been operating in Mindanao.

"Who supports the madrasah? It's Saudi Arabia," Enrile said. "It is the most purist practitioner of Wahabism or Salafism." Enrile was referring to ultra-conservative and revivalist branches of Islam.

This, as China Ministry spokesperson Geng Shuang reiterated Beijing's "strong condemnation" of the attack, saying: "China opposes all forms of terrorism and stands ready to work with the international community, including the Philippines, to jointly combat threats and challenges posed by terrorism."

**The Al Qaeda had quickly shifted its radicalism through the Daesh after Bin Laden's death and it included the Abu Sayyaf, whose members carry themselves in the style of the foreign terror group including the adoption of its flags, symbols and signs to gain international financial support.**

Russian President Vladimir Putin, in a telegram to President Duterte, vowed his country's "readiness to further step up interaction" with Philippine partners to combat terror.

The French government also condemned "the attack for which the Daesh has claimed responsibility." The country "stands with the Philippines in the fight against terrorism."

The Japanese Embassy in Manila also condemned the attack.

The Bureau of Immigration has placed all ports on heightened alert against the possible entry of suspected foreign fighters to boost the Abu Sayyaf numbers.

The Philippine National Police also tightened security around the St. Augustine Cathedral and other major Catholic churches against a repeat attack.

30 January 2019 Malaya The National Newspaper Page: B3

# Suicide bombers behind Sulu blasts?

**BY JOCELYN MONTEMAYOR and VICTOR REYES**

PRESIDENT Duterte yesterday said suicide bombers may be behind the twin bombings at the Our of Lady of Mt. Cathedral in Jolo town in Sulu last Sunday.

He said the information came from security officials.

The blasts initially killed 20 persons and wounded at least 100 others. Yesterday, one of the wounded died.

Duterte's statement came hours after defense and military officials said security forces may have committed lapses as the intelligence community received information in August last year about plans by the Abu Sayyaf to bomb Catholic churches in Jolo.

His statement also runs counter to those of military and police officials who said the bombs inside and outside of the church appeared to have been detonated remotely.

On Sunday, investigators said the first bomb exploded inside the church while mass was ongoing, while the second exploded about a minute later in front of the church. The second explosive was reportedly planted in a motorcycle parked near the church entrance.

Yesterday, Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said the first bomb that exploded inside the church "was apparently left behind by a certain woman."

The second blast, he said, may be a case of suicide bombing.

"The second bomb that exploded at the entrance about a minute-and-a-half after may have been a suicide bomber as indicated by body parts strewn all over, including half a face and neck and two feet," he said.

The President, in a chance interview at the groundbreaking of the San Lorenzo Ruiz General Hospital in Malabon City, said the military informed him that a man and a woman carried the bombs to the church.

He said there were also eye witnesses who said suicide bombers were involved.

Informed that the military earlier discounted the involvement of suicide bombers, Duterte said, "I don't know... kung hindi suicide bombing ano (if not suicide bombing, what is it)?"

"It exploded. That is terrorism and suicide. You cannot carry plastic bags, you will be questioned by the military, police when you have backpack," Duterte said when asked by reporters to clarify an earlier remark.

"But you could see all around bits and pieces of flesh. We even stepped on it," added Duterte who went to the blast site on Monday.

He acknowledged the possibility that the bombs were detonated using a mobile phone, adding the bombers probably had other people with them as a kind of "support system."

He said based on a briefing given to him by security officials, the woman was wearing a cross when she entered the church.

The man, who Duterte said was possibly the husband, just passed by the church before the bomb

See SUICIDE ➤ Page B3

• FROM PAGE B1 •

# SUICIDE

exploded.

Duterte also said that the government believes that the Abu Sayyaf is involved.

"Yes we are sure of that. Walang ibang, nobody but nobody can perpetuate that kind of terrorism thereabouts sa lugar na iyun (in that place). That is what the military told me, that's what the police relayed to me and I am guided by what the government forces would tell me," he added.

## BODY PARTS

Lorenzana said the identity of the alleged suicide bomber whose body parts were scattered "is still a mystery and is under investigation by the PNP SOCO (scene-of-the-crime operatives). The investigators also found a soldier with severed torso. It is more likely that the second bomb was caused by a suicide bomber," he said.

Lorenzana also said the first explosion was not suicide bombing.

"There are two bombs that exploded one after the other within 1.5 minutes. The first bomb that exploded inside the church was apparently left behind by a certain woman. This is according to the hazy recollection of a survivor sitting four pews behind the explosion," he said.

Col. Noel Detoyato, AFP public affairs chief, said the first explosion was not a case of suicide bombing based on information from two of the wounded.

"Two of them said a woman left a bag on the fifth pew of the church, from the main entrance," said Detoyato.

He said the woman "may still be alive because there was sufficient time to leave."

On the second explosion, Detoyato said there are "indicators" that it was a case of suicide bombing "because a vehicle-borne attack is not possible."

"No one noticed someone leaving a bag (of explosives) and as far as 50 meters, there were body parts that were recovered. That's the big possibility (of a suicide bombing)," he said.

On earlier information about the bomb planted in a parked motorcycle, Detoyato said, "There was no vehicle in the area. If it was placed on a utility box of a motorcycle, we should have recovered motorcycle parts."

If true, this will be the second suspected case of suicide bombing in the country. The first was in July last year when a Moroccan associated with the Abu Sayyaf blew himself up inside a van in Lamitan City in Basilan, leaving 11 people dead. The Moroccan reportedly used a "suicide vehicle-borne" improvised explosive device detonated near a checkpoint,

## LAPSES

Lorenzana said as early as August last year, the intelligence community received information that the Abu Sayyaf would bomb Catholic churches in Jolo town, Basilan province, and other areas, "with Jolo as most probable."

Since then, he said, soldiers have been guarding the Jolo cathedral "24 hours a day."

"We will never know how the bombers got in or near the church as the soldiers guarding the main door all died. Other soldiers who were getting in to rescue the victims of the first explosion inside the church were also hit by the second bomb," said Lorenzana.

"Was there lapse? While we were briefed that all people going inside (the church) were searched, it is possible that there may be lapses in the procedure," he also said.

Detoyato said, "Just the mere fact that a bomb exploded inside the church means there were lapses. As to how it actually happened, we will never know as the soldiers on duty also died in the blast," said Detoyato.

Five soldiers died in the second explosion.

## 'CRUSH THE ABU SAYYAF'

Lorenzana said President Duterte is planning to offer a reward for information that would lead to the arrest of the perpetrators. As to the amount, he said this "will come out in a couple of days."

Detoyato said the President ordered the military "to work some more to arrest (the suspects) and then prevent a similar incident."

Col. Gerry Besana, spokesman of the AFP Western Mindanao Command, said the President was "infuriated" by the Jolo bombings.

"I order you to destroy the organization. I order you now, crush the Abu Sayyaf by whatever means," Besana quoted the President as telling the Armed Forces.

The military said CCTV footage showed four to six persons of interest in the twin bombings. The six suspects were outside the church after the first explosion.

Detoyato said the six were later identified as members of the Ajang-Ajang, a sub-group of the Abu Sayyaf. He declined to name the suspects, pending operations to catch them.

"It's a product of profiling... We have their names but I'm not at liberty to reveal them," he said.

Asked if one of the suspects uses the alias "Kamah," said to be a brother of an Abu Sayyaf sub-leader who was slain by soldiers in a clash, Detoyato said, "I don't have that information but the group we identified as behind is the Ajang-Ajang."

Besana said one of the suspects caught on the CCTV footage was identified only as one Kamah.

Interior Secretary Eduardo Año said the strategy employed in the Jolo bombings is similar to that used by the Jemaah Islamiah during the deadly Bali bombings in Indonesia many years ago.

"We call this 'maximize the number of casualties.' This is what they did in Bali, Indonesia during the time of the JI, they'll detonate one and the tendency is the crowd will look for the exit and then another explosion," said Año, a former Armed Forces chief.

The Abu Sayyaf is known to have links to the JI whose operatives are in Mindanao co-existing with Abu Sayyaf members in Sulu and Basilan and with the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters in Central Mindanao. — *With Reuters*

30 January 2019 Manila Standard TODAY Page: A2

# 2 airstrikes unleashed on Sulu towns

THE military unleashed two airstrikes in Sulu on Tuesday after President Rodrigo Duterte declared an all-out war against the terrorist Abu Sayyaf Group.

According to a GMA News TV report, the military launched airstrikes on Patikul and Indanan towns after ASG members were sighted there.

Ground troops also fired heavy artillery into enemy territory, said Brig. Gen. Divino Rey Pabayo, commander of Joint Task Force Sulu.

"We are utilizing all the military, our every might, in chasing after the Abu Sayyaf. Our intensity [in attacking them] is the same as before," Pabayo said.

In a related development, the twin bombings in Jolo, Sulu perpetrated by Abu Sayyaf members last Sunday is enough proof that Mindanao remains under terrorist threat, which justifies the extension of martial law in the southern Philippines, the chief state lawyer said on Tuesday.

During the oral arguments at the Supreme Court on petition assailing the constitutionality of the third extension of martial law declaration, Solicitor General Jose Calida said the bombings only strengthened the factual basis for the extension of Proclamation No. 216 for another year of until December 2019 as unconstitutional. **Rey E. Requejo**

30 January 2019 Tempo Page: 2

# Duterte okays air strikes on Abu Sayyaf

By GENALYN KABILING

In the wake of the deadly twin bombings in Jolo, Sulu, President Duterte has authorized the military to drop bombs on the Abu Sayyaf Group but reminded them to avoid collateral damage.

The President said the government troops could use land, sea and air assets to "destroy" the Abu Sayyaf group but must let the civilian community leave the conflict zone to avoid casualties or injuries.

"I ordered you to destroy the organization. I'm ordering you now: pulpugin ninyo ang Abu Sayyaf [crush the Abu Sayyaf] by whatever means," Duterte said during his visit to Jolo Monday.

"Meron man tayong helicopter, may eroplano, may mga barko. Eh iyong mga bala natin diyan sa mga kanyon ninyo... Paputukin na ninyo. I-bomba muna ninyo lahat, magbili na tayo nang bagong stock. Ngayon kung may inosente mamatay, iwasan ninyo," he said.

Duterte said once the military finds a target area, the civilian community must be allowed to leave the area for their own safety. He assured that the government was ready to provide food and other assistance to the people who might be displaced by the military operations.

"Sabihin ninyo pagka-bobombahin mo 'yang lahat, paalisin mo iyong mga tao. Paalisin mo 'yung mga tao, ilagay mo dito kung saan ako ang mag --- ako ang maggastos ng pagkain, lahat," he said.

"Kunin ko 'yung lahat ng inosenteng tao. Halikayo dito, ako ang magpakain muna. Magsakripisyo ako. Hanap ako pera. Tapos pulpugin mo 'yang teritoryo nila So pagkatapos wala nang magtindig. Ke aso, ke manok, ke lahat, pati tao. Giyera man kaya ito," he added.

Accompanied by top security officials, the President first visited the Jolo cathedral, the site of the deadly bombing that claimed 20 lives.

Duterte then commiserated with the wounded soldiers and civilians, giving them financial aid. He also visited the wake of the blast victims and offered his condolences and support to the families.

Authorities earlier said a subgroup of the Abu Sayyaf, known as Ajang-Ajang, could be behind the twin explosions in the church in Jolo last Sunday.

In his speech, the President told the military not to be afraid of launching attacks on the Abu Sayyaf group or else risk losing the battle.

"Pero kung sabihin mo lang takot ka mag-attack kasi makapatay ka ng inosente, p***** i** talo ka. Eh kung nandiyan 'yan sila palagi?" he added.

The commander-in-chief also said he was also prepared to deploy more troops to the area to run after the Abu Sayyaf elements.

"Ang sabi ko 'pag may target kayo, paalamin mo lang ako, hanap ako ng pera, maglagay tayo ng unit there, sabihin natin six months lang. Tapos bantayan ng Intelligence 'yung sumasama. Pagkatapos bombahin ninyo. Para magbili tayo mga bagong bomba," said.

As the government steps up the campaign against the terror elements, Duterte also appealed to the Jolo community to cooperate with authorities in the campaign against the Abu Sayyaf Group. He urged them to shun any ASG member in their place or report to authorities for appropriate action.

30 January 2019 Tempo Page: 4

# Manhunt against 'Kamah', 2 other bomb suspects

By MARTIN SADONGDONG

Three persons, including one known only by his alias "Kamah", are being sought by police in the aftermath of the recent twin bomb attacks at a church in Jolo, Sulu that killed 21 people and wounded 112 others.

The latest fatality was a civilian who died Monday afternoon in a hospital in Zamboanga, according to Philippine National Police (PNP) chief Director General Oscar Albayalde.

The death toll could still rise following the discovery of dismembered parts found underneath the rubble.

"We are still identifying at least two [victims]. There were dismembered parts that our men on the ground have discovered," Albayalde said in a text message.

Kamah and two others were caught on closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras near the Jolo Cathedral where the bombs were detonated one after the other.

Albayalde said Kamah, wearing a blue green jacket, was seen handing something to his companion who was sporting a cap and a bag before the first blast occurred.

In another footage, Kamah was seen successfully passing what he intended to pass to his companion.

Albayalde said they have yet to establish whether what Kamah was trying to pass to his companion.

"Our EOD [Explosive Ordnance Division] believes the bombs were electronically-detonated so we have to determine whether it was the cellphone that he was giving to his companions," Albayalde noted.

Following the blast, people started to run away, but Kamah ran in an opposite direction.

Albayalde said that Kamah belongs to the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) sub-group Ajang-Ajang, earlier tagged by the military as the one behind the twin explosions last Sunday.

"Ajang-Ajang is no different to Abu Sayyaf Group. The ASG is using younger fighters to carry out offensive attacks. The members of Ajang-Ajang are either the orphans of the ASG or their relatives," Albayalde said in a television interview yesterday.

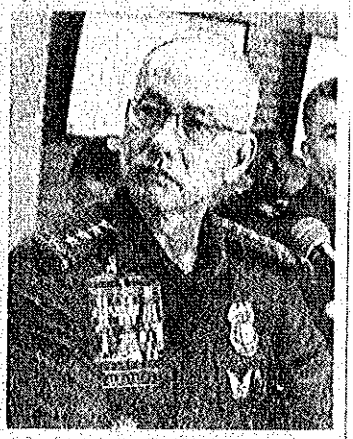
Radio station DZMM said Kamah is a brother of slain ASG leader Surakah Ingog, but the claim could not be independently confirmed.

"This group [Ajang-Ajang] is originally from Sulu, that is where their lair is. We only know his alias but the investigators said he is known in the community because he lives there," Albayalde added.

He also appealed to residents of Jolo to inform the authorities about the real identity of Kamah and his two other companions.

"They are considered persons-of-interest because we're trying to establish here whether it's only a coincidence that they were near the church when this incident happened or they have something to do with it," Albayalde explained.

Police have yet to establish the motive behind the attack but Albayalde said they couldn't see any link between the incident and the recently-held Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL), which seeks to establish a new Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM).



OSCAR Albayalde

However, Albayalde said one thing is for sure now – that the Jolo Cathedral blast was an "act of terror."

"We see it as a plain act of terror. We couldn't see anything that would link this incident to the plebiscite," he said.

4

11

30 January 2019 PM Pilipino Mirror Page: 2

# DU30: ALL OUT WAR VS SAYYAF!

"I ordered you to destroy the organization. I'm ordering you now: pulpugin ninyo ang Abu Sayyaf by whatever means".

Ito ang naging kautusan kahapon ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte sa Armed Forces of the Philippines kasunod ng dalawang magkasunod na pagsabog sa Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Cathedral sa Jolo, Sulu na ikinasawi ng 20 katao at pagkasugat ng 112 na karamihan ay mga nagsimba nang dumalaw ito kamakalawa sa blast site.

"Meron man tayong helicopter, may eroplano, may mga barko. Eh iyong mga bala natin diyan sa mga kanyon ninyo may --- Ano bang taya? Ano bang taya sa Tagalog? [Official answers: Kalawang] Oh gikalawang na 'yung mga... Paputukin na ninyo. I-bomba muna ninyo lahat, magbili na tayo nang bagong stock.Ngayon kung may inosente mamatay, iwasan ninyo," dagdag pa na utos ni Pangulong Duterte sa AFP.

Inatasan din ng Pangulo ang militar na bago magsagawa ng all-out war laban sa ASG ay paalisin ang mga sibilyan upang walang madamay na inosenteng tao sa gagawing pagdurog sa Abu Sayyaf.

"Ang gawin ninyo sabihin ninyo pagka-bobombahin mo 'yang lahat, paalisin mo iyong mga tao. ilagay mo dito kung saan ako ang mag --- ako ang maggastos ng pagkain, lahat. Tapos plantsahin ninyo ng bala pati.. Ganun lang ang paraan. Pero kapag hindi, pa-ganun-ganun lang tayo eh. Kunin ko 'yung lahat ng inosenteng tao. Halikayo dito, ako ang magpakain muna. Magsakripisyo ako. Hanap ako pera. Tapos pulpugin mo 'yang teritoryo nila," sabi pa ng Pangulo sa militar.

Tinitignan ng Palasyo ang posibilidad na suicide bomber ang nagsagawa ng pambobomba sa loob ng simbahan dahil sa itinatakbo ng imbestigasyon ay nakita ang pira-pirasong katawan ng tao na hinihinalang siya ang may dala ng bomba.

Tiniyak naman ng Malacañang na ginagawa ng mga security personnel ng pamahalaan ang lahat ng paraan para masiguro ng hindi na magaganap ang madugong terror attack sa Mindanao at iba pang panig ng bansa.-*Rudy Andal, Joy Cantos*-12

12

30 January 2019 PM Pang-Masa Page: 2

## Tatlong person of interest nakunan ng CCTV...

# JOLO BOMBERS TINUTUGIS

Ni JOY CANTOS

Matapos na matukoy sa CCTV na 4 hanggang 6 na suspek kabilang ang isang babae ang may kagagawan ng dalawang sunod na pagbomba sa loob at labas ng Our Lady of Mount Carmel Cathedral na ikinasawi ng 20 katao at pagkasugat ng 112 pa ay nagsasagawa na ngayon nang pagtugis ang security forces.

Ito ang sinabi ni Col. Noel Detoyato, Chief ng AFP Public Affairs Office, kung saan isang babae na pumasok sa loob ng simbahan ang natukoy na may dala ng bomba.

"We have 4-6 suspects including a woman that left the bomb inside the church, "ani Detoyato kung saan may nakakita sa mga survivors na ang iniwang bag ng nasabing babae sa ikalimang upuan ang pinaglalagyan ng sumabog na bomba.

Sa kuha ng unang CCTV, malinaw na nakunan ang tatlo sa mga suspect habang sa isa pa ay nakunan naman ang iba pang suspect.

Tinukoy naman na ang Abu Sayyaf Group ang masterminds sa pagpapasabog na isinagawa ng Ajang-Ajang group na kaalyado ng mga ito.

Ang tatlong persons of interest na malinaw na nakunan sa CCTV ay kinabibilangan ng isang alyas Kamah, bomb maker na kapatid ng napatay na lider ng Ajang Ajang group na si Surakah Ingog.

Sa kuha ng CCTV ay makikita ang isang lalaki na naka-jacket ng kulay berde't asul na tinukoy na si Kamah na may iniaabot sa isang lalaking naka-sumbrero na may dalang bag at dito rin ay kitang-kita ang pag-detonate sa ikalawang bomba sa labas ng simbahan.

Sa resulta naman ng post blast investigation ang mga sangkap ng pampasabog na kinabibilangan ng ammonium nitrate ay inilagay sa tubo na ginamitan naman ng cellphone bilang triggering device at ang signature naman ay nula sa mga ekstremistang Abu Sayyaf Group.

Magugunita noong Linggo ng alas- 8:58 ng umaga sa ikalawang pagbasa habang idinaraos ang isang misa ay sumambulat ang itinanim na bomba sa loob ng simbahan at ilang minuto pa ay sumunod namang sumabog ang ikalawang bomba sa labas ng nasabing pook dasalan. 2

30 January 2019

Balita
Ang Nangungunang Pahayagang Tagalog sa Bansa ₱8.00

Page: 5

# 'Kamah', 2 pa tinutugis sa Jolo bombing

Nina MARTIN A. SADONGDONG, JUN RAMIREZ, MINA NAVARRO, at ROY MABASA

**Kumikilos na ang awtoridad laban kay alyas "Kamah" at dalawa pang persons-of-interest sa likod ng pambobomba sa isang simbahan sa Jolo, Sulu na ikinamatay ng 21 katao at ikinasugat ng 112 iba pa.**

Sa ipinadalang mensahe sa *BALITA* nitong Lunes ng gabi, kinumpirma ni Philippine National Police (PNP) chief, Director General Oscar Albayalde ang pagkakakilanlan ng isa sa mga persons-of-interest bilang si Kamah.

Ayon sa PNP chief, si Kamah ay nakasuot ng blue green na jacket malapit sa cathedral ilang sandali bago ang pagsabog.

Sa closed-circuit television (CCTV) video na hawak ng awtoridad, isang batang lalaki na nakasuot ng blue green na jacket ay nasilayan kasama ang dalawang iba pa sa Jolo Cathedral.

Sa isang sandali, nakita ang lalaki na may ibinibigay sa kanyang kasama na nakasuot ng sombrero at bag ngunit sila ay nawala nang maganap ang unang pagsabog.

Sa isa pang CCTV footage, nakita ang isang lalaki na may ipinasa sa kanyang kasama.

Nagsimula nang magkagulo at nagtakbuhan ang mga tao kabilang ang tatlong lalaki. Gayunman, ang lalaking nakasuot ng blue green na jacket ay kumaripas sa ibang direksiyon.

Ang batang lalaki na nakasuot ng blue green na jacket ay sinasabing si Kamah nang pasabugin niya ang mga bomba.

Sinabi ni Albayalde na si Kamah ay kabilang sa Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) sub-group Ajang-Ajang, na unang iniugnay ng militar bilang nasa likod ng Jolo Cathedral blast nitong Linggo.

"Ajang-Ajang is no different to Abu Sayyaf Group. The ASG is using younger fighters to carry out offensive attacks. The members of Ajang-Ajang are either the orphans of the ASG or their relatives," sabi ni Albayalde, sa hiwalay na panayam sa telebisyon nitong Martes.

Wala pang ibang detalye sa pagkatao ni Kamah, ngunit sa ulat ng DZMM, siya ay kapatid ng pinaslang na ASG leader na si Surakah Ingog.

"This group [Ajang-Ajang] is originally from Sulu, that is where their lair is. We only know his alias but the investigators said he is known in the community because he lives there," dagdag ni Albayalde.

'ACT OF TERROR'

Inaalam na ng awtoridad ang motibo sa pag-atake, ngunit sinabi ni Albayalde na wala silang nakikitang ugnayan sa pagitan ng insidente at ng kadaraos na Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL), na layuning magtatag ng bagong Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM).

DEATH TOLL

Ipinahayag din ni Albayalde ang posibilidad na tumaas pa ang bilang ng mga nasawi.

"We are still identifying at least two [victims]. There were dismembered parts that our men on the ground have discovered," pahayag ni Albayalde.

Habang isinusulat ito, nasa 21 na ang nasawi sa insidente. Habang sa 112 sugatan, 54 ang nananatiling na sa ospital.

HEIGHTENED ALERT SA BI

Inalerto ng Bureau of Immigration (BI) ang mga tauhan nito sa iba't ibang paliparan at daungan upang mapigilan ang posibleng pagpasok ng mga dayuhang terorista sa gitna ng pambobomba sa Jolo, Sulu.

"I have instructed our port operations division to alert all its personnel and be on the lookout for suspected foreign terrorists who might attempt to enter the country," sinabi ni BI Commissioner Jaime Morente.

KINONDENA NG JAPAN, FRANCE

Kinondenan ng France at Japan nitong Lunes ang pag-atake at nagpaabot ng pakikiramay pamilya ng mga biktima.

"France utterly condemns the attack against the cathedral in Jolo Island last January 27, for which Daesh has claimed responsibility and which killed some 20 people and injured around 100 others, according to the information available," pahayag ng French Embassy sa Maynila.

Nagpaabot naman ng pakikiramay si Japanese Ambassador to the Philippines Koji Haneda sa pamilya ng mga biktima.

"Such terrorist attacks shall never be tolerated. Japan firmly condemns this terrorist act in the strongest terms," pahayag ng Japanese Embassy.

5

4

30 January 2019

Bulgar
Ang Nangungunang Pahayagang Tagalog sa Bansa P8.00

Page: 2

# Utos ni Digong vs. Abu Sayyaf: Bombahin 'yan!

**Ni GENALYN D. KABILING**

Sa harap ng magkasunod na pambobomba sa Jolo, Sulu, inatasan ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte ang militar na paulanan ng bomba ang kuta ng Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), subalit nagpaalalang siguruhin na walang sibilyan na madadamay sa kaguluhan.

Sinabi ni Duterte na maaaring gamitin ng militar ang lahat ng gamit nitong panglupa, pangdagat at panghimpapawid upang ma-"destroy" ang Abu Sayyaf, subalit mahalagang paalisin muna ang mga sibilyan sa lugar upang maiwasang madamay ang mga ito.

"I ordered you to destroy the organization. I'm ordering you now: pulpugin ninyo ang Abu Sayyaf by whatever means," sinabi ni Duterte sa kanyang pagbisita sa Jolo nitong Lunes.

"Meron man tayong helicopter, may eroplano, may mga barko. Eh iyong mga bala natin diyan sa mga kanyon ninyo... paputukin na ninyo. Ibomba muna ninyo lahat, magbili na tayo ng bagong stock. Ngayon kung may inosente mamatay, iwasan ninyo," anang Presidente.

Aniya, kapag natukoy na ng militar ang kuta ng teroristang grupo, dapat na kaagad na paalisin sa lugar ang mga sibilyan para sa kaligtasan ng mga ito.

Tiniyak din niyang magkakaloob ang gobyerno ng pagkain at iba pang pangangailangan sa mga ililikas dahil sa operasyon ng militar.

"Sabihin ninyo pagkabobombahin mo 'yang lahat, paalisin mo iyong mga tao. Paalisin mo 'yung mga tao, ilagay mo dito, kung saan ako ang mag – ako ang maggastos ng pagkain, lahat.

"Kunin ko 'yung lahat ng inosenteng tao. I lalikayo rito, ako ang magpakain muna. Magsakripisyo ako. I hanap ako pera. Tapos pulpugin mo 'yang teritoryo nila. So pagkatapos wala nang magtindig. Ke aso, ke manok, ke lahat, pati tao. Giyera man kaya ito," ani Duterte.

Unang binisita ng Pangulo ang Jolo Cathedral, ang lugar ng pagsabog nitong Linggo na ikinasawi ng 21 katao, bago niya binisita ang mahigit 100 nasugatang sundalo at sibilyan at pinagkalooban ang mga ito ng ayuda lang pinansiyal, saka nakiramay sa pamilya ng mga nasawi.

Sa kanyang speech, sinabi ni Duterte na hindi dapat na matakot ang militar sa mga gagawing pag-atake at tuluyang durugin ang Abu Sayyaf.

"Pero kung sabihin mo lang takot ka mag-attack kasi makapatay ka ng inosente, p***** i** talo ka. Eh kung nandiyan 'yan sila palagi?"

"Ang sabi ko 'pag may target kayo, paalamin mo lang ako, hanap ako ng pera, maglagay tayo ng unit there, sabihin natin six months lang. Tapos bantayan ng Intelligence 'yung sumasama. Pagkatapos bombahin ninyo. Para magbili tayo mga bagong bomba." Kasabay nito, umapela si Duterte sa mga taga-Jolo na makipagtulungan sa gobyerno laban sa pagpuksa sa Abu Sayyaf.

"'Pag hindi, 'pag nalulog' yang bomba sa ulo ninyo, inyo 'yan," ani Duterte. "'Pag hindi, mawawala itong Pilipinas pati Jolo. Balang araw hindi na ito parte ng Pilipinas.

**May ulat ni Beth Camia**

30 January 2019 TABLOID Page: 2

# Pulbusin ang Abu Sayyaf! - Digong

## Babae nag-iwan ng bomba sa Jolo church

NI RUDY ANDAL

Isang babae ang natukoy na nag-iwan ng bomba sa loob ng Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church sa Jolo, Sulu noong Linggo.

Ayon kay AFP Public Affairs chief, Col. Noel Detoyato, dalawang survivors ang nakakita na inilagay ng babae ang bomba na nasa bag sa ika-limang upuan ng simbahan.

Natukoy din sa CCTV na kabilang ang babae sa 4-6 bombers na pumasok sa loob ng simbahan na may dala ng bomba.

"Ang method of deployment ng IED (improvised explosive device), iniwan yung bag, then babae, and then it was remotely detonated so that will dispel report na may suicide bombing," sabi ni Detoyato.

Sa unang CCTV, malinaw na nakunan ang tatlo sa mga suspek habang sa isa pa ay nakunan naman ang iba pang suspek, ayon pa sa opisyal.

Tinukoy naman ni Detoyato na ang Abu Sayyaf ang mastermind sa pagpapasabog na isinagawa ng Ajang-Ajang group na kaalyado ng mga ito. Ang Abu Sayyaf ay mga ekstremistang nakikipag-alyansa sa Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS).

Ayon naman kay PNP Chief P/Director General Oscar Albayalde, isa sa tatlong persons of interest na malinaw na nakunan sa CCTV ay isang alyas Kamah, bomb maker na kapatid ng napatay na lider ng Ajang-Ajang group na si Surakah Ingog.

Sa nasabing CCTV ay makikita ang isang lalaki na naka-jacket ng kulay berde't asul na tinukoy na si Kamah na may inilaabot sa isang lalaking naka-sumbrero na may dalang bag at dito rin ay kitang-kita ang pag-detonate sa ikalawang bomba sa labas ng simbahan.

"Ajang-Ajang, walang pinag-iba sa ASG. Ginamit ng ASG na mga bata ang edad. Naulila, napatay ng militar 'yung ibang kamag-anak The ASG is just using young suspects. These were the ones who were orphaned because their relatives were killed by the military," sabi ni Albayalde.

Samantala sa resulta ng post blast investigation, ang mga sangkap ng pampasabog na kinabibilangan ng ammonium nitrate ay inilagay sa tubo na ginamitan naman ng cellphone bilang triggering device at ang signature naman ay mula sa Abu Sayyaf. *(Joy Cantos)*

Inutusan ni Pangulong Duterte ang Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) na durugin ang Abu Sayyaf sa kahit anong paraan matapos ang magkasunod na pagsabog sa Mt. Carmel Church sa Jolo, Sulu noong Linggo na ikinasawi ng mahigit 20 katao.

"I ordered you to destroy the organization. I'm ordering you now: pulpugin ninyo ang Abu Sayyaf by whatever means," utos ng Pangulo sa militar matapos dumalaw sa blast site at burol ng mga nasawi sa pag-atake.

"Tutal ang gusto ninyo diyan --- may armas man kayo --- obviously patayan ang gusto ninyo. Eh 'di ibigay natin," pahayag ni Duterte sa harap ng mga sundalo at kaanak ng mga biktima ng pagsabog.

"Meron man tayong helicopter, may eroplano, may mga barko. Eh iyong mga bala natin diyan sa mga kanyon ninyo may --- [Ano bang taya? Ano bang taya sa Tagalog?] [Official answers: Kalawang] Oh gikalawang na 'yung mga... Paputukin na ninyo. I-bomba muna ninyo lahat, magbili na tayo nang bagong stock. Ngayon kung may inosente mamatay, iwasan ninyo."

Inatasan din ng Pangulo ang militar na bago magsagawa ng all-out war laban sa ASG ay paalisin ang mga sibilyan upang walang madamay na inosenteng tao.

"Ang gawin ninyo sabihin ninyo pagka-bobombahin mo 'yang lahat, paalisin mo iyong mga tao. Paalisin mo 'yung mga tao, ilagay mo dito kung saan ako ang mag --- ako ang maggastos ng pagkain, lahat. Tapos plantsahin ninyo ng bala pati," sabi pa ng Pangulo sa militar.

Samantala, tinitignan ng Palasyo ang posibilidad na suicide bomber ang nagsagawa ng pambobomba sa loob ng cathedral.

Sinabi ni Presidential Spokesman Salvador Panelo na sa tinatakbo ng imbestigasyon ng mga awtoridad nakita sa loob ng simbahan ang pira-pirasong katawan ng tao na hinihinalang siya ang may dala ng bomba na sumabog.

30 January 2019

Balita

Ang Nangungunang Pahayagang Tagalog sa Bansa ₱8.00

Page: 2

# Sulu bombing, banta sa kapayapaan

**Nagpahayag ng pangamba si dating presidential political adviser Francis Tolentino hinggil sa pambobomba nitong Linggo sa Jolo Cathedral sa Sulu, at sinabing malinaw na banta ito sa kapayapaan at seguridad ng mga mamamayan.**

Magkasunod ang pagsabog na bumulabog sa misa nitong Linggo ng umaga sa Our Lady of Mount Carmel Cathedral, na kumitil sa buhay ng 21 at mahigit 100 ang nasugatan.

Kinondena ni Tolentino ang insidente kasabay ng panawagan para sa agarang imbestigasyon upang mabilis na maibigay ang hustisya sa mga biktima.

"Nakalulungkot na sa gitna ng pagsisikap ng ating pamahalaan, sa pangunguna ng Pangulong Duterte, na makamit ang tunay at pangmatagalang kapayapaan sa Mindanao, may mga salungat na puwersang pilit na humahadlang sa pagsulong tungo sa pag-unlad," pahayag ni Tolentino. -2-

17

30 January 2019 MANILA BULLETIN THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER Page: 16

# Former MILF camp to be converted into ₱8-B banana farm

By ALI G. MACABALANG

COTABATO CITY – Camp Abubakar Assidique, the former main camp of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) practically covering entire Barira town in Maguindanao and parts of adjacent towns, will become a major banana plantation soon, according Agriculture Secretary Emmanuel Piñol.

Piñol said the Department of Agriculture (DA) is dispatching a team of soil experts, solar irrigation engineers, and digital technology experts to conduct preliminary steps needed in converting some 7,000-hectare lands within the erstwhile MILF camp with ₱8-billion investment.

French-Russian businessman Robert Gaspar of the Techiron Resources and Awitzerland-based Investment Group signed the enabling memorandum of agreement (MOA) with the Department of Agriculture (DA), a group of farmer-residents and Maguindanao Gov. Esmael Mangudadatu last January 24, Piñol said.

Piñol disclosed the DA technical team will also help the resident farmers to prepare their land, adding that the group of investors was very interested on the immediate realization of the venture.

"The IT team, led by a Bangsamoro computer expert, will use satellite- and drone-generated data and images to produce a digital map of the (whole area)," he said.

Earlier, Mangudadatu told the Manila Bulletin that the group of foreign investors, especially Gaspar, was "very confident" of the viability of Cavendish banana plantation in lands straddled by the former MILF along Barina, Buldon and Matanog towns in the first district of Maguindanao.

He said Gaspar formed part of the group of investors in the long-booming Cavendish banana farm covering several thousands of hectares in the municipalities of Buluan, Datu Paglas and adjacent towns in Maguindanao's second district.

30 January 2019 Tribune Page: A7

# Repatriation of 16,000 OFW pushed

She also thanked the migrant workers for their sacrifices and making the country's economy strong and competitive

**By Hananeel Bordey**

House Speaker Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday disclosed that she will find ways for the possible immediate repatriation from Saudi Arabia of some 16,000 distressed overseas Filipino workers (OFW).

Arroyo, who is currently in the oil-rich kingdom to explore investment opportunities for Mindanao, said Labor Secretary Silvestre Bello III personally asked her to help in the repatriation of the migrant workers and fast.

"I do have a message for our OFW and it was requested by Secretary Bello, that I help in the repatriation of 16,000 Filipinos who still have claims," Arroyo said during a meeting with the leaders of the Filipino community in the said country.

This, as she also thanked the migrant workers for their sacrifices and making the country's economy strong and competitive.

"Thank you for your sacrifices and heroism and for keeping our economy strong," she said.

The former president along with six lawmakers from Mindanao flew to KSA on Monday to help find investors following the recent passage of the Bangsamoro Organic Law.

"Since we have ratified the Bangsamoro Law, I brought here six lawmakers from Mindanao to help fulfill the expectations of their people," she continued.

The former chief executive was originally invited by Dr. Abdullah Bin Mohammed Bin Ibharim Al Sheik, the president of the Consultative Assembly of Saudi Arabia, for an official visit.

She, however, took the opportunity to conduct an investment mission with the Mindanaoan lawmakers to scout for possible investors in the region. A7

30 January 2019 THE PHILIPPINE STAR Page: 1

# ADB renews commitment to Mindanao peace process

By CZERIZA VALENCIA

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) renewed yesterday its commitment to extend assistance to the peace process in Mindanao following last weekend's bombing of the Catholic cathedral in Jolo that killed 21 people and left about 100 others wounded.

"On behalf of ADB, I offer my deepest sympathies to the people of Jolo, Sulu and to the families of the victims," ADB vice president Stephen Groff said in a statement.

"ADB stands ready to support the government of the Philippines in the peace process and provide assistance as needed,"

Turn to Page 10

60

# ADB

From Page 1

he added.

The Manila-based multilateral development bank added it remains steadfast in pursuing its development efforts in Mindanao.

ADB recently stepped up the provision of assistance in Mindanao with the approval of a $380-million loan in December 2017 for the improvement of 280 kilometers of national road and bridge networks in the region.

This was the first Mindanao-specific loan granted by the bank in 16 years.

This was followed by the approval of the $480 million worth of loans and grants for the Emergency Assistance for the Reconstruction and Recovery of Marawi in December 2018.

The financing package funds programs, projects and activities under the Bangon Marawi Comprehensive Rehabilitation and Recovery Program to resume economic activities and restore a good standard of living in the war-torn city.

ADB yesterday reiterated that amid these developments, it remains committed to increasing to over $1 billion the total commitments for Mindanao development for the 2018-2021 period with a focus on transport, flood control, creation of livable cities, and human development.

ADB has been financing key infrastructure project in rural areas in Mindanao since the late 1960s to early 1970s to increase farm productivity and income.

The twin bombings at the Our Lady of Mount Carmel Cathedral on Sunday happened a week after the first conduct of the plebiscite for the ratification of the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL), which would create the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) to replace the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM).

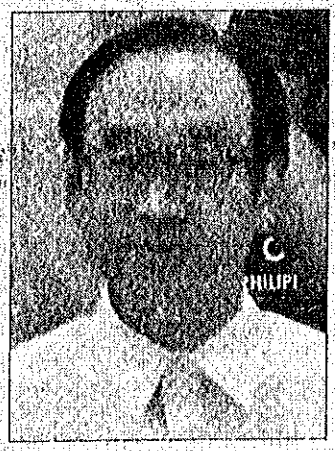
It is hoped the referendum would end decades of armed conflict between Muslim separatists and the government.

The government will administer the second plebiscite on Feb. 6 in several towns in Lanao del Norte in Region 10 and in North Cotabato in Region 12 to determine if the residents there are in favor of grouping their communities together under the expanded Bangsamoro region.

## In solidarity

Japanese Ambassador Koji Haneda said the Philippines would continue getting support from Japan in achieving sustainable peace and stability in Mindanao in accordance with the BOL.

Haneda made the assurance of Japan's support as he expressed condemnation over the latest bombing attack in Jolo.



Haneda

"Such terrorist attacks shall never be tolerated. Japan firmly condemns this terrorist act in the strongest terms," Haneda said in a statement.

"Japan stands with the Philippines when the government and people of the Philippines are overcoming this difficulty in solidarity," he said.

The Japanese government dispatched a monitoring team led by Norikazu Suzuki, Parliamentary Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs, to Cotabato City last Jan. 21 as international observers of the first plebiscite for the ratification of the BOL.

Suzuki also led the contingent from the Japanese Office of the Cabinet Secretariat of the International Peace Cooperation Headquarters and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

On plebiscite day, the team visited Sero Central Elementary School in Cotabato City and observed the opening of the voting precinct, voting by registered voters and counting of votes, and the canvassing of votes by the Cotabato City plebiscite board of canvassers.

Suzuki said he was impressed by the passion of the voters who cared about the future of their region, and praised the dedication of public school teachers who conducted the procedure impartially with a firm attitude.

The following day, Suzuki and the mission met with Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process Galvez and Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) chairman Al-Hajj Murad.

Suzuki said the Japanese government sent the plebiscite monitoring mission as a partner of the Philippines in the Mindanao peace process.

"Japan will strengthen its support according to the progress of the peace process, and underscored the importance of the smooth implementation of the decommissioning of MILF combatants," Suzuki told Galvez and Murad.

Galvez and Murad expressed their gratitude for the support and assistance from Japan, their expectations for the continuing warm relations between the two countries, and their firm resolve to implement the peace process.

## Turkey hails BOL approval

Turkey also hailed the ratification of the BOL and the creation of the BARMM, saying this development would end the decades-old conflict and establish a just and lasting peace in Mindanao.

"We appreciate the devoted efforts of the government of the Philippines, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front and other stakeholders for achieving this milestone for the southern Philippines peace process," the embassy of Turkey in Manila said in a statement.

Turkey has actively supported the Mindanao peace process in leading the Independent Decommissioning Body under the 2014 peace agreement between the government and the MILF.

"We will continue contributing to the successful completion of the peace process," the embassy said. – With Pia Lee-Brago, Lino dela Cruz

30 January 2019

MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

Page: 16

## PCID call

ZAMBOANGA CITY - The Philippine Center for Islam and Democracy (PCID) urged the national and local government to establish an action plan that will develop systemic preventive steps to address the conditions that drive individuals to be radicalized, and join violent extremist groups, and put in place security-based counter-terrorism measures. PCID President Amina Rasul also appealed to leaders to take a rational and pragmatic approach to this crisis to prevent violence from further escalating in the region.

According to Rasul, the incident was also a bleak reminder to all sectors of the urgency to address the issue of violent extremism in conflict-affected communities of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM). "This is the time for us to stand against these terrorists who seek to divide the Bangsamoro people and cast fear," she said. (Nonoy E. Lacson)

30 January 2019 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER Page: A9

# Heartbreak and bashing

AT LARGE

RINA JIMENEZ-DAVID

One's heart just has to break after news of the twin bombings inside and just outside the Cathedral of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel in Jolo, Sulu.

It is a tragedy by any measure: around 20 dead (the final number keeps shifting) and 112 injured. The first bomb went off in the middle of Sunday Mass, and when first responders, law enforcers and fleeing Mass-goers gathered outside, further mayhem awaited them when a second bomb, believed stored in the compartment of a motorcycle, went off again.

The questions ring ominously, as do the facts on hand. The targets of explosions this time were members of Jolo's tiny Catholic minority, showing how both Christians and Muslims are victims of Mindanao's violent history. The bombs went off just days after Sulu voters rejected the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL). This brings into question the holding of the second phase of the BOL voting, as well as throwing a cloud of doubt over the viability of Bangsamoro unity and the enduring peace that many had anticipated with the BOL's passage.

Indeed, this is what's meant by throwing a monkey wrench into a complex process. We can only hope and pray, and hold on to our fragile hopes, that the deaths and destruction in Jolo will not derail the decades-, nay, centuries-old struggle to bring peace and progress in the whole of Mindanao, and finally unite our troubled archipelago.

**THE TARGETS OF EXPLOSIONS THIS TIME WERE MEMBERS OF JOLO'S TINY CATHOLIC MINORITY, SHOWING HOW BOTH CHRISTIANS AND MUSLIMS ARE VICTIMS OF MINDANAO'S VIOLENT HISTORY**

---

**In this "silly season" leading up to the May senatorial elections, one expects all sorts of attacks and counterattacks on candidates of all stripes. But Sen. Bam Aquino seems an incongruous target. Not only does he bear an illustrious surname, he also bears an uncanny resemblance to his uncle Ninoy, a revered figure in our political history. And, given his impressive academic background and the waves he created in civil society involvements, it wasn't at all surprising that he would find himself embroiled in the world of politics, particularly in the Senate where he has been one of the hardest-working senators.**

**But come to think of it, maybe all these reasons are precisely why he has become a target of online bashers, who attack him for being, among other things, a "credit grabber."**

**The online warriors have gotten on Bam's case for his claim of authorship of the free college law, which requires state-run universities and colleges to offer free education for basic college courses. This, despite the senator's chairing of the committee on education when the measure was passed by the Senate.**

**The prospect of free college education is certainly popular among young Filipinos, their parents, friends and families. Maybe that's why everybody seeking public office wants to ride on the bandwagon, seeing the appeal to voters young and old. And, certainly, the senator has as valid, if not the most valid, claim on its authorship as anyone. But don't take Senator Bam's word alone for this.**

**You can also take the word of Sen. Panfilo "Ping" Lacson, a "veteran" member of the Senate. When the free college law was signed into law by President Duterte, Lacson was the first to congratulate and give credit to Senator Bam for his "hard work."**

**And in the face of contrary claims by other candidates, Lacson went on the record in his Twitter account, proclaiming that "before anybody else from the Senate grabs credit, Sen Bam principally authored/sponsored the free tuition bill, now a landmark legislation."**

**Later, in a separate interview, Lacson reiterated his position, saying that as principal sponsor and coauthor of the free college law, Senator Bam put in the requisite work to shepherd it through the Senate floor. As principal author, said Senator Lacson, Senator Bam did much of the hard work of holding committee hearings and seeking consensus from all stakeholders. Eventually, Senator Bam had to defend the measure in the plenary where he had to field questions, even on the smallest details, from his colleagues.**

**That doesn't strike me as "credit-grabbing." And Lacson doesn't strike me as the sort who would rush to a colleague's defense just to make nice. So, bashers, give credit where it's duel**

---

rdavid@inquirer.com.ph

30 January 2019 STAR Page: 9

## GOTCHA

JARIUS BONDOC

# Jolo twin bombings an affront to MILF

Islamic State claims handiwork of Sunday's "suicide bombings" of the Jolo Catholic Cathedral. That's meant to mislead. In saying suicide, IS wants investigators to think there no longer are perpetrators to hunt down. Yet CCTV footages reportedly show four to six lads likely planting the explosives then scurrying from the blasts.

Still the misdeed *was* suicidal. The central authority and the soon-to-govern Moro Islamic Liberation Front consider it an affront. Two days prior, the two sides had taken the peace settlement to the stage of expanded Muslim autonomy. Both consider Islamist terrorism among the foremost threats to Moro home-rule. The world is watching how they will make the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region for Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) work. Those bombers have given Malacañang and the MILF a first chance at joint policing and security. Triggering a fierce manhunt, they've practically signed their own death warrants.

One of the videoed bombers reportedly is a brother of a slain Abu Sayyaf chieftain. Feigning to espouse Moro independence, that 300-man band of kidnappers-for-ransom has been reduced by recent military onslaughts to 80. Famished and fatigued, they've split up into smaller gangs. Intelligence gatherings have it that the bombers are from one that calls itself Ajang-Ajang.

MILF chairman Ebrahim Murad does not see the Abu Sayyaf and IS having formal ties as yet. The two have wide ideological gaps, he said in an interview with Rappler online news days before the bombings. If at all, Abu Sayyaf remnants are seeking IS tie-up only for funding. Could the Ajang-Ajang thus have killed 20 churchgoers and soldiers to prove itself worthy of IS doles? The IS aims for a "Southeast Asia province" consisting of southern Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Mindanao – but is stymied by closer security ties and tighter border patrols among the four countries. A subplot the police are looking into is revenge for the Abu Sayyaf brother's slaying. That's likely why a second bomb was set off against soldiers responding to the first.

It could not have been lost on the Ajang-Ajang that Murad is about to take over leadership of the BARMM. A plebiscite had ratified last week the Bangsamoro Organic Law. Under it, President Rodrigo Duterte is to appoint an 80-member Bangsamoro Transition Authority, till the first BARMM election in 2022. Murad is expected to be named BTA chief minister. He will have overall economic and political responsibility, including law and order. Going after the Abu Sayyaf and the Ajang-Ajang bombers would avert any more disruptions to his governing.

The BARMM will have a branch of the National Police Commission to oversee the regional police. In the interim there shall be a Joint Peace and Security Team, Murad told Rappler. To compose it are the Philippine National Police, Armed Forces of the Philippines, and MILF fighters. Combating terrorism and dismantling private armies are among the JPST's primary duties, as the MILF gradually decommissions its arms.

The MILF had waged a 35-year separatist war before the peace pact of 2014. Before becoming the head Murad was vice chairman for military affairs, in charge of its Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Force.

One of Murad's fiercest foes became his closest associate in governing: retired AFP chief and now Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process Carlito Galvez. Also tasked with law and order is outgoing Muslim Mindanao Gov. Mujib Hataman, a Tausug ex-rebel long fed up with Abu Sayyaf banditry. Those three former warriors will give terrorists no space.

* * *

Though prevalent among Filipinos, depression and suicide are misunderstood. For awareness, discussions are crucial, if uncomfortable. Theater is a safe place and form for exchanges.

The Sandbox Collective and 9 Works Theatrical are staging "Every Brilliant Thing," a one-character play of a child who lists down things in the world that make life worth living – ice cream,

water fights, staying up past bedtime, watching TV – every time her mom comes back from the hospital trying to commit suicide.

The eyewitness story of a parent's depression captures not only the struggles people face in those situations but also the capacity of the human spirit for finding happiness in the smallest of things.

As 3,000 die per day by suicide, playwright Duncan Macmillan aimed to stir conversation and educate audiences on mental health. "Every Brilliant Thing" has run in the UK, Ireland, USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, France, and South Korea, and was filmed for a 2016 HBO documentary. The Philippine debut is timely, as Filipinos, among the world's happiest people, also have the highest depression incidence in Southeast Asia. The Global Burden Disease Study in 2015 revealed that 3.3 million Filipinos suffer depression, with suicide rates of 2.5 percent in males and 1.7 percent in females. Stigma associated with mental health worsens the problem, as families avoid opening up. In the play "people will have an encounter, to find their way through this issue," says Toff de Venecia, artistic director of The Sandbox Collective.

The play stars Teresa Herrera, directed by Jenny Jamora. Premieres Feb. 2, at Zobel de Ayala Recital Hall, Maybank Performing Arts Theater, 26th Street cor. 9th Avenue, Bonifacio Global City.

In unique format, the audience forms part of the performance, as the lead character interacts with the viewers as the narrative unfolds. Post-show dialogues with mental health specialists, support groups, and suicide hotlines will explore depression healing and suicide prevention.

* * *

Catch *Sapol* radio show, Saturdays, 8-10 a.m., DWIZ (882-AM).

*Gotcha* archives on Facebook: *https://www.facebook.com/pages/Jarius-Bondoc/137660215921845*9*, or **The STAR** website *https://beta.philstar.com/columns/134276/gotcha*

★ 9

20 January 2019

MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

Page: 9

GOVERNANCE MATTERS

# The challenges of waging peace

By **JEJOMAR C. BINAY**
Former Vice President

THE bombing last Sunday of a Catholic Church in Jolo, Sulu, shattered the jubilation that attended the ratification a few days before of the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL).

It was also a reality check for those who entertained the optimistic notion that the BOL ratification, and the subsequent creation of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), would end the conflict in the troubled South. Clearly, groups with their own agenda are determined to throw the aspiration of peace in disarray.

The historic fight for self-determination of our Muslim brothers in the South, and the dismal performance of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) in its 30-year existence, cast a long shadow on the future of the BARMM.

The BARMM replaces the ARMM, created by law in 1989 in pursuance of a specific Constitutional mandate. Article 10, Section 15 states: "There shall be created autonomous regions in Muslim Mindanao and in the Cordilleras consisting of provinces, cities, municipalities, and geographical areas sharing common and distinctive historical and cultural heritage, economic and social structures, and other relevant characteristics within the framework of this Constitution and the national sovereignty as well as territorial integrity of the Republic of the Philippines."

Granting the Cordilleras and Muslim Mindanao the right to create autonomous regions, as explained by Fr. Joaquin Bernas, is "more than just a question of privilege for these two regions. It is a question of right."

"One of the riches of the Filipino nation is the diversity of cultures found in it. These diverse cultures, as matter of right, must be allowed to flourish. No one culture should be allowed to crush any other. Thus the basis for the establishment of autonomous regions is homogeneity of the culture and distinctiveness from other cultures, and not just geographic incident," he said.

But Bernas, a noted constitutional expert and member of the Constitutional Commission that drafted the 1987 Constitution, clarified that the creation of the autonomous regions "does not mean the establishment of sovereignties distinct from that of the Republic." The Constitution is very precise in its wording. These autonomous regions can be established only "within the framework

of this Constitution and the national sovereignty as well as territorial integrity of the Republic of the Philippines."

For this, the decision of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) to abandon its decades-old armed struggle for an independent Muslim state in favor of the BARMM deserves highest praise.

The ARMM has been described almost unanimously as a "failed experiment." Since its creation, the ARMM has been mired in controversy, and plagued by allegations of inefficiency, mismanagement, and corruption. Past efforts from the central government to clean house has been vigorously resisted, to the point where, so the story goes, a team of auditors dispatched by the COA central office to conduct a special audit were welcomed by gunfire at the airport. The team booked the first flight back to Manila.

It would be prudent on the part of the MILF and the members of the Transition Council to conduct an honest-to-goodness assessment of the operation and management of the ARMM. Such an assessment is indispensable if the BARMM intends to chart a path totally different from the controversy-laden road taken by the ARMM.

Insurgent groups have always thrived on chronic poverty and underdevelopment. Nowhere has this been more pronounced than in Muslim Mindanao.

Based on 2016 data from the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), the ARMM is the poorest region in the country, with at least 11 percent or 573,446 of the 5.1 million poorest households in Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur, Basilan, Sulu, and Tawi-Tawi.

Defenders of the ARMM cannot claim that it had been deprived of government support. On the contrary, the region has never wanted for money. The ARMM has consistently received a generous slice of the national budget. In the 2018 budget, for example, the ARMM was among the top ten recipients with P24.9 billion. I have noted in a previous column that if we add the PDAF allotments for elected congressmen from the ARMM and Official Development Assistance (ODA) from foreign countries and development agencies over the years, the ARMM had enough money to make significant changes in the social and economic conditions of its people.

The era of waging war for Muslim identity is all but over. The journey towards peace in Mindanao has just begun. The bombing in Jolo, however, is a sobering reminder of the uncertainties and challenges that lie ahead.

*jcbinay11@gmail.com*

9

20 January 2019

MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

Page: 8

# The Jolo bombing – one big question mark

**THE bomb attack on the Our Lady of Mount Carmel Cathedral in Jolo, Sulu, last Sunday, in which 20 people were killed and 81 wounded, presents so many angles in the matter of peace and order in Mindanao.**

The attack happened a week after Sulu voted against the Bangsamoro Organic Law establishing a Bangsamoro Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) to replace the 32-year-old Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM).

Initial reports raised the possibility of an attack by forces identified with the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), which had been behind the attack on Marawi City last year. After ISIS-inspired forces were wiped out in Marawi, there were fears that the international jihadist group would soon strike elsewhere in Mindanao in pursuit of its goal to set up an ISIS center in Southeast Asia.

At the same time, however, fears persist that the Jolo attack is somehow related to the ongoing effort to set up the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region, for which the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) had fought for years.

All throughout the history of this country, the Moros of Mindanao have fiercely resisted all efforts to subjugate them. They fought the Spanish, then the American, colonial forces, as well as the forces of the Philippine government after the independence of 1946. It was finally decided in 1987 that the Moro people of Mindanao have their own the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM).

ARMM was administered by Nur Misuari of Sulu and other leaders of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF). The Moro Islamic Liberation Force (MILF) identified with central and southern Mindanao broke off from the MNLF and continued fighting the government until it succeeded in its goal of a Bangsamoro Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (BARMM).

There have always been those who believe that that there should be two autonomous regions in Mindanao for the Moro people – one represented by the MNLF, the other by the MILF. The coming BARMM of MILF will soon replace the ARMM of MNLF. This may explain why Sulu rejected the Bangsamoro Basic Law in the plebiscite. We hope this opposition expressed in the plebiscite does not go to the extent of violence.

There are other possible groups that could have been behind the Jolo bombing. There is the Abu Sayyaf, long operating independently of the bigger MILF and MNLF, but it has not been identified with such a major operation as the cathedral bombing that killed 20 at one time. There is also the New People's Army (NPA) but it is not likely to attack a Catholic church.

The whole bloody incident is one big question mark as of today. We hope the military can quickly get to the bottom of this attack, as the first step in going after the perpetrators with all possible resources at the government's command.

30 January 2019 The Manila Times Page: A4

# Editorial

## IS claims on Jolo blast need thorough vetting

ALMOST like clockwork, the Islamic State (IS) immediately claimed responsibility for the deadly blasts at Jolo Cathedral on Sunday. This is a claim that cannot be taken at face value.

The IS has been reduced into an internet propaganda machine, and is now but a shadow of the once huge terrorist network that dreamed of establishing a global caliphate from captured strongholds in Iraq and Syria.

The American military, in fact, now believes the demise of the IS will come in the next few weeks.

The IS's claim of responsibility for the Jolo blasts came by way of its *Amaq* online newsletter and a communiqué, and was later picked up by private security entities SITE Intelligence Group and the *Long War Journal*.

The details released by *Amaq* were doubtful, at best. The IS claims two pro-IS militants detonated explosive belts at the cathedral, timed for the 8 a.m. Sunday Mass.

Initial investigation, however, showed that an improvised explosive went off inside the cathedral at about 8 a.m., followed shortly by another blast close to the entrance. That second improvised bomb was left inside the toolbox of a parked motorcycle, according to the military.

The Philippine National Police, meanwhile, found several mobile phones on the blast site, one of which was possibly used to detonate the twin bombs.

The early conclusion was that there were no suicide bombers at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Cathedral. If there were, the Jolo blasts would be the first instance of suicide bombing — and changes the nature of terrorist strategy — in the Philippines.

No terrorist has ever used a suicide belt in the Philippines to execute a dastardly act that could be carried out by remote control. The IS also has a faulty history of claiming authorship of terrorist attacks, and Philippine incidents are no exception.

In early 2017, the same *Amaq* online news site published the IS claim of responsibility for the attack on the Resorts World Manila complex in Pasay City. It turned out to be a false claim; the attacker was a lone wolf, a former government employee who became deranged over mounting casino debts.

At best, the online warriors at *Amaq* can only claim that the Jolo blasts were the handiwork of pro-IS "sympathizers." There is no evidence, yet, that the IS itself had provided resources and know-how to its Filipino adherents, or had even communicated with them.

According to the military, the Ajang-Ajang faction of the notorious Abu Sayyaf Group could have been responsible for the Jolo blasts, based on security footage from establishments surrounding the cathedral.

In the footage, the brother of one of the group's leader's, who was killed by authorities last year, was said to have been spotted by investigators. If this proved true, the motive of the blast could have been revenge.

Taking the word of the IS could mislead the investigation away from the real brains behind the cathedral attack, and deprive the victims of justice. The claims of this spent force must be vetted thoroughly by law enforcement and intelligence agencies.

69

30 January 2019 The Manila Times Page: A1

# Honoring our martyred dead

FIRST THINGS FIRST

FRANCISCO S. TATAD

THE whole city of Jolo is on a total lockdown following the twin explosions at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Cathedral on Sunday, January 27, that killed 20 civilians, soldiers and Coast Guard personnel, wounded 100 others, and shattered the peace promised to war-torn Southern Philippines by the January 21 ratification of the Bangsamoro Organic Law creating the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM).

➢ TatadA5

TATAD FROM A1

# Honoring our martyred dead

The terrorist Islamic State (IS), which US President Donald Trump has declared "defeated" in Syria, prompting him to pull out all American troops fighting terrorism in that country, was quick to claim responsibility for the attack, but Philippine police and military authorities were equally quick to reject the claim as "pure propaganda." The Duterte government had earlier claimed to have expelled IS forces when it liquidated the IS-linked Maute group last year in Marawi City.

## A giant setback

Whoever was finally responsible for the carnage, foreign governments which were unanimous in welcoming the BOL as a genuine achievement for peace were equally unanimous in lamenting the return of violence as a giant setback to the peace and economic development in Mindanao. Local analysts cannot help linking the terrorist attack to the results of the January 21 plebiscite—of the five provinces in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), Sulu alone voted against BARMM; Maguindanao, Lanao Sur, Basilan and Tawi-Tawi voted for it, by a landslide.

But Sulu is Muslim, not Catholic; why should the Catholic Church be punished for Sulu's negative vote? There was no pronounced Catholic campaign in any direction among the Tausugs; they voted as Tausugs, who apparently were not prepared to see their own Nur Misuari's Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) lose out definitively to Murad Ebrahim's Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). Their vote against inclusion was motivated by ethnic political considerations, not by religious relief.

In Cotabato City, the crown jewel of BARMM, the people voted for inclusion, after voting against it twice in the past. This was largely because of the combined efforts of Muslim and Catholic campaigners, led by Cardinal Archbishop Emeritus Orlando Quevedo, who had long consistently advocated it. There was no basis for any group to accuse any religious group of having attempted to influence a negative vote on the organic law.

## The Tausugs warned

But reports reaching some members of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) meeting in Manila, and with whom I had dinner on Sunday evening, said that on the eve of the January 21 plebiscite, the Tausugs were warned "by word of mouth" that bombs would explode if the BOL loses in Sulu. There was no indication though that the cathedral would be targeted.

Former Sulu governor Sakur Tan is still trying to get the Supreme Court to rule that because of its vote (163,526 against, and 137,630 in favor), Sulu cannot be made part of BARMM, despite the obviously unconstitutional rule that no single province in ARMM can opt for exclusion if the majority of provinces votes for inclusion. Tan is also challenging the constitutionality of the entire BOL itself, which provides for a regional government in which the executive and legislative functions are fused, as in a parliamentary government, while the rest of government remains presidential, where the executive and the legislative functions remain separate and distinct from each other.

Regardless of how the high court finally rules on these two issues, and how the law enforcement authorities finally resolve the authorship of the cathedral bombing, it looks like the Catholic Church in Sulu will be going through a new period of intense struggle. From 1971 to 2001, 13 Catholic priests were killed in Mindanao, a number of them from Sulu.

In 1985, a paramilitary group kidnapped and killed Father Tullio Favalli, the first foreign missionary taken from the Pontifical Institute for Foreign Missionaries (PIME). His killers were arrested, prosecuted and punished, but ultimately forgiven. The chief culprit Norberto Manero was freed in January 2008, after serving a commuted sentence and being pardoned by President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo.

## First Favalli, then De Jesus

But after Father Favalli, the most celebrated of these murders was that of the 56-year-old Oblate bishop Benjamin de Jesus outside the cathedral of Mount Carmel on Feb. 4, 1997. De Jesus was a priest from Malabon, first assigned to Jolo's Notre Dame College in 1976. He was made bishop by Saint John Paul 2nd in 1992. Two gunmen shot him six times at close range, hitting him on the head, the right cheek, shoulder and arm, back of the neck and twice in the chest. A 10-to-15-year-old third assailant was reported to have participated in the killing, and a fourth acted as lookout and getaway driver. One woman was killed and several others were wounded during the police pursuit of the killers through the marketplace.

De Jesus was the first Filipino Catholic bishop to be assassinated in history. In 1975, Manila's auxiliary bishop Hernando Antiporda was killed in what was believed to be a robbery. In 1993, two Spanish Carmelite sisters were kidnapped in Sulu, but were subsequently released. In 1994, Father Bertelsman of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate was kidnapped after substituting for Bishop de Jesus at a mass in a military camp. By some twist of fate, I was personally drawn to share the bishop's tragedy.

## A fateful trip to Jolo

On Feb. 14, 1997, my wife and I flew to Jolo in the company of some bishops and the Apostolic Nuncio to attend the martyred bishop's funeral. We took the regular PAL flight to Zamboanga and from there took two small planes to Jolo. I was still in the Senate at the time, and an aide and a freelance photographer who used to cover Sen. Nikki Coseteng traveled with me.

On our return flight, some of the bishop's relatives who had come with us chose to stay behind, leaving one small plane free. This allowed my faithful aide Edison Tamondong and the photographer Edwin Ponce de Leon to occupy the plane by themselves. As we prepared to take off, Auxiliary Bishop Antonio Nepomuceno of Cotabato came running, asking if he could join us. As we were already full, I asked him to join the next plane which was quite empty. Then we took off.

## The plane crash

We landed in Zamboanga in a matter of minutes, and proceeded to the late Congresswoman Maria Clara Lobregat's seafood restaurant on the seaside for lunch. Minutes went by, then hours, there was no news of the second plane. Then finally we heard the plane had crashed after takeoff in the forest, bringing all three passengers and the pilot to their death. There were conflicting stories and theories about what happened, but it remains unclear to this day what really happened. The owner of the plane was too poor to provide indemnity for the deceased passengers. Since then I have never been able to think of Bishop de Jesus' death without feeling that part of me had also died with him. Nor have I been able to go back to Jolo.

## More murders

This was not the last priestly murder in Sulu or in any other part of Mindanao. In 2002, Claretian priest Roel Gallardo was kidnapped, tortured and killed in Basilan. In January 2008, the Oblate priest Fr. Rey Roda was killed inside the Notre Dame High School in South Ubian town during a failed kidnapping attempt. The priest fought off Abu Sayyaf gunmen who raided his convent. He was praying when 10 gunmen burst into the room, dragged him outside and killed him. His hands were tied when his bullet-ridden body was found outside the convent later.

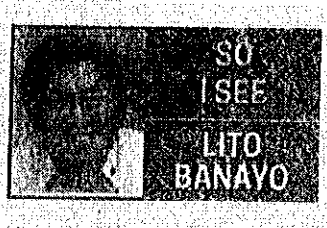
In other parts of the country, priests have been killed while speaking against the evil of extrajudicial drug killings. Since December 2017, three priests have been killed in Luzon for preaching about the sixth commandment, "Thou shall not kill" amid the continued extrajudicial killings of drug suspects. These are Fr. Richmond Nilo in Nueva Ecija, Fr. Mark Anthony Ventura in Cagayan and Fr. Marcelino Paez, also in Nueva Ecija.

All these deaths — whether in the hands of Islamic jihadists or death squads and vigilantes — have the quality of martyrdom, which in my view should be properly and adequately recognized by the Church. It may be time for some Catholic organization, after an inventory of all these victims, to work for the opening of the cause of beatification of these martyred dead. Then all the extremists and thugs who murder for the state will see how we honor the least of our brethren who are killed for their faith.

fstatad@gmail.com

29 January 2019 Standard TODAY Page: A5

# Back to square one?




WE WROTE too soon. I sent my article for Monday last Sunday morning, where I expressed the hope that the overwhelming approval of the Bangsamoro Organic Law would usher in peace and eventual prosperity in Muslim Mindanao.

Then I motored to Hsinchu, a good hour away south of Taipei, to attend the third anniversary celebration of a group of Filipino OFWs who are photography enthusiasts, the Taiwan Litratistas.

These OFWs in Taiwan went into photography, first as a means to escape the drudgery of work in a foreign country during weekends, and also to learn a possible skill that would serve them in good stead when they return to the Philippines. They also conduct workshops in our Ugnayan Center, teaching photography to our fellow contract workers. Last year, we cooperated with them to put up the first photo exhibit of Philippine sceneries at Taipei's Red House, a tourist landmark.

While we were having lunch, news came about the bombing of the Jolo cathedral, which suddenly cast a pall of gloom upon our table, where sat Davaoeño Cesar Chavez, our labor attache, and Dayang-Dayang Sitti Jaafar, our welfare officer who comes from Tawi-Tawi.

Just as the whole world was congratulating us for the successful ratification of what could finally end decades of fratricidal conflict in the South, this dastardly act happens.

It's almost Sisyphean. Are we back to square one in our quest for peace?

* * *

Sulu is such a beautiful island. Several times in the past, when I was in the cabinet of President Estrada, we would see from a helicopter the many pristine white sand beaches and the mountain lakes that could be such an attractive destination for foreigners. The surrounding waters teem with abundant marine life. The soil is so fertile that the fruits in Sulu are without equal, whether *lanzones* or mangosteen.

If we only had peace, the economy of Sulu could grow by leaps and bounds, and its people saved from crippling poverty. The same could be said about Basilan.

Tawi-Tawi further south has fortunately been a haven of peace, and look how despite its distance from Luzon and the capital, this island province has slowly but surely developed, with its seaweed farming and nickel mining.

* * *

Over that Litratista affair in Hsinchu, our labor attache, Atty. Cesar Chavez, also spoke about a creeping human trafficking racket that victim-

izes our contract workers, as already detected in Taiwan.

Illegal recruiters still manage to prey on our OFWs by taking advantage of their search for greener pastures.

Chavez reported that five Filipinos are currently stranded in Malta after falling prey to illegal recruiters who promised them jobs in Europe.

These unscrupulous recruiters specifically target workers in Taiwan because of their capacity to pay higher placement fees, amounting to as much as NT$200,000 or about P340,000, considering that they are already in good paying jobs in Taiwan.

> "It's almost Sisyphean."

Workers who have been on the island for quite some time, with substantial savings and who are about to reach the end of their contracts, are the most vulnerable to this unscrupulous scheme.

The lure of better paying jobs, and the possibility of permanent residency, in Canada and other European countries is the biggest factor why our *kababayans* entertain these precarious offerings from illegal recruiters.

The Manila Economic and Cultural Office and the labor office, however, cannot extend protection or provide assistance to workers who avail of these job offers since their original job contracts indicate that they are to work in Taiwan.

We can only warn them not to entertain these job openings as they only jeopardize their safety and welfare.

* * *

Taiwan and many other Asian countries celebrate the New Year, which in the lunar calendar begins February 5. As such, work grinds to a halt from February 2 all the way to February 10 this year, as the Year of the Pig takes over from the Year of the Dog.

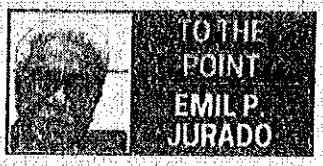
Filipino travelers who made the mistake of booking tours in Taiwan will find almost all shops, even restaurants closed, as Taiwanese take a holiday break, much like our Christmas holidays where all work stops on December 24 and though not declared holidays, the dates between the 26th to the 29th are virtually no-work days until the first of January.

In the case of Taiwan and many other Asian countries, the whole week is declared an official holiday period. It is a practice that we may as well adopt in our country, that is, declare the whole period between December 24 to January 1 a long holiday.

Filipinos hardly work during this whole festive season anyway.

20 January 2019 Standard TODAY Page: A4

# Elusive peace in Mindanao




AFTER the ratification of the Bangsamoro Organic Law creating the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao in place of the ARMM, President Rodrigo Duterte led many to believe that unity and peace, and then development, would finally come to Mindanao.

But there are doubts. Many issues still have to be addressed. Foremost is the presence of IS-inspired rebel groups, like the Abu Sayyaf which holds sway over Sulu and Basilan.

ADVERTISEMENT

> *"There remain many challenges."*

ADVERTISEMENT

And then, aside from the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters, there are other groups like the Maute terrorists. And don't forget the New People's Army.

Those deadly blasts at a Jolo church were just an example of terrorist acts. Whether or not it was related to the BOL plebiscite should not bother Duterte, the military and the police. These terror groups have already made their presence known. What matters is where they might strike next. That's now the job of military and police intelligence.

There are other factors that make unity, peace and development elusive as ever. Nur Misuari's Moro National Liberation Front would not be part of the BARMM. To me, it's a big mistake to exclude it.

History, culture and tradition among Muslims tell us that among the Maranaos (traders) in the Lanao provinces and the Maguindanaoans (farmers) in the Cotabato provinces, the Tausugs, of which Misuari and his MNLF belong, can never live with the Maranaos. To the Maranaos and the Maguindanaoans, the Tausugs are pirates.

Santa Banana, why do you think the MILF broke away from the MNLF? This kind of enmity cannot be just eradicated by a law like the BOL.

This is why many are pessimistic about peace.

* * *

President Duterte's reported trust and satisfaction in ex-Customs Commissioner and now TESDA director general Isidro Lapeña can easily be explained. To the President, retired military officers are honest. They follow orders without question. This is why he has packed his Cabinet with retired generals.

At best, Lapeña is incompetent. Remember the billions of pesos worth of shabu that got into the ports under his watch? I now wonder what has happened to President Duterte's promise that he would remove officials if they had so much as a whiff of corruption around them. Well, this is more than a whiff!

And yet, the President fired former Chief of Staff Dionisio Santiago, then chief of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency, for criticizing the multi-million peso drug rehabilitation center in Nueva Ecija.

* * *

I must give it to Bong Go, the President's favorite senatorial candidate, for appealing almost daily on newspapers.

Malacañang insiders tell me that Go has hired a big advertising agency. The agency has a big

Turn to A5

74

# Elusive...

From A4

advertising account in well-known brands of cars.

My *gulay*, Bong Go must have spent a lot of money already! The Commission on Elections should start monitoring his expenses.

I think Go's candidacy will be a test for the President.

* * *

Barangay officials have invented a new gimmick to earn money for local and national candidates this coming elections.

Because they know their respective communities, they sell no less than a thousand votes to anyone who can pay the price. These officials also provide crowds during sorties. The candidates pay for the food and transport of the people.

This is why I say that if you are a candidate and don't have the money, you should just forget about winning.

* * *

The forthcoming movie of former PNP Chief Ronald dela Rosa must be stopped. This will violate election rules.

You have to wonder, though: Where did he get the funding for a movie starring a popular action star like Robin Padilla? Just asking.

*www.emiljurado.weebly.com*

28 January 2019 Manila Standard TODAY Page: A5

EDITORIAL

# A challenge for everyone

IT IS facile to conclude that martial law has been a failure in Mindanao simply because of Sunday's bomb attack on a Catholic church in Jolo, Sulu that killed 20 people and wounded scores of others.

There can be no doubt that there was a serious lapse in police and military intelligence in this case, as well as in the New Year's Eve bomb attack at a Cotabato City mall. But to leap to the conclusion that martial law is a failure based on these two incidents seems illogical and premature. After all, can we say with any certainty that there wouldn't have been more attacks without martial law?

On the other hand, the government's statement that the bomb attacks show that martial law must remain in effect in Mindanao is simplistic and a little too convenient.

Somewhere between these two positions lies the truth, and we can only hope that the inevitable congressional investigations that will follow provide more answers than questions.

In the meantime, Sunday's bomb attack is a clear challenge to the police and the military. It highlights the weaknesses in their security measures and the need to improve their capability to prevent similar attacks.

The measures taken immediately after the Jolo attack—increased checkpoints and heightened security in public places—will help to an extent, but they are extraordinary steps that clearly emphasize that things are far from normal. A more effective solution would be for security forces to quickly identify the bombers and neutralize them with the same mercy they showed the churchgoers who died in Jolo.

From a broader perspective, Sunday's attack is a challenge to the administration, flush with the success of the "yes" vote in the recently concluded plebiscite to ratify the Bangsamoro Organic Law in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

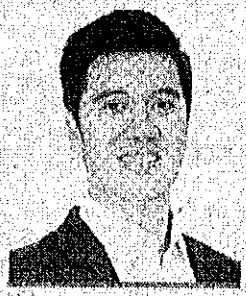
The product of peace talks between the government and Moro rebels, the BOL sets the stage for the creation of a Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao that would give Moros greater autonomy, which has been seen as the way to peace after decades of war in the south.

An attack on a Catholic church is obviously an attempt to fan religious hatred that has fueled the conflict in Mindanao—and can only be the work of those who oppose the BOL and the BARMM. These forces clearly must be stopped.

This, too, is a challenge to the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, which will have a key leadership role to play in the new BARMM. It is not enough for the MILF to deny any involvement in Sunday's bomb attack, as it has done. Given its stake in the new order, it needs to bring its considerable influence and resources in the region to help remove the enemies of peace.

30 January 2019 tribune Page: 4

# A critical look at the Jolo blasts



**QUO VADIS**

Darren M. de Jesus

> *"The rejection is considered merely a symbolic gesture... since Sulu will still be included in BARMM for being previously part of the ARMM.*

It was a deathly terror attack, nothing else. The twin bombing of the Cathedral of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Jolo, Sulu was brought about by crazed, cynical mass murderers. Vile treachery and ignominy are depictive of the killers behind this act of terror. People go to Sunday Mass for peace and solace, but were faced by explosions designed to terrorize and, by the strategic position of the second bomb – right at the path of the crowd escaping loss of life – ensured maximum damage and loss of life. Bombs were filled with shrapnel, so that those not within the radius of the blast would still fall prey.

Photos of the crime scene would upset anyone's stomach. I personally saw some of the heartbreaking photos of deceased individuals and mutilated bodies. I cannot imagine how anyone would intend this to happen. With at least 22 killed and more than a 100 wounded, questions on motive remain unanswered. President Rodrigo Duterte was correct to be enraged with what happened and I pray that the perpetrators are eventually caught by the authorities.

The government is doing its part with the lockdown of Sulu and the initial identification of the suspects seen on CCTV, who are said to be members of the Abu Sayyaf Ajang-Ajang Group. In a TV interview, Sulu 1st District Caretaker Rep. Jericho "Koko" Nograles of the PBA Partylist (in lieu of deceased Sulu 1st District Rep. Tupay Loong, who passed away in 2016), clarified that Sulu is not in total lockdown as businesses have resumed operations. Interior Secretary Eduardo Año said that a woman may have been behind the first blast and a man set off the second bomb, which caused more damage. With all the information coming in, it is best for us to trust the authorities and pray that those being treated in the hospitals are able to recover quickly.

Now, may I distract from this horrific scene and ask you to think critically – what is the relation of this to the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) plebiscite? We are unsure, but we do know that Sulu is one of the more vocal jurisdictions affected by this momentous piece of legislation. If we may recall, Sulu voted "No" to reject the BARMM – 163,500 voted against the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL), while 137,630 voted for it. However, the rejection is considered merely a symbolic gesture, there being no effect, since Sulu will still be included in BARMM for being previously part of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

> *"All forces must ensure that the BARMM push through; otherwise, peace will never be realized in this region.*

Imagine if the blasts took place a week earlier or on the Sunday before the first plebiscite held on 21 January. Then, the plebiscite might not have pushed through at all due to widespread violence. This being so, one may conclude that the intent for the blast may be unrelated to the BARMM at all and was meant to wreak terror in the area. Regardless, the effects will still be felt in the upcoming plebiscite on 6 February and, more importantly, at the formation of the Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA).

The BOL was done through the efforts of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front and the MILF are expected to hold key positions in the BARMM. Left out was the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), led by Nur Misuari, who hails from Sulu and supported by Sulu Governor Abdusakur Tan. Malacañang denied that the MNLF has anything to do with the terror attack. In a Palace briefing, presidential spokesman Salvador Panelo made it clear that it is unfair to speculate on this, because Misuari was never seen as a threat to the BOL, as his disagreement was merely a matter of preference: Misuari preferred Federalism over BARMM.

But the elephant has been pushed into the room and the President now has a golden opportunity to reconcile differences and settle wild speculations. The best move perhaps is to come up with a BTA that encompasses the different interests in Muslim Mindanao, including that of Misuari and Gov. Tan – the latter even filed a petition before the Supreme Court in an attempt to derail the BOL. In the days leading to the second plebiscite, we will see the mettle of Malacañang in how determined it is to see this through.

As for the 6 February plebiscite, Mindanaoans must be wary of the possibility of another terror attack, despite the existence and continuation of martial law in the area. The areas where voting will be held – North Cotabato and Lanao del Norte – may be considered "hotspots" by the Commission on Elections and military presence should be beefed up. All forces must ensure that the BARMM push through; otherwise, peace will never be realized in this region.

*Email: darren.dejesus@dejesuslegal.com*

77

30 January 2019 tribune Page: 4

# Constitutional danger

*"How can there be peace even among the various Moro tribes when some of them feel that they had been betrayed not just by the government but also the MILF?*

**FRONTLINE**
Ninez Cacho-Olivares

Senate Majority Leader Juan Miguel Zubiri knows that the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL) he sponsored and passed by Congress, as well as the first plebiscite recently held in Mindanao, is clearly unconstitutional, which is why Zubiri now hopes that the "Yes" vote that had drowned out the "No" votes ratifying the BOL would convince the Supreme Court (SC) to dismiss the petition that challenged its constitutionality.

The author of the BOL said he hopes the SC will not look at the legal and constitutional issues and have an open mind and heart, since he claimed it is an instrument of peace and not a political instrument, stressing that it's an instrument of progress for these areas in Mindanao.

Does Zubiri not realize the consequences should the SC go against what is legal and constitutional and declare the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao legal and constitutional, as well as the establishment of a Bangsamoro parliamentary government, which goes against the constitutionally ratified presidential system of government?

An even worse consequence for constitutional democracy is the fact that with the SC declaring as constitutional the BOL and the plebiscites – which really is putting the cart before the horse – is that Congress then is given by the SC the power to amend the Constitution and, in effect, Congress then will have the power to also throw out of the constitutional window the very Constitution and its provisions that disallow Congress, through a mere law, the right to dismiss that which had been ratified by the Filipino people.

This is not the first time a peace agreement has been reached between the Moros in Mindanao and brought before the High Court. And every time, under past governments, such peace pacts were junked by the court for its unconstitutionality.

What then is the difference today? The plebiscite that came before the unconstitutional amendment through an unconstitutional act of Congress?

How, pray tell, can a mere congressional law that usurps the right to amend the existing Constitution through the mandated modes of amending or revising the Charter be deemed constitutional and legal by the SC? There is therefore no more need for the Constitution and its mandated provisions ratified by the electorate.

Why, we can even have Congress merely come up with a law that makes the change from a presidential system to a federal system in the Philippines. After all, Congress will have been given the right and the power to amend any constitutional provision by the High Court even with just a simple reason that may have no basis at all, of the BOL bringing about

peace in Mindanao and for a federal-system change. Why, Zubiri and other members of Congress can always claim that there will finally be peace in the entire Philippines.

"It will bring about a just and dignified peace to the land of Bangsamoro areas to all those who passed away. There were already too many who died in their struggle to achieve peace," the senator said.

So sorry, but what Zubiri says is pure double bullsh*t.

For one, too many Filipino soldiers and civilians have died for the motherland in their fight against these lawless Muslims elements who insist on not being identified as Filipinos and believe they have the right to claim their so-called ancestral lands.

Have I got news for the Moros: the ancestral land belongs to our Filipino ancestors who probably were all Moros before the Spanish colonizers came around. It's not only Malaysia that has datus and other members of royalty.

> ***"This is not the first time a peace agreement has been reached between the Moros in Mindanao and brought before the High Court.***

Even before the SC rules on the constitutionality and legality of Congress, on the right of Congress to amend any constitutional provision that catches the fancy of congressmen and through a mere law, it is pretty evident that neither the unconstitutional BOL nor the plebiscite results can bring about peace, dignified and otherwise.

Already, this is being made clear through the horrendous Jolo church bombing in which the Abu Sayyaf, trained by the foreign IS recruiters and teaching them bombing techniques, is supposedly the culprit. And this is just the beginning.

Then, too, how can there be peace even among the various Moro tribes when some of them feel that they had been betrayed not just by the government but also the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) that has been given, moreover, the "right" to hold on to their arms and the right to have its private army as it refuses to decommission its arms despite their being part of government?

The petition asking the High Court to stop and eventually declare the BOL unconstitutional was filed by Sulu Governor Abdusakur Tan last year.

Will the SC allow Congress to amend the Constitution through a mere law enacted by Congress and signed by the President?

If it does, the High Court itself also can be abolished through a mere law amending the charter.

Danger certainly lurks for constitutional democracy.

11/01/30/19
DAILY TRIBUNE

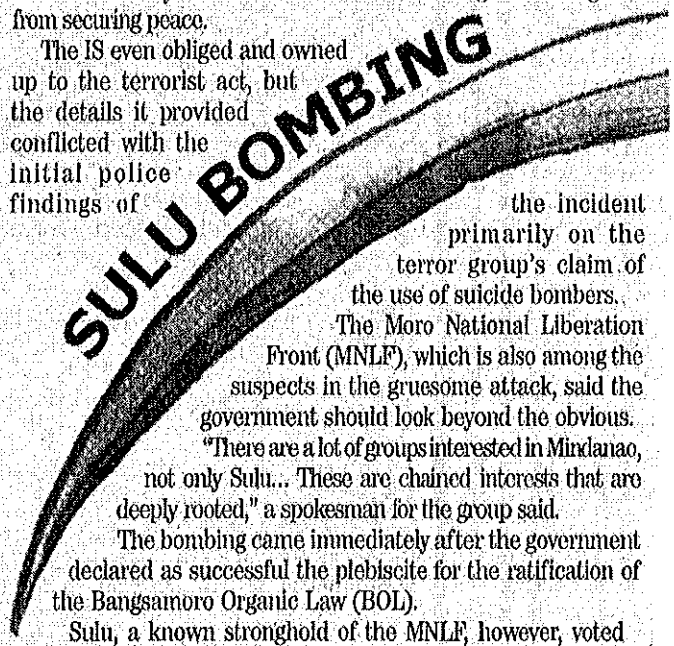
30 January 2019 tribune Page: 4

# Dark shadows lurk

*"The strong backing for the MILF may just need a convincing push since the Bangsamoro Organic Law faces a difficult time with the Supreme Court.*

The Islamic State (IS) was the automatic suspect in the Jolo, Sulu bombing that killed 20 Sunday church goers and state troopers securing the Church, but the troubled past of Mindanao points to several other interests that may seem to frustrate President Rodrigo Duterte's gains from securing peace.

The IS even obliged and owned up to the terrorist act, but the details it provided conflicted with the initial police findings of the incident primarily on the terror group's claim of the use of suicide bombers.




The Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), which is also among the suspects in the gruesome attack, said the government should look beyond the obvious.

"There are a lot of groups interested in Mindanao, not only Sulu... These are chained interests that are deeply rooted," a spokesman for the group said.

The bombing came immediately after the government declared as successful the plebiscite for the ratification of the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL).

Sulu, a known stronghold of the MNLF, however, voted against the BOL, thus making it among those with a strong motive to launch an attack.

Initially, the Philippine National Police and Armed Forces of the Philippines investigators blamed the Ajang-Ajang group, which has links with the terrorist Abu Sayyaf for the bombings.

The MNLF said the suspects being presented are shallow and obvious.

To a great degree, the MNLF, which preceded the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in the self-determination effort, forwarded a good reason for investigators to look deeper.

Rody apparently had an inkling on whom he should be wary of.

The declaration of an all-out war against terrorists was expected, but the real culprits may be lurking nearer than in the conflict areas of the south.

For instance, two former Presidents, Noynoy Aquino and Fidel V. Ramos, rejected calls for an all-out war against insurgents, such as that in 2011 when 19 soldiers were killed.

Again, in the Mamasapano tragedy of 2015, Noynoy refused to launch an offensive against rebels who slaughtered 44 Special Action Force commandos.

Former President Joseph Estrada also blamed Ramos and the yellow mob of Noynoy for throwing him out just when government forces were about to wipe out the MILF.

Estrada also revealed that he received calls from former US President Bill Clinton demanding a halt in government offensive against the MILF.

The strong backing for the MILF may just need a convincing push since the BOL faces a difficult time with the Supreme Court (SC).

Sometime in 2008, after the high tribunal ruled an agreement that would have broken up Mindanao and awarded regions to the MILF as unconstitutional, its commander Umbra Kato went into a rampage that resulted in the pillage of villages in Mindanao.

Kato was slain in 2015 after a military offensive.

> ***"The declaration of an all-out war against terrorists was expected, but the real culprits may be lurking nearer than in the conflict areas of the south.***

The United States has long been pouring huge investments in the troubled areas in Mindanao mainly due to the huge resources believed to be found in the region.

Mindanao is estimated to hold some $1 trillion in untapped natural riches.

The sealing of a peace deal with the rebels was pivotal in assuring the long-term exploitation of the resources in the island.

Rody supported the BOL, but he wanted the agreement to be amended and improved to bring together all the divergent tribes and fiefdoms in the Islamic south.

Such a prospect would be detrimental to the groups wanting to exploit the huge resources of Mindanao since they wanted just one group to talk to.

An agreement that would have ceded portions of Mindanao to the MILF through the so-called Memorandum of Agreement on Ancestral Domain was rejected by the SC and the BOL would likely go the same way, since the provisions of both are not too different primarily on the surrender of resources.

The hierarchy of the MILF frequently consults with US embassy officials as evidenced by leaked cables on WikiLeaks that proved the deep interest of the American government in the MILF and what could be its future role in the Bangsamoro.

The MILF officials even suggested, based on the WikiLeaks entries, a parallel consultation with the US regarding the setting up of the autonomous region during the several meetings held between the MILF and US diplomats.

The twin bombings may have been warning shots fired at the SC to force its hand on the BOL.

30 January 2019

Balita
ANG NANGUNGUNANG PAHAYAGANG TAGALOG SA BANSA ₱8.00

Page: 6

EDITORIAL

# Ang Jolo bombing—isang malaking katanungan

ANG pambobomba sa Our Lady of Mount Carmel Cathedral sa Jolo, Sulu, nitong nagdaang Linggo, kung saan 20 katao ang nasawi at 81 ang sugatan, ay naglantad ng maraming anggulo sa usapin ng kapayapaan at kaayusan sa Mindanao.

Nangyari ang pag-atake isang linggo matapos bumoto ang Sulu kontra sa Bangsamoro Organic Law, na naglalatag ng Bangsamoro Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) bilang kapalit ng 32 taon nang Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM).

Sa mga paunang ulat, lumilitaw ang posibilidad ng pag-atake ng puwersa na kinikilalang may kaugnayan sa Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), na siyang nasa likod ng pag-atake sa Marawi City noong 2017. Matapos maubos ang puwersa na nauugnay sa ISIS sa Marawi, nagkaroon ng pangamba na umatake ang international jihadist group sa alinmang bahagi ng Mindanao, upang maisakatuparan ang hangarin na makapagtatag ng isang ISIS center sa Southeast Asia.

Gayunman, kasabay nito, nananatili ang takot na ang pag-atake sa Jolo ay may kaugnayan sa pagsisikap na maitatag ang Bangsamoro Autonomous Region, na matagal nang ipinaglalaban ng Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF)

Sa buong kasaysayan ng ating bansa, matapang na ipinaglaban ng mga Moro sa Mindanao ang lahat ng naghangad na gapiin sila. Nakipaglaban sila sa mga Espanyol, sa mga Amerikano, mga puwersang kolonyal, maging sa puwersa ng pamahalaan ng Pilipinas matapos maideklara ang kalayaan noong 1946. Noong 1987, pormal na nagpagdesisyunan na magkaroon ang mga Moro ng Mindanao ng sariling Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM).

Pinangasiwaan ang ARMM ni Nur Misuari ng Sulu at ng iba pang lider ng Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF). Nakipaghiwalay ang Moro Islamic Liberation Force (MILF) sa bahagi ng central at katimugang Mindanao mula sa MNLF at patuloy na nakipaglaban sa pamahalaan hanggang magtagumpay sa hangarin nito na isang Bangsamoro Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (BARMM).

Matagal nang may mga naumungkahi na dapat na magkaroon ng dalawang autonomous na rehiyon sa Mindanao para sa mga Moro—isa na kumakatawan sa MNLF, at isa para sa MILF. Ang nalalapit na BARMM ng MILF ay nakatakdang pumalit sa ARMM ng MNLF. Ito ang maaaring paliwanag kung bakit tinanggihan ng Sulu ang Bangsamoro Basic Law sa plebisito. Umaasa tayong ang ipinapakitang pagsalungat sa plebisito ay hindi umabot sa karahasan.

May iba pang posibleng grupo na maaaring nasa likod ng pambobomba sa Jolo. Nariyan ang Abu Sayyaf, na matagal nang malayang kumikilos mula sa MILF at MNLF, ngunit hindi ito nagkaroon ng isang malaking operasyon katulad ng pambobomba sa Cathedral na kumitil sa buhay ng 20. Nariyan din ang New People's Army (NPA) ngunit malabo nitong atakihin ang isang simbahang Katoliko.

Ang buong nakagugulat na insidente ay nananatiling malaking katanungan hanggang ngayon. Umaasa tayo na mabilis na matutukoy ng militar ang ugat ng pag-atakeng ito bilang unang hakbang sa paghahanap ng mga salarin gamit ang lahat ng maaaring makatulong mula sa utos ng pamahalaan.

6

82

30 January 2019 Tempo Page: 6

EDITORIAL

# The Jolo bombing – one big question mark

THE bomb attack on the Our Lady of Mount Carmel Cathedral in Jolo, Sulu, last Sunday, in which 20 people were killed and 81 wounded, presents so many angles in the matter of peace and order in Mindanao.

The attack happened a week after Sulu voted against the Bangsamoro Organic Law establishing a Bangsamoro Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) to replace the 32-year-old Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM).

Initial reports raised the possibility of an attack by forces identified with the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), which had been behind the attack on Marawi City last year. After ISIS-inspired forces were wiped out in Marawi, there were fears that the international jihadist group would soon strike elsewhere in Mindanao in pursuit of its goal to set up an ISIS center in Southeast Asia.

At the same time, however, fears persist that the Jolo attack is somehow related to the ongoing effort to set up the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region, for which the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) had fought for years.

All throughout the history of this country, the Moros of Mindanao have fiercely resisted all efforts to subjugate them. They fought the Spanish, then the American, colonial forces, as well as the forces of the Philippine government after the independence of 1946. It was finally decided in 1987 that the Moro people of Mindanao have their own the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM).

ARMM was administered by Nur Misuari of Sulu and other leaders of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF). The Moro Islamic Liberation Force (MILF) identified with central and southern Mindanao broke off from the MNLF and continued fighting the government until it succeeded in its goal of a Bangsamoro Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (BARMM).

There have always been those who believe that that there should be two autonomous regions in Mindanao for the Moro people – one represented by the MNLF, the other by the MILF. The coming BARMM of MILF will soon replace the ARMM of MNLF. This may explain why Sulu rejected the Bangsamoro Basic Law in the plebiscite. We hope this opposition expressed in the plebiscite does not go to the extent of violence.

There are other possible groups that could have been behind the Jolo bombing. There is the Abu Sayyaf, long operating independently of the bigger MILF and MNLF, but it has not been identified with such a major operation as the cathedral bombing that killed 20 at one time. There is also the New People's Army (NPA) but it is not likely to attack a Catholic church.

The whole bloody incident is one big question mark as of today. We hope the military can quickly get to the bottom of this attack, as the first step in going after the perpetrators with all possible resources at the government's command.

0

83

**ONLINE NEWS**

**30 JANUARY 2019**

# Jolo blast an isolated case: AFP

By Priam Nepomuceno January 29, 2019, 1:45 pm

**MANILA** -- The recent bombing in Jolo, Sulu which claimed the lives of at least 20 people and wounded 112 others, is a just an isolated incident, a military official said Tuesday.

"It was an isolated case as there was apparently an unconfirmed information as revealed by a priest in Jolo in a media interview that there is a bombing threat against the Church," Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) public affairs office chief Col. Noel Detoyato told the Philippine News Agency when asked if Sunday's blast is an isolated one or just the beginning of a wave of attacks in the area.

He also added that the Mount Carmel Cathedral has already a long list of bombing incidents in the past.

"It is in this light that a community effort has to be tapped as security against terrorism is a complex activity," Detoyato added.

Earlier, the AFP public affairs office chief said the military will take "extra precautionary measures" to secure the second Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL) plebiscite on February 6 following the incident in Sulu's capital town.

"We will take extra precautionary measures in the advent of the Jolo incident. Meanwhile, our troops are advised to be always on the alert for any changes in the security protocols to anticipate the fluid situation. All other security arrangements stay the same," he said.

Another plebiscite for the BOL will be held next week in the province of Lanao del Norte, except Iligan City; the municipalities of Aleosan, Carmen, Kabacan, Midsayap, Pikit, and Pigkawayan in the province of North Cotabato and the 28 barangays to be included in the region.

The military has deployed over 10,000 troops and support units to help secure the BOL plebiscite along with the Philippine National Police. ***(PNA)***

*www.pna.gov.ph*

# Security lapses eyed in Jolo blast: Lorenzana

By Priam Nepomuceno January 29, 2019, 4:01 pm

**MANILA** -- Department of National Defense (DND) Secretary Delfin Lorenzana on Tuesday said lapses in security led to the twin bombings in Jolo, Sulu which killed at least 20 persons and wounded 112 others last January 27.

He made this statement after noting that as early as August last year, they received information regarding plans of Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) terrorists to bomb the Our Lady of Mount Carmel Cathedral.

"That is correct, there were reports that Catholic Churches in Jolo, Basilan and (Zamboanga) would be bombed as early as August 2018, with Jolo as most probable. Since then, the Jolo Cathedral was guarded by soldiers 24 hours a day. We will never know how the bombers got in or near the church as the soldiers guarding the main door all died," Lorenzana said in a message to reporters.

He noted that other soldiers who entered the church to rescue victims of the first explosion were hit by the second bomb.

"Was there (a) lapse? While we were briefed that all people going inside were searched, it is possible that there may be lapse in the procedure," the DND chief added.

Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) public affairs office chief, Col. Noel Detoyato echoed Lorenzana's position on the incident.

"Just the mere fact that a bomb exploded inside the church (in Jolo, Sulu) means there were lapses. As to how it actually happened, we will never know as the soldier on duty also died in the blast," he added.

In connection with this, Detoyato said security protocols will be updated to prevent a repeat of the incident.

"Meanwhile we will reconstruct the events leading to the blast through interviews and data gathering so that we can effect changes in the existing security protocols," the AFP official stressed.

Detoyato, however, downplayed reports that the Jolo attack was conducted by suicide bombers.

"In the course of the investigation, *may mga natanong na mga* wounded *na nasa* hospital, *dalawa sa kanila* is *sabi may nakita sila na babae na nag-iwan ng* bag on the fifth pew *ng simbahan* (some of the wounded in the hospital were asked. Two of them said they saw a woman who left a bag on the fifth pew of the church) coming from (the) back. *Parang on* the fifth pew, *iniwan yung bag, umalis yung babae* (It seems that the bag was left on the fifth pew and the woman also left). Then a few seconds after, *may sumabog* (there was an explosion) So *yun ang* (that was the) method of deployment so *hindi siya* (it is not a) suicide bombing. So, *ang* (the) method of deployment *ng* (of) IED (improvised explosive device), *iniwan yung* bag (the bag was left) and then *babae* (there was a woman) and then remotely, it was remotely detonated so that would dispel the reports *na may* (of) suicide bombing," he added.

Detoyato also bared that since 2000, there have been 10 bombing incidents in and around the vicinity of the church and the principal suspects have always been ASG members. ***(PNA)***

www.pna.gov.ph