



Action Network Human Rights- Philippines

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Disclaimer: The news articles available in this review are only collated from local newspapers. They were not written by the Action Network Human Rights- Philippines.

The Action Network Human Rights – Philippines advocates the sustainable improvement of the human rights situation in the Philippines. Members are: Amnesty International, Bread for the World – Church Development Service, Misereor, Missio Munich, philippinenbüro e.V., the International Peace Observers Network (IPON) and the United Evangelical Mission (UEM).



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HEADLINES & POLITICS
HRonlineph.com, 08.08.2013

Dispatches: Philippines Should Revoke Blacklisting of Protester

By Carlos Conde

Thomas van Beersum, a 20-year-old Dutch citizen, was about to board his flight Tuesday morning back to the [Netherlands](#) when [the Philippines](#) Bureau of Immigration stopped him and detained him for the next 30 hours at the [Ninoy Aquino International Airport](#) in [Manila](#). Officially, his crime was overstaying his visa, a charge Beersum disputes. Immigration officials, however, were emphatic about why he was detained: Beersum had joined an anti-government rally on July 23, 2013, near the Philippine Congress where [President Benigno Aquino III](#) delivered his [State of the Nation address](#).

Bureau of Immigration Officer-in-Charge Siegfred Mison told the media Beersum had violated visa rules because he joined the protest. Foreign visitors, Mison said, should not join such protests. Apart from detaining Beersum, the [immigration](#) bureau also declared him an "undesirable alien," put him on an "alert list order," and blacklisted him, thus barring any future visits to the country of his fiancée.

The Philippine Star, 08.08.2013

TUCP slams foreign investors for anti-wage hike stand

By Mayen Jaymalin

MANILA, Philippines - The country's largest labor group debunked yesterday the claim of foreign and local businessmen that increasing the minimum wage would result in mass layoffs and closure of companies.

"This will not happen in the Philippines because those who cannot afford the minimum wage rate can be exempted by law from applying the rate," TUCP executive vice president Gerard Seno said yesterday in reaction to the warning issued by the Joint Foreign Chambers of the Philippines (JFC) and the Employers Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP).

[...] The ECOP and the JFC urged the wage boards to dismiss TUCP's petition for wage increase. The TUCP filed separate petitions for an increase in the daily minimum wage of workers in Metro Manila by P85 and from P80 to P88 for workers in other regions.

Seno said workers are suffering from rising electricity rates and gas prices. He also cited the impending hike in Social Security System premiums and the Metrorail Transit and Light Railway Transit fares.

Inquirer.net, 12.08.2013

AFP hands over P19.25-M reward to 10 informers

By Frances Mangosing

MANILA, Philippines — Ten informants received the reward money on Monday at Camp Aguinaldo for their information that led to the capture or death of key terrorist personalities and communist leaders.

The reward money shelled out by the military to the 10 informers amounted to P19.25 million.

That Beersum was arrested when he was already on his way out suggests this was nothing but harassment. The government's behavior violates the guarantees of free expression and peaceful assembly to which foreign visitors as well as Philippine citizens are entitled under international law. It undermines Aquino's claims that his administration respects human rights and values [civil liberties](#).

While the administration seems to have time to chase foreigners protesting rights violations, it has fallen far short of its rhetoric to end impunity for serious abuses, an important topic that Aquino failed to mention in his State of the Nation address.

The Philippine government should revoke the blacklisting of Beersum. It should reject the immigration chief's statement warning foreigners from joining in peaceful protest actions. Instead of harassing those who decry the continued violations of human rights, Aquino should welcome them.

"The response to dismiss the petition outright tends to show the top leadership of ECOP and JFC is losing touch with reality and utterly disregarding the economic difficulties being experienced by thousands of Filipino minimum wage earners," Seno said.

He said it is also unfair to compare the wage rate in the Philippines with those in other countries in Southeast Asia since workers operate in varying political and economic circumstances and procedures.

He said the P456 daily minimum wage in Metro Manila has significantly eroded and is way below the living wage needed to survive in the highly urbanized region.

Seno said JFC and ECOP's claim would not discourage workers from seeking a wage increase.

[...] The wage board in Metro Manila is set to hold today a public hearing on the TUCP's petition for wage increase.

Meanwhile, workers belonging to the militant Kilusang Mayo Uno staged a mass action to push for a P125 legislated wage increase and to abolish the wage boards.

Seven New People's Army leaders and three Abu Sayyaf Group members were captured or killed during focused-security operations because of the cooperation of the informants.

Armed Forces of the Philippines Chief of Staff General Emmanuel Bautista personally handed the reward money to the informants.



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Among the NPA leaders arrested due to the leads given by informants was Danilo Benjamin Mendoza alias 'Rolly Panesa,' the NPA's Secretary of Southern Tagalog Regional Party Committee and member of the CPP-NPA-NDF Central Committee. He has a P5.6-million reward money on his head and was captured by joint police and military troops in Quezon City last October.

Also captured were Felimon Mendrez alias "Tatay" with a P5.25-million bounty on his head, Jesus Abetria alias "Puti" (P2.5 million), Allie Tafalla alias "Maco" (P750,000), and Alvin Orpiada alias "Bong" (P550,000), while Teofila Buralo alias "TimTim" (P1.2 million) was killed, and Lawina Salibulan alias "Wendy" (P1.2 million) surrendered.

The captured ASG members were Abdurasad Musad alias "Mokeh" (P1 million), Jaid Jawalon alias "Jaid" with (P600,000), and bomber Daud M. Rahim alias "Rahim Omar" (P600,000).

The reward system for wanted ASG leaders and members was activated on June 12, 2001, while the reward system for wanted insurgents was activated on June 30, 2006. Cohorts and other terrorist personalities were then included in the reward system in October 2007.

Sun.Star Davao, 21.08.2013

Army organizes regional multi-sector advisory group

By Ivy C. Tejano

IN celebration of the 7th Philippine Army's 10th Infantry Division's founding anniversary, the division vowed to strengthen peace and development efforts to benefit all.

To reinforce its function as peacemaker, the division formally organized a Multi-Sector Advisory and Action Group (MSAAG) yesterday to institutionalize its collaboration with stakeholders in attaining its vision in addressing the security and development concerns in its area of responsibility.

The MSAAG is patterned after the national advisory group that has been helping the army craft out plans and programs for peace and development.

Among the stakeholders, who attended the assembly at Camp General Manuel T. Yan Sr. in Mawab in Compostela Valley were government officials, regional director of different government agencies, religious group, media partner and other public and private sector.

The 10th Infantry Division with the stakeholders signed a Manifesto of Commitment for the Multi-Sector Advisory and Action Group, manifesting their commitment to be part of the group.

The division discussed the reasons of insurgency, identified the issues that needs to be addressed especially in the far-flung areas, the division's campaign in winning the peace, its peace and development initiatives, security reform and commitment so as to maintain a peaceful life.

During the assembly, Major General Ariel B. Bernardo, 10th Infantry Division commander, cited some issues that caused the insurgencies and is need to be addressed are the land tenure, ancestral domain, mining issues, health services, farmers to market road, among others. [...]

Sun.Star Cagayan de Oro, 21.08.2013

Oro blast task group: 'Justice will be served'

By Loui S. Maliza

JUSTICE will surely be served for the victims July 26 blast, the Special Investigation Task Group (SITG) said Tuesday after the preliminary hearing of the charges filed against the blast suspects.

SITG spokesperson Michael John Deloso is optimistic after the preliminary hearing at the City Prosecutor's Office Tuesday yielded result favoring the investigating team as witnesses

As many as 227 ASG personalities and 276 NPA members have been included in the Department of National Defense-Department of the Interior and Local Government Joint Orders on Reward or rewards list. A total of P140.20 million cash reward had been granted to informants for the neutralization of 115 ASG personalities from 2001 to present, and P65.73 million for the capture of 50 NPAs from 2006 to present.

Karapatan says AFP handing out rewards for 'fake rebel leaders'

By Ernie Reyes

MANILA, Philippines - The human rights group Karapatan on Tuesday called P19.25 million in rewards handed out by the Armed Forces of the Philippines to informers part of an "organized racket", claiming that one of the payoffs was for the capture of a man falsely accused of being a communist rebel leader.

Karapatan has long insisted that the man the military claims is "Communist Party of the Philippines official Benjamin Mendoza" is really Rolly Panesa, a security guard who was seized in Cubao, Quezon City, and has been in jail for 10 months now.

Among the rewards handed out by AFP chief Gen. Emmanuel Bautista on Monday was the P5.6-million bounty for the arrest of Mendoza.

[...] [Karapatan secretary general Cristina] Palabay said Panesa is not the first bogus rebel leader presented by the AFP. She cited the arrest of Oligario Sebas, a resident of Manjuyod, Negros Oriental who the military claimed was alleged Negros rebel leader "Felimon Mendrez."

"The AFP said Sebas had a P5.2 million on his head and was on the list of the Department of National Defense-Department of Interior and Local Government Joint Orders on Reward or Joint Order 14.2012," Palabay said. Sebas was eventually released through a writ of habeas corpus.

Earlier, Karapatan called the joint order "no different from the secret hit list of Gloria Arroyo's Oplan *Bantay Laya* which resulted to thousands of cases of human rights violations ranging from illegal arrest and detention, enforced disappearances and political killings."

The group said the joint order was "used to legitimize the enforced disappearance, illegal arrest and detention of Estelita T. Tacalan, a 60-year old peasant organizer and rural health worker in Misamis Oriental" who was reported missing on April 27 and was found on May 7 at the Dipolog City Jail, where she remains detained.

"The DND-DILG's secret hit list should be scrapped as it has become the basis to arrest, detain, and torture people on false charges; or worse, (have them) disappeared or killed," Palabay said. [...]

InterAksyon.com, 13.08.2013

MSAAG aims to forge a broad range of partnership, public-private-military partnership, such as bayanihan concept. It formulate and implements critical and priority community interventions using multi-pronged and multilevel participatory for win-win solutions most especially in conflict affected areas.

"It sets up a workable social infrastructure in the said communities not only in providing the venue for addressing their needs and concern but also in assisting the generation of resources for the convergence for peace and development projects and activities," Bernardo said.

MSAAG also aims to guide and ensure the 10th Infantry Division's adoption of their unit performance governance system as embodied in Army Transformation Roadmap (ATR) further translated into the unit strategy map and performance governance scorecard. [...]

solidly identified Usman Hapids and his cohorts to be responsible for the blast that killed 26 and hurt 46 others.

Five witnesses, two of them complainants including the widow of Misamis Oriental Board Member Roland Lagbas, attended the hearing.

Deloso, who was at the hearing, said witnesses were firm in identifying Hapids. Their affidavit and their statements during



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the hearing coincided. [...]

Deloso said: "The other two complainants, who are still in Manila, would also file the same charges."

Deloso said they filed the charges before the City Prosecutor's Office in the hope that it could be elevated to the courts and eventually get the warrant to arrest the suspects, "if we can find him (Hapids) anywhere in the country."

ManilaStandardToday.com, 21.08.2013

Martial law victims press for reparations

By Christine F. Herrera

HUMAN rights groups SELDA and Karapatan and a lawmaker on Tuesday accused President Benigno Aquino III of ignoring the contribution of the "lesser known" 9,539 martial law victims each time the assassination of his father is commemorated.

The two groups said marking the assassination of former Senator Benigno Ninoy Aquino will remain as "empty celebrations" as long as the reparation and recognition for Martial Law victims remain a lip service and unenforced by the Noynoy Aquino administration.

Former House Minority Leader Edcel Lagman also pressed the President to appoint soonest the chairman and eight members of the human rights Victims' Claims Board.

Lagman was the principal author of Republic Act 10368 or the Human Rights Victims Reparation and Recognition Act of 2013.

Lagman said that more than five months have elapsed since the President signed into law the Reparation and Recognition Act on February 25, 2013 during the EDSA People Power anniversary. [...]

Lagman said the Claims Board is the indispensable core in the implementation of the Act since it has sole jurisdiction to:

1. Determine whether a claimant is a human rights violations victim, unless he or she already enjoys the conclusive presumption extended by the law to plaintiffs in the class suit adjudicated by the US Federal District Court of Honolulu, Hawaii against the estate of the late President Ferdinand E. Marcos and those acknowledged as human rights violation victims by the Bantayog ng mga Bayani; and
2. Validate the amounts to be granted to all claimants relative to the severity of the atrocities they have suffered and in accordance with a point system.

GMA News, 23.08.2013

Berlin-based group asks SC to grant PHL comfort women's plea on apology, compensation from Japan

By Mark Merueñas

A Berlin-based non-government organization has asked the Supreme Court to grant a petition of a group of Filipino "comfort women" - collectively known as the Malaya Lolás - seeking an apology and compensation from Japan for the sexual abuses they suffered during World War II.

In a petition, the European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights (ECCHR) asked the high court to allow them to participate in the case and to consider the group's arguments in supporting the Filipino women abused during World War II.

"The enslavement of the 'comfort women' was a violation of ius cogens at the time the sexual slavery facilities were established

InterAksyon.com, 24.08.2013

Manila, Washington ink 'security cooperation' ahead of next round of framework agreement talks

By Jaime Sinapit

MANILA - A security cooperation agreement was formalized by the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the United States on Thursday, ahead of a second

[...] City Prosecutor Fidel [...] Macauyag said witnesses have "affirmed their statements and stood pat on the identification of the respondent (Hapids)."

"The case was submitted for resolution now. We hope to be able to issue our resolution on Friday or Monday. The panel is aware that the case is in view with public interest, thus we will try our best to resolve the case the soonest possible time," he said.

Moreover, Lagman said, the promulgation of the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) depends on the constitution of the Claims Board which is mandated to promulgate the IRR within fifteen (15) days from its promulgation.

"Consequently, without the Claims Board being organized, no IRR can be promulgated and no implementation of the Act can be started," he pointed out.

"Republic Act No. 10368 gives due reparation and recognition to countless deceased and surviving victims of human rights violations during the martial law regime from September 21, 1972 to February 25, 1986 who suffered summary executions, enforced disappearances, deadly torture and other violations of human rights and civil liberties," Lagman said.

The law likewise seeks to rekindle the nation's memory of the atrocities of martial law and to immortalize the heroism and sacrifices of the victims, he said. [...]

A fund amounting to P10 billion plus accrued interests is appropriated for the reparation for the claimants which is part of the amount transferred by the Swiss Federal Supreme Court to the Philippine Government and which the Philippine Supreme Court forfeited in favor of the Republic of the Philippines as Marcos ill-gotten wealth, Lagman said.

Part of the accrued interests amounting to P500 million will finance the establishment of a museum, library and repository of memorabilia for the victims, Lagman said.

Human Rights Violations Victims Claims Board (HRVVCB) is established to validate the amounts to be granted to the claimants in accordance to the severity of the injuries and damages they have sustained based on a points system, he explained.

by Japan between 1932 and 1945," said the group, led by its general secretary, German lawyer Wolfgang Kaleck.

"Further, the petitioners Isabelita Vinuya et al. have a right to compensation as established under international law. The Court should therefore take the arguments presented in this petition into consideration when it decides on the motion for reconsideration of its judgment," the group added.

The ECCHR claimed that the sexual abuse committed by Japan against Filipino comfort women is considered a form of sexual slavery, a war crime, and a crime against humanity. [...]

round of talks between Manila and Washington for a framework agreement covering increased rotation of American forces in the Philippines.

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A joint statement announcing the security cooperation, dated August 22, was signed by AFP Chief of Staff General Emmanuel Bautista and US Army General Martin Dempsey, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

[\(Click here to read the security cooperation agreement\)](#)

The agreement affirms the Manila Declaration of 2011 that strengthens the 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty between the two countries.

The United States and the Philippines have vowed to maintain freedom of navigation in a Southeast Asia increasingly beset by maritime territorial rows, the two military allies said.

The military chiefs of the two countries made the pledge in the United States on Thursday as their governments held talks on expanding the American military presence in the Philippines, their joint statement said.

[...] The Philippines has been looking to the United States for military and political support as part of efforts to protect its claims to South China Sea waters from an increasingly assertive China.

[...] While the United States has insisted it does not take sides in the dispute, it has been seeking to rebuild its military footprint in the Philippines, a military ally since 1951, as part of President Barack Obama's strategic "pivot" to Asia.

[...] The Philippines had hosted tens of thousands of US soldiers at two bases near Manila, but they were forced to leave in 1992 after the Philippine Senate voted to end their lease contracts amid strong anti-American sentiment.

A new agreement in 1999 allowed US troops to return to the Philippines for joint military exercises every year.

US special forces have also been rotating through the southern Philippines since 2002 to help local soldiers who are fighting Islamic militants.

In the newly signed cooperation agreement, the Philippine and American militaries also pledged to work for enhanced cooperation for:

- Creating greater interoperability through mutually beneficial and iterative engagements of aligned forces

Philippine Daily Inquirer, 25.08.2013

90% of Luisita farmers ink land papers

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO – Around 90 percent of 6,212 farmworkers in Hacienda Luisita in Tarlac province have signed the documents required to make the titles transferring to them the bulk of the sugar estate owned by the family of President Aquino, Agrarian Reform Secretary Virgilio de los Reyes said.

The signing of the lot allocation certificates (LAC) and applications to purchase and farmer's undertaking (APFU) by majority of farmworkers in the 10 villages in the 6,443-hectare estate has enabled the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) to submit proof to the Registry of Deeds to register the certificates of land ownership award (CLOAs) of the beneficiaries, De los Reyes said in a statement.

President Aquino said the CLOAs should be out by September.

Ambala protest

The Alyansa ng mga Manggagawang Bukid sa Asyenda Luisita (Ambala) has asked the Supreme Court to void the LAC and APFU.

[...] "The signing of the APFU has long been required since the first day of [Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP)] implementation in 1988," he said.

- Enabling faster response to contingency requirements such as natural or man-made disasters
- Allowing for the responsible provision of resources
- Improving the capacity of the Armed Forces of the Philippines facilities to support additional capabilities
- Enhancing the capabilities of the Armed Forces of the Philippines as outlined in the Internal Peace and Security Plan Bayanhian
- Establishing a joint force posture that assures freedom of navigation and provides for the common defense of each nation's sovereign territory

New PH-US military pact will expand presence beyond Subic, Clark - Bayan

MANILA - The proposed agreement increasing United States military presence in the Philippines could be "worse" than the former military bases treaty [...] the militant organization Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) said Monday.

The new agreement, which is being negotiated starting Monday, "will allow US troops to be present all over the country. Every Philippine military facility, not just Subic and Clark, can now be accessed by US troops," said Bayan secretary general Renato Reyes Jr. in a news release.

[...] This means turning the entire country into a huge US military base, he said.

[...] Worse, he said, the Philippine government will have no control over these equipment and vehicles, citing the current Visiting Forces Agreement, which does not give the Philippines the the right to inspect these materiel. [...] "The Philippines will be hosting equipment and war machine used in US intervention in other parts of the world. This makes the Philippine government complicit and supportive of US intervention," he said.

'Learn from history'

Bayan listed at least two disadvantages of increasing US military presence in the country:

* It will violate national sovereignty. [...]" it said.

* It will cause social and environmental damage in terms of prostitution and toxic waste dumping, as experienced when US had military bases before the Philippine Senate rejected the treaty.

* It will not develop the Philippine armed forces. "We had US bases for nearly half a century yet our armed forces still did not modernize. [...]" Bayan said.

History has shown that every time the US wants to justify its presence in the country, it would invoke certain threats to the Philippines.

"In the past, the Cold War and so-called communist threat was used to justify the presence of US bases. [George W.] Bush's 'war on terror' was used to justify the permanent stationing of US troops in Mindanao from 2002 up to the present," Bayan said.

[...] "What the US wants is to take advantage of the dispute with China to justify US presence in the Philippines, strengthen the US hand in Asia, further contain China and keep other countries in line," he added. [...]

The negotiations form part of the US strategic pivot to Asia where it aims to move 60 percent of its warships to the region as a means to advance its own agenda in the Asia-Pacific region, Bayan said.

InterAksyon.com, 12.08.2013

In Hacienda Luisita, each beneficiary is set to get 6,600 square meters from out of 4,099 ha, the final size of the CARP-covered land.

These are to be paid within 30 years at a total cost of between P60,000 and P70,000. [...]

The coverage area shrunk to 4,099 ha because on order of the high court, the DAR deducted the 500 ha sold to the Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. and the 80.51 ha sold for the construction of sections of the Subic-Clark-Tarlac Expressway. The DAR also retained less than 500 ha as common areas, like roads, canals and firebreaks.

Willingness to pay

[...] De los Reyes said the refusal of any farmer-beneficiary to sign the APFU "is a ground to be stricken out of the list of beneficiaries and be replaced by other qualified beneficiaries."

That was because the APFU is a commitment to pay the land, make it productive and bind the beneficiaries to comply with agrarian reform laws, he said.

While Parungao said the signing by 90 percent of beneficiaries indicated their "cooperation," a leader of Ambala accused the



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DAR of using "deceit and intimidation, with the support of the military and the police."

Drawing of lots

"This is more to please its owners [including] President Aquino," Florida Sibayan, acting Ambala chair, said in a statement. Sibayan said the DAR should not have drawn the lots through "tambol" (raffle drum) and should have recognized instead the "bungkalan" (tilling) system through which the farmworkers

Philippine Daily Inquirer, 31.08.2013

I learned from Palparan mistake – Aquino

By Nikko Dizon, TJ Burgonio

President Benigno Aquino III said he received Janet Lim-Napoles in Malacañang to accept her surrender and offered to take her to Camp Crame to "impress on everyone" that he wanted her "alive."

[...] He said he did not want to repeat the mistake he believed he had made in the case of former Army Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan, who went into hiding after Mr. Aquino ignored his surrender feelers last year.

Wanted for the forced disappearance in 2006 of University of the Philippines students Karen Empeño and Sherlyn Cadapan, Palparan has not been found despite the P2-million reward the government is offering for his arrest.

"Part of the decision was Palparan's case. He insisted that he had to talk to me first before he submitted. I said, 'Why would you make demands? You have a warrant of arrest that you have to face.' I refused to meet him. [Had I] met him, I wouldn't be looking for him now," Mr. Aquino said.

Grabbing the chance

"In this (Napoles) case, we already have a chance (to get her). So I grabbed it," he said.

INSTITUTIONS

InterAksyon.cpm, 06.08.2013

Akbayan solons file bill giving CHR more teeth

By Lira Dalangin-Fernandez

MANILA, Philippines -- The two representatives of the Akbayan party-list have filed a bill that seeks to give the Commission on Human Rights more teeth to respond to "changing patterns of human rights abuses."

House Bill 2152, or the Commission on Human Rights Charter, filed by Representatives Walden Bello and Ibarra Gutierrez, proposes fiscal autonomy and broader investigative powers for the body, including the power to impose preventive suspension on officials under investigation.

"It is time to pass a legislative enactment that would make the Commission on Human Rights an effective institution, building on the experiences for the past 26 years," they said.

The CHR was created by the 1987 Constitution and was organized after the issuance of Executive Order No. 163.

Its current chair, Loretta Ann Rosales, was Akbayan representative for three terms.

Gutierrez said the CHR should be strengthened to allow it to give "real-time response to abuses."

"Different forms of abuse happen and are reported everyday. Unfortunately, the government fails to protect victims of human rights abuses from further harm because of the long, bureaucratic process required to obtain temporary remedy for the abused," Gutierrez said.

He said the bill grants the CHR power to immediately respond

assigned lots among themselves.

Ambala continued to oppose paying the Cojuangco family for the land they would get, saying they have already paid this through their labor as stockholders of HLI since 1989.

But De los Reyes said the DAR is implementing the order of the Supreme Court to compensate the landowner.

[...] Mr. Aquino said the government did not ask Napoles to serve as state witness in exchange for security, as critics of his action on Wednesday night implied.

Napoles claimed there was a grave threat to her life, presumably from some people involved in the pork barrel scam.

[...] The businesswoman allegedly connived with lawmakers to divert P10 billion from their Priority Development Assistance Fund (PDAF) to her bank accounts and their commissions through bogus nongovernment organizations over the last 10 years.

She allegedly used the same trick to siphon off P900 million in Malampaya gas funds into her bank accounts. [...]

Plunder charges

The National Bureau of Investigation, which is looking into the scam, is expected to bring plunder charges against Napoles and her coconspirators, possibly lawmakers, in two weeks.

Napoles and her brother Reynald Lim disappeared on Aug. 14 after being ordered arrested by a Makati City court for the illegal detention of Benhur Luy, the principal witness in the pork barrel scam.[...]

to abuses by issuing legal protective measures such as writs of injunction, restraining orders, and cease and desist orders.

"The CHR will no longer have to wait for the court to exercise jurisdiction over the matter. It can, on its own, stop the violation even as it happens," Gutierrez said.

Rosales said the CHR should be able to enjoy fiscal autonomy to help it define and restructure the organization, and effectively perform its mandate.

"Now we are deep into mining issues because we have to see to it that the rights of the indigenous peoples, and other social and economic rights are protected. We can only do that if we have the wherewithal, if we have the teeth. [...] We cannot be toothless, we need teeth that can bite, if needed," she said.

The bill mandates the CHR to look into cases of human rights abuses, compel the attendance of witnesses and production of evidence or documents, and cite in contempt any person for violation of its guidelines and procedures.

It would also allow the CHR to preventively suspend, pending investigation, any officer or employee, provided that it determines that "the evidence of guilt is strong, the charges would warrant removal from service, and the officer or employer's continued stay in office would prejudice the conduct and result of the investigation.



Action Network Human Rights- Philippines

HRonlineph.com, 07.08.2013

Re-militarization of the PNP-NO WAY! Uphold civilian supremacy. Promote rights-based policing!

The [Philippine Alliance of Human Rights Advocates \(PAHRA\)](#) and the undersigned stand firmly with the [1987 Philippine Constitution](#) stating in Section 6, Article XVI (General Provision) that "The State shall establish and maintain one [police force](#), which shall be national in scope and civilian in character to be administered and controlled by a national police commission...." (emphasis supplied)

Civilianizing the police force was a major step by President [Corazon Aquino](#) to break the military domination designed by Marcos [...].

[...] According to the Philippine Public Safety College (PPSC), "it is common knowledge that the [Philippine National Police] PNP, for far too long, has been under the leadership of PMA graduates with military orientation." Thus, amidst the fact that the PNP top brass and their successors are mostly graduates of the [Philippine Military Academy \(PMA\)](#), what has prevailed in education and training amongst the officers and personnel of the PNP are strongly a military-mindset and behaviour.

We are alarmed that even while the last batch of military graduates from the PMA, Tanglaw-Diwa Class of 1992, are still to

retire by 2026 at the mandatory retirement age of 56, there are already moves to perpetuate further the military hold on the police institution which not so subtly subverts the spirit and intent of 1987 Constitution for civilian supremacy over the military.

We firmly oppose the re-entry of PMA graduates into the PNP as per the proposal made by the PMA Alumni Association as well as the intention to maintain and embed the military hold of the PMAyers [...].

When activated, will there not be a conflict on the chain of command to the detriment of the PNP?

Furthermore, such action may also put into question the consistency and sincerity of the AFP's resolve to uphold civilian supremacy and the rule of law in the implementation of its Internal Peace and Security Plan (IPSP) or "Bayanihan".

We call on all to uphold the Philippine Constitutional provision and work together for one strong, professional police force that is truly civilian in character, educated and trained with human rights as preferred values in institutional work and in field operations.

CURRENT CASES OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

Philippine Daily Inquirer, 01.08.2013

Aetas cry discrimination

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO, Philippines – An Aeta leader complained that Commission on Elections (Comelec) personnel in Porac, Pampanga, have been discriminating against tribe members who were registering to vote in the Oct. 28 barangay (village) and Sangguniang Kabataan (youth council) elections.

"They're the priority, these unat (straight-haired people). Not one of us is being called to register although we have been here for several days now," said Ronald Popatco, a council member in Barangay Camias.

Carol Enriquez, a teacher in Pulong Santol High School, also in Porac, expressed concern for Aeta students.

No policy

"Many of them lined up as early as 3 a.m. Others have camped out so they could be first in line. Some students skipped their classes because they have been tired of queueing up for two to three days," Enriquez said in a text message.

She said this happens because the Comelec has accepted only 200 registrants for the SK (15 to 17 years old) and 100 registrants for the barangay elections (18 years old and up) daily since July 22.

Lizette Mallari, election officer in Porac, denied that Aetas were being treated badly.

"There is no such policy. As long as they are in line, we assist them," she said. [...]

Paid by a candidate

In Nueva Ecija, a student from a southern town said he was paid by an aspiring candidate for SK chair to seek out and help qualified voters in their village to register to assure the aspiring bet's

victory.

The student said the SK chair hopeful who tapped his service is studying in a university in Metro Manila.

In the five days that he carried out his task, the student said he earned P500 and was entrusted a tricycle that he used to approach registrants on a list provided him. He would then convince them to register and bring them to the Comelec office and back to their houses.

"I was able to convince 19 registrants who agreed to vote later for my would-be candidate for SK chair," he said.

His two companions also succeeded in meeting their targets and together, they were able to seek out and assist 67 registrants.

"That number was enough to make the SK chair candidate win as there are only 167 voters in the village and four of them are running for SK chair," the student said.

Contact person

He said a "contact person" waiting for them in the Comelec compound helped them hasten the registration.

Earlier last week, registrants in San Isidro town complained of shortage of registration forms that delayed the process. A registrant said they were asked to pay P12 for a three-page photocopy of the registration form.

Josephine Galang, San Isidro election officer, said they asked registrants to copy the form because the Comelec did not send additional forms. [...]

The 10-day registration ended Wednesday.

DavaoToday.com, 04.08.2013

Agusanon Manobos hurt by police in evacuation camp

Davao City, Philippines – Some Agusanon Manobos (not Agusanons as earlier reported) who evacuated from Loreto to the provincial capitol gym in the town of Prosperidad to evade military operations were hurt by police Sunday morning as they were making way for a medical mission team.

Hanimay Suazo of Karapatan Southern Mindanao who was with the medical team coming from Davao said police blocked them from entering the capitol compound in Patin-ay. These prompt-

ed the Manobos to go out from the gym and demanded the police to let them bring in the medical team.

But the police refused and after a heated exchange they pushed away the lumads, resulting to some getting bruised. Suazo said 75 people including women were hurt.

Some 300 of the Agusanon Manobos have been encamped at a gym inside the provincial capitol compound since Friday night as they demanded provincial governor Adolph Edward Plaza to



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pull out military operations of the 26th Infantry Battalion in their communities in the town of Loreto.

Suazo in a phone interview said she accompanied the medical team, which was part of Balsa Mindanao who helped the Manobos during the Typhoon Pablo disaster last December. She was also there to follow up on the case of two Manobo minors who were detained two weeks ago by the soldiers and paramilitary.

Suazo was surprised that police blocked them from the compound as the governor's order was to prevent anyone from entering or exiting the gym.

"This became absurd when the Lumads came out to escort us, and they themselves were blocked from returning to their children in the gym, and this resulted to the scuffle," she told davaotoday. "The children were sick and exhausted as we learned they trekked for two days and were hungry."

She added that more police came in full battle gear, including Special Armed Forces, numbering up to 50.

Suazo said there was chaos as they wanted to talk to officials to calm down the situation, especially when the adults were contained later by the police away from the children awaiting them.

"They still have not eaten, it was like they were placed in a concentration camp," exclaimed Suazo.

She said the only official appearing for them that time is the provincial jail warden, Josefa Bajade, who is assigned to look at the evacuees.

HRonlineph.com, 11.08.2013

Spate of Journalist Killings, Government Inaction Contributes to Erosion of Media Freedom-HRW

(Manila) - Philippines President [Benigno Aquino III](#) should speak out against the recent killings of three journalists and ensure that the authorities expedite their investigation, [Human Rights Watch](#) said today. While the killers and motives are unknown, these and past unresolved attacks on journalists have a chilling effect on media freedom in the country.

"The latest killings and threats against journalists underscore the precarious state of media freedom in the Philippines and the need for the government to respond," said Phelim Kine, deputy Asia director at Human Rights Watch. "Unless the government brings people who attack journalists to justice, these killings are not going to stop."

On July 30, 2013, unknown assailants shot and killed Richard Kho, 47, and Bonifacio Loreto Jr., 59, both columnists for the weekly tabloid Aksyon Ngayon, in [Quezon City, Metro Manila](#). Two days later, on August 1, unidentified gunmen killed a freelance photojournalist, Mario Sy, 53, in the southern city of [General Santos](#). Police have not made any arrests in the killings.

That same week, a broadcast journalist, Ces Drilon, received text messages threatening to "erase" her after her network, ABS-CBN, aired her report on the [Maguindanao Massacre](#), in which 58 people, most of them journalists, were executed in 2009. While her news show reported on a bombing in [Cagayan de Oro City](#) she received a text message that read: "You're next to explode."

Although the number of extrajudicial killings has declined since 2010, when Aquino took office, certain groups, such as environmental and labor activists, and journalists, continue to be recurring targets of attack.

Journalism has long been a high-risk profession in the Philippines. According to the [Committee to Protect Journalists](#), some 73 journalists have been murdered in the Philippines since 1992;

Bulatlat.com, 12.08.2013

Rights group cites abuses of newly deployed military units

MANILA - The newly assigned soldiers in the Cordillera region

Suazo said she is surprised why Bajade, a jail warden, is placed in charge of the evacuees and not someone from the social welfare.

Bajade refused to be interviewed by a radio anchorman on the incident saying official statements would be given by the governor.

As of press time, leaders of the evacuees are in negotiations following the incident with the provincial crisis committee composed of Agusan del Sur Vice Governor Santiago Cane, Jr, a CHR region XIII representative and Josefina Bajade.

Suazo criticized Governor Plaza, who is reportedly out of town, for failing to address his constituents' demands. "He hasn't responded to these lumads who were victims of typhoon Pablo and now victims of militarization by the 26th Infantry Battalion that forced them to evacuate."

Suazo said there are still hundreds more Manobos coming down from five barangays in Loreto as military operation continues.

The residents first evacuated last July 28 to an elementary school in Barangay Kauswagan, Loreto municipality but harassments from the military and paramilitary men, known as Bagani, prompted them to leave the area and sought refuge instead at the provincial capitol in Prosperidad town where they thought they would get help.

The tribal and community leaders wanted a negotiation with the governor, and demand relief as many are sick and exhausted from their trek. [...]

local media groups put the number considerably higher. The Philippines consistently ranks as among the "top 3" in the organization's list of "deadliest countries" for journalists.

The National Union of Journalists of the Philippines said that the three recent killings brought the number of journalists killed in the country under the [Aquino administration](#) to 18. Journalists, particularly outside the major cities, regularly report threats and harassment. The union said that most of the journalists killed had received death threats.

The Aquino administration has announced reforms to the criminal justice system that could result in more effective criminal investigations, but has not fully implemented them, Human Rights Watch said. For instance, Administration Order 35, issued by the Aquino administration in 2012, authorized the creation of a government "super body" to coordinate and expedite the actions of various criminal justice organs on specific high-priority cases. However, eight months later, that body is stalled at the stage of identifying appropriate cases to pursue.

Aquino began his term with a promise to promote and respect human rights, and pressed for the passage of several laws to improve human rights, but this has not translated into significant improvements on the ground. In particular there has been little progress in prosecuting human rights abusers. In his [State of the Nation Address](#) in July, which outlined the priorities of his administration's final three years, Aquino did not mention human rights, raising concerns that less attention would be given to human rights issues.

"The Philippines has a reputation for having one of the freest media freedom environments in Asia, but that reputation disappears bit-by-bit with every killing of a journalist," Kine said. "President Aquino needs to realize that this problem won't go away on its own."

are "following the same old notorious footprints of the previous



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units" when it comes to human rights violations.

This was the statement of the Cordillera Human Rights Alliance (CHRA).

In Ifugao, the 86th IB is replaced by the 54th IB. On their first day of duty, the 54th IB occupied the village center of Gumhang, Tinoc, Ifugao.

"This is a clear violation of International Humanitarian Law (IHL). Besides being the barangay (village) hall it is also being maximized by the community as their daycare center. Their continuing encampment on the said community center is putting the community at risk," Jude Baggo, CHRA secretary general, said.

CHRA data showed that the 54th IBPA committed human rights violations when it was based in Botigue, Paracelis, Mt. Province. These include the torture of two civilians from the tri-boundary of Alfonso Lista, Aguineldo and Paracelis and cases destruction and divestment of properties.

Baggo called on affected communities to be more vigilant and assertive in defending their rights given the track records of these army brigades. [...]

The 86th IB has been operating in the Ilocos, Cagayan and Cordillera regions. Baggo said the Army unit is notorious for human rights violations ranging from extrajudicial killings, rape, torture, destruction and divestment of properties and filing up of trumped-up charges against civilians. [...]

From 21st IB to 17th IBPA

Bulatlat.com, 25.08.2013

Anti-mining activist from N. Vizcaya missing

By Marya Salamat

MANILA - Amid increased police and military visibility in parts of Nueva Vizcaya where locals are resisting the mining operation of Australian Royalco in the Philippines, an anti-mining activist went missing after he was "arrested" and forced to board a police patrol car by at least six policemen.

Bryan Epa, 34, a member of Katribu party list, was "arrested" at around 9 p.m. on August 21 in Salvacion Dumlao Boulevard village, Bayombong town, Nueva Vizcaya. Alfonso Shog-oy, a

Press Release - Karapatan, 29.08.2013

Desaparecidos calls the Anti-Disappearance law a mere token, hits Aquino for continuing disappearances

"Until when will we keep looking for the disappeared?" Lorena "Aya" Santos, a daughter of a desaparecido and secretary general of Families of the Desaparecidos for Justice asked. "For years, we keep commemorating the International Day of the Disappeared to remember all the desaparecidos in the world and to call to stop enforced disappearances. Regimes had passed, but enforced disappearance still exist while our missing loved ones have yet to be found," Santos said.

"It is obvious that the elimination of the practice of enforced disappearance will not end under the Noyonoy Aquino regime," Santos lamented. "All the indicators are here. Enforced disappearances continue, the government does not own up its accountability, no perpetrator has been prosecuted or jailed and, human rights violators are promoted to higher posts. Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan remains free from prosecution and jail," Santos said. [...]

Under the Aquino regime, 17 persons have fallen victims of enforced disappearance. The latest case of disappearance was Bryan Epa of Nueva Vizcaya, an anti-mining activist, who was abducted by Vizcaya police on the night of August 21.

It is the first time that the Philippines is commemorating the International Day of the Disappeared with a law that criminalizes enforced disappearance. [...] "The law alone could not put a stop on enforced disappearances as proven by the recent cases of disappearances; more so to surface the disappeared," Santos pointed out. "This law has so far served only as a mere token to appease our outrage; but nothing has really changed since its enactment," Santos said. [...]

village official, reportedly witnessed the incident.

According to a statement by Katribu, Shog-oy reportedly

In Kalinga, the 21st IB is replaced by the 17th IB.

In July this year, development workers in Kalinga were harassed by the elements of the 17th IB led a certain Sgt. Jessa dela Paz and Sgt. Albert Lopez. The victims were interrogated.

CHRA reported that the 17th IB even went on to vilify progressive party list groups as fronts of the NPA. [...]

"These violations are actually not different from the 21st IB. It is a mere continuation of their orientation. While it is also true that the 21st is pulled out from Kalinga but the scars they left still mar the communities," Baggo said.

"We should not forget the cold blooded killings of Victor Balais, Rocky Aboli, Rey Logao and Robert Sabado by the 21st IB and the 77th IB. [...]" Baggo said. [...]

Baggo underscored the rape of two minors in Pinukupuk, Kalinga by elements of the 21st IB. The victims were brought to the military camp of the 86th IB. They were lured to drink beer and fell unconscious. The two were also photographed while assembling and disassembling a rifle.

[...] Baggo further pointed out that the army's redeployment of troops is just a change of guards but the orientation of troops does not change. [...]

"We should remember that until now justice has not been served to many if not all the victims. We should remember that the 21st IB and the 86th IB should be held accountable to all their crimes against the people wherever they go [...]" Baggo said.

dropped Epa in the area because Epa was to get his bag from a colleague there. When Shog-oy came back to fetch Epa, he saw six policemen waiting in a patrol car. Three of the policemen alighted, and Shog-oy heard Epa asking the police why they were taking away his bag. The police then forced Epa into the patrol car, but the latter resisted and asked the police why he was being taken.

The witness related how he heard the policemen tell Epa he was being taken into custody because he looked 'suspicious.' Epa was reportedly punched in the stomach by two of the policemen, and when he tried to hold on to a store's post, the policemen hit his hand hard with a police baton. The police then managed to force him into the waiting patrol car.

The following day, Shog-oy and lawyer Fidel Santos sought Epa at the police station, but they did not find him there. The police told them they released a detained person on the same night that Epa was arrested. But their records show it was a person named Felix Bacsa Jr., not Epa.

Epa's whereabouts remain unknown.

Kalipunan ng mga Katutubong Mamamayan ng Pilipinas (Kamp) said Epa is among the residents of Nueva Vizcaya opposing the entry of Australian mining company Royalco Philippines Inc. Epa is among the locals manning the barricades, set up since 2007 to prevent mining equipment from entering their lands.

Kamp expressed concern over Epa's disappearance. There are still many unresolved cases of enforced disappearances among activists, it said in a statement.

"The climate of impunity in the Aquino administration is a breeding ground for grave human rights violations especially of those perceived as 'enemies of the state,' including those resisting mining operations," said Piya Macliing Malayao, Kamp spokeswoman.

The group fears for the safety of Epa.

Kamp said there are 35 cases of extra-judicial killings of indigenous peoples in the three-year administration of President Aquino. Most of these killings, it said, were done in the context

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of community resistance against mines, plantations, or dams.[...]

DavaoToday.com, 27.08.2013

Groups bewail killing of another anti-SMI Xstrata mining leader, son

By John Rizle L. Saligumba

DAVAO CITY - Progressive patriotic groups led by Bagong

Glencore Xstrata unit cuts budget, jobs for PH mine project

MANILA - A Glencore Xstrata Plc unit will eliminate as many as 920 jobs and cut the budget for its delayed \$5.9 billion Tampakan copper-gold mine project in southern Philippines because it could not guarantee the start of production by 2019.

Sagittarius Mines Inc, which is 62.5 percent-owned by Glencore Xstrata, said it had revised the work plan as the Tampakan project still faces "substantial development challenges" including a ban on open-pit mining in South Cotabato province.

"Until these challenges are resolved it is not possible to determine when commercial production could commence," Sagittarius spokesman John Arnaldo told Reuters on Tuesday.

The turn of events involving what could be the single-biggest foreign direct investment in the Philippines reflects the challenging environment for mining investors looking to develop the country's untapped mineral wealth worth an estimated \$850 billion.

Although the Southeast Asian country has recently won investment-grade ratings from global debt watchers Fitch Ratings and Standard & Poor's, policy uncertainty continues to hound the Tampakan project.

Australian miner Indophil Resources N.L., which has a 37.5 percent interest in the project, remains optimistic about the future of the Tampakan mine.

Richard Laufmann, Indophil chief executive, said Indophil was still in talks with Glencore Xstrata regarding the revised work plan, but he ruled out a shutdown of the Tampakan project.

"This modification of activity at what is a world-class minerals deposit is temporary and every effort will be made to restore the work program to its original plan," he said in a statement.

DOWNSIZING

A provincial ban on open-pit mining, in place since 2010 although it runs counter to the national mining policy, and the difficulty of getting regulatory and public approvals have stalled the Tampakan project. [...]

Discovered in 1992, the Tampakan mine is predicted to have a 17-year lifespan with estimated deposits of 15 million tonnes of copper and 18 million ounces of gold.

In December last year, Sagittarius announced it was pushing back the target date to start production at the Tampakan mine by three years to 2019 as it struggled to win regulatory and community approvals.

Three months later, Sagittarius was granted an environmental compliance certificate by the government, removing just one of the hurdles delaying work on the project.

ABS-CBN News, 13.08.2013

Allyansang Makabayan-Socskargen [...] denounce the killing of Fulong (Tribal Chieftain) Anting Freay, 60, and his son, 16-year old Victor, on August 23. [...]

In an earlier statement from Karapatan Socskargen, Freay's wife, Kiit, who survived the killing early dawn at their house in Sitio Bulol, Barangay Kimlawis, Kiblawan town, Davao del Sur, pinned the murders on Task Force Kitaco [Kitaco was a special task force created under the Army's 1002nd Infantry Brigade to oversee and secure the areas covering SMI-Xstrata's mining

Inquirer Mindanao, 27.08.2013

Town exec in Sultan Kudarat still in critical condition after shooting

By Edwin Fernandez

COTABATO CITY - A town councilor of Isulan, Sultan Kudarat province remained in critical condition at an undisclosed hospital after being shot on Monday by two men riding in tandem on a motorbike, the police said Tuesday.

Superintendent Ruel Surmese, Isulan police chief, said Rene Aristoza, 50, was standing in front of his home in Barangay (village) Kalawag 2 when attacked around 6:30 a.m. Monday.

ManilaTimes.net, 30.08.2013

Human Rights News August 2013

project.]

Karapatan said "Their dog was barking hard so Anting went out to inspect but he was shot while their house was ridden with bullets. The soldiers were just three meters away from their house."

"Kiit immediately went out to investigate but [...] was also fired at. She then saw Anting already bathed in blood," the statement further said.

[...] Her son Victor ran back to the house to get back to his father, but Victor was shot too, 18 times.

The Freays of the Freay-Capion clan were known oppositors to the SMI mining operations. Freay's son Eking Freay survived while his son-in-law Sonny Boy Planda perished in an ambush last June 28 purportedly staged by alleged members of Citizen Armed Force Geographical Unit (CAFGU) under Task Force KITACO.

October last year, 27-year old Blaen Juvy Capion and her two sons Jordan, 13, and John, 8, were strafed to death by alleged military troops. Early this year in January, another two B'laan tribe members, Kitari and Diyo Capion were also killed by alleged members of Task Force Kitaco.

BAYAN Socskargen spokesperson Ryan Lariba slammed SMI which was "downsizing other components of its operation, but not the military component." [...]

X-Strata SMI is the largest mining investor in the country with US\$5.9 billion investment in Tampakan, South Cotabato- site of the largest underdeveloped copper and gold deposits in Southeast Asia. In its press release last August 12, SMI Executive Vice-President, Justin Hillier, said SMI will be "taking a new approach" and "will reduce current activity levels and expenditure on the Project. [...]

Some 4,000 Blaen Lumads are said to be displaced with SMI mining operations.

The latest violence in the troubled SMI area earned criticism from Fr. Joel Tabora SJ, President of the Ateneo de Davao University [...]. Tabora [...] said the Freay's murder was "a planned and pre-meditated military operation against a leader of an indigenous people who had dared to oppose the operations of foreign mining operations in their ancestral domain."

[...] based on a fact finding mission of the Social Action Council of the Diocese of Marbel, "more than 100 empty shells (were found) near Anting Freay's house alone." [...]

The Armed Forces' 1002nd Infantry Brigade which operates in the Southern part of Mindanao claimed in their statement that "lawless armed men identified only in their aliases as Anting Peayay and Victor" were killed in "pursuit operations" by Task Force KITACO adding that "two rifles were also recovered in their possession." [...]

The gunmen quickly fled after the incident.

"He was hit on the neck and remained under observation at a private hospital," Surmese said.

He said the police were investigating the identities and the motive of the gunmen even as Aristoza's relatives were equally puzzled as the victim had no known enemies.



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Radioman gunned down in Iligan City

A radio commentator in Iligan City was shot dead by at least two men riding a motorcycle on Thursday night.

Nanding Solijon of dxLS Love Radio Iligan City was hit seven times in the head, chest and other parts of the body during the attack in Purok 1, Barangay Buruun, Iligan City where he had gone to drink with friends.

Solijon was crossing the street to his parked car when he was gunned down.

NUJP Iligan City Chapter Chairman Ronnie Enderes said investigators recovered eight .45 caliber shells at the crime scene.

However, he said no one could give a clear description of the killers because the street was dark.

Solijon, anchor of Sandiganan, which airs 8 a.m. Monday to Friday, was a known supporter of Iligan City Representative Vicente Belmonte.

He had criticized several local politicians on his program, even linking a barangay captain to illegal drugs.

If Solijon's murder is proven to be work-related, he would be the 159th media practitioner murdered in the country since 1986 and

the 19th since President Benigno Aquino 3rd assumed office in 2010.

The National Press Club of the Philippines (NPC) assailed the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Philippine National Police (PNP), for their "continued indifference" in the dangerous state of media practice in the country. [...]

Only last month, in a span of 48 hours, there were three recorded killings of members of the press, one in General Santos City in Mindanao and two in Quezon City.

"Repeatedly, we have sought an audience with DOJ Sec. Leila de Lima, even 'begging' her for a sit-down as far back as three weeks ago so that the NPC and the authorities can discuss on how best to address the problem but all we got from the good secretary are repeated promises that is yet to happen," said NPC vice president Marlon Purificacion.

"In the same breadth, we also wrote police director general, Alan LM Purisima requesting for a meeting but he replied that he is "too busy" and instead pass on the responsibility to one of his deputies. [...]

UPDATES ON CASES OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

InterAksyon.com, 31.07.2013

Coca-Cola plant in Tacloban, company agrees to settle unpaid overtime

The Tacloban City plant of Coca-Cola Bottlers Philippines Inc. and its workers have resolved a labor dispute after the company agreed to settle unpaid overtime and pay for weekends and night shifts.

The company also agreed to give union, vacation, and official business leaves to the 62-member Tacloban Coca-Cola Plant Union from October 2012 up to the present, the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) said in a statement. [...]

The dispute was resolved on July 11, 2013 through preventive

mediation (PM) by the National Conciliation and Mediation Board Regional Office No. 8, the DOLE said in a statement.

On July 6, the workers' union filed a preventive mediation case, saying that Coca Cola violated certain provisions in their collective bargaining agreement (CBA). Both parties also agreed to NCMB Regional Branch No. 8 to monitor developments of the agreement on 11 August 2013, or a month after the parties have signed the agreement. [...]

The Philippine Star, 13.08.2013

Sulu sultanate seeks UN, media presence in Sabah

By Perseus Echeminada

MANILA, Philippines - The sultanate of Sulu challenged Malaysian officials yesterday to allow independent international media and United Nations observers in Lahad Datu, Sabah to prove that there are no ongoing military operations in the area.

Abraham Idjirani, spokesman for the Sulu sultanate, said Eastern Sabah Security Command director Gen. Datuk Mohammad Mentek denied that eight Malaysian soldiers were killed during a recent encounter with members of the so-called Royal Sultanate Army of Sulu. [...]

The Sulu sultanate would provide the media with proof such as photographs [...], said Idjirani.

He said Malaysian special forces are conducting discreet military operations against the 1,600 members of the Sulu sultanate's forces that have set up their stronghold in a 3,000-hectare rubber plantation, which is part of their ancestral land. [...]

Idjirani said Malaysia wants to hide the actual situation in Lahad Datu from the UN and other countries who were witness or signatories to treaties which recognized the Sulu sultanate as the real owner of Sabah.

The Sulu sultanate has accused Malaysia of committing the greatest land grab in modern history by exploiting the ancestral land of the sultan of Sulu.

Philippine Daily Inquirer, 13.08.2013

2 charged with killing columnists

By Julie M. Aurelio

The police filed charges Monday against two men accused of killing two tabloid columnists in Quezon City last month.

Clemente Bersosa, 48, and Roel Manaog, 33, both residents of Barangay (village) Commonwealth, were charged with two counts of murder in the City Prosecutor's Office.

Case investigator SPO1 Pascual Fabreag said the suspects were tagged by witnesses in the killing of Richard Kho, 59, and Bonifacio Loreto, 47, columnists of Aksyon Ngayon, a tabloid

that printed just one issue before it shut down in March.

The motive for the shooting, however, was still under investigation, he added.

The victims were talking in front of Loreto's store in Barangay Commonwealth shortly before midnight on July 30 when two men walked up to them and shot them.

Fabreag said the witnesses managed to identify the suspects by going through a police file of people with criminal records.

Rappler.com, 12.08.2013

NPA who led Guingona ambush arrested

By Karlos Manlupig

DAVAO CITY, Philippines - Intelligence operators arrested

around midnight of Sunday, August 11, a suspected New Peo-



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ple's Army (NPA) member who led the [ambush on then Gingoog City Mayor Ruthie Guingona](#) during the campaign period.

Reynaldo Agcopra Gundaya alyas Ka Tarik had been wanted for leading the April 20 ambush which left the 70-year-old Guingona injured and two of her aides killed, according to Maj Leo Bongosia, spokesman of the military's 4th Infantry Division. Guingona is the wife of former Vice President Teofisto Guingona Jr and mother of Sen TG Guingona. Her daughter

Philippine Daily Inquirer, 12.08.2013

Case yet to be filed 2 years after priest's slay

KIDAPAWAN CITY—Almost two years after the killing of Italian missionary priest Fausto "Pops" Tentorio, the group fighting for justice over his death is dismayed that no case has been filed in court despite overwhelming evidence linking some individuals to the killing.

Fr. Peter Geremia, convener of Justice for Father Pops Movement (JPM), said his group was appalled at the "seeming disinterest" of the Aquino administration to solve the Tentorio case, which has not yet been filed in court. The perpetrators are allowed to roam free, protected by prominent and influential politicians behind the priest's killing, Geremia's group said. [...] "As early as Nov. 29, 2011, we wrote to Justice Secretary Leila de Lima to ask for an independent investigation. We asked her, in the succeeding meetings, to come up with unified investigations and testimonies from the witnesses, and to investigate other suspects including the military. In July 2012, we petitioned the government to disarm the paramilitary group Bagani, particularly its leaders involved in the case," Geremia said. "But until now, the suspects freely wield their arms and continue to sow terror around indigenous peoples' communities in North Cotabato doing counterinsurgency operations upon orders by the military."

He challenged President Aquino to deliver justice for Tentorio [...].

Minda News, 12.08.2013

At least 79 groups want Senate probe on release of Abu Sayyaf bombers

By Carolyn O. Arguillas

DAVAO CITY - At least 79 civil society organizations have issued a statement asking the Senate for an "immediate and impartial investigation" on the alleged "suspicious release from detention of four high-valued Abu Sayyaf inmates" from the Special Intensive Care Area (SICA) of Bicutan Jail allegedly through the facilitation of a "very powerful politician from Sulu."

The CSOs appealed to the Senate to immediately conduct an inquiry so that the National Commission on Muslim Filipinos (NCMF), Department of Justice (DOJ) and Sulu Vice Governor Abdusakur Tan "will be able to answer for all these issues" as they expressed fear that the release of the four Abu Sayyaf members "has ostensibly exposed the civilian population into such extreme level of risks from these terrorists who are now freely roaming around public places and could now be plotting the next bomb to detonate and kill our own people."

[...] The CSOs' statement, dated August 12 and written "on behalf of the bereaved families and victims of bombings and kidnappings in Mindanao" and "in the interest of truth and justice," asked why four confessed Abu Sayyaf members were allegedly "inserted" into the list of 18 detainees ordered freed by the Department of Justice in February. The 18 were ordered freed on the grounds that there appeared to be "no proof of their participation in the kidnapping much less evidence of their purported membership in the Abu Sayyaf Group." [...]

National print and online media outfits reported on February 7 the order of the DOJ to release 18 suspected Abu Sayyaf mem-

beries who were allegedly wrongfully accused of kidnapping and beheading of Jehovah's Witness/Almeda Group members in 2002. Because of the dropping of their criminal charges by the DOJ, the 18 "walked to freedom on February 15, 2013."

"Shocking"
"What is shocking," the statement noted, is that barely a month from their release from prison, four of the 18 [...] "were presented before the Regional Trial Court of Manila-Branch 19 as witnesses of Sulu Governor Abdusakur Tan" in criminal cases he filed "against a known human rights defender from Sulu."

The statement did not name the "human rights defender from Sulu" but was apparently referring to Temogen "Cocoy" Tulawie who was arrested in Davao City and detained since mid-January 2012.

Tulawie was implicated in the May 13, 2009 bombing in Patikul, Sulu that injured 12 persons including then Governor Tan (Tan is now Vice Governor of Sulu while his son, Abdusakur II, is the governor).
Tulawie, a member of the Consortium of Bangsamoro Civil Society and Baugbog where he documented cases of human rights violations in the province of Sulu, has repeatedly denied the allegations.

[...] He also opposed Governor Tan's creation of a Civilian Emergency Force which he said was a "private army."
The statement noted that the four freed Abu Sayyaf members admitted in open court that "they are bombers, kidnappers and proud active members of the Abu Sayyaf Group."

Geremia said several individuals with links to people in the bureaucracy had been trying to protract the case at the prosecution level.
He added that influential politicians had been protecting the killers who remained at large [...]. In July this year, the Department of Justice (DOJ) held clarificatory hearings that narrowed down the lead to the suspects. [...]

He [Geremia] also said the latest retraction of witness Dominador Damlayon and suspect Jimmy Ato from their sworn statement only destroyed the credibility of the investigators of the National Bureau of Investigation. Ato and Damlayon claimed they were forced by a certain "Loloy" to give false testimonies.

"But we have a strong hunch that 'Loloy' appears to be the link to the masterminds of the killing," Geremia said.

He said Justice Undersecretary Francisco Baraan III assured him that President Aquino had approved the guidelines of Administrative Order No. 35, creating the interagency committee on extralegal killings, enforced disappearances, torture and other rights violations.

"It is still a test case, but we believe that if it is genuinely implemented, it is possible to obtain justice for Father Pops and other cases of extrajudicial killings," he said.

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It added that Sali Said, "the star witness produced by the Governor, admitted that he was released from prison through the help of the lawyer of the governor who offered to help him 'process (his) papers for release' on the condition that his group will agree to stand as false witnesses for the governor."

"Wolf in sheep's hide"

Tan, however, laughed off the allegations. He told MindaNews Monday morning that he is "open to inquiry by any body so that everybody would know the group/groups behind this and

deceiving other groups/CSOs into believing them which is after all to help Cocoy who they want to project as human rights advocate."

"They should show the other groups the revelations of the witness in the case against Cocoy," he said, adding they "want to present a wolf in a sheep's hide, ano ba naman yan. Shame on them," Tan said. [...]

Bulatlat.com, 25.08.2013

'Nothing justifies torture, illegal arrest,' military told on Morong 43

By Ronalyn V. Olea

MANILA — The military is recycling old lies. This is what members of the [Morong 43](#) and human rights groups said of the military's claim that one of those killed in an encounter with government troops in Bulacan was a member of the Morong 43.

Major General Pio Gregorio Catapang of the Armed Forces Northern Luzon Command claimed in a report that Ramon dela Cruz, one of the three members of the New People's Army (NPA) killed in an encounter in Doña Remedios Trinidad town last Thursday, was a member of the Morong 43.

"The Morong 43 are not members of the New People's Army," Dr. Alexis Montes, one of the 43 health workers arrested in Morong, Rizal in February 2010, said. [...]

At the time of their arrest, Montes was one of the instructors in the basic health training course held in Morong.

Members of the Morong 43 filed [torture charges](#) against military and police officials involved in their arrest, detention and torture. A separate [damage suit](#) is pending with a Quezon City local court against former President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and her military and police officials.

Most members of the Morong 43 were released after ten months in detention. The government withdrew charges of illegal possession of firearms and explosives due to international and local pressure.

Illogical

Edre Olalia, one of the lawyers of the Morong 43 and secretary general of the National Union of Peoples' Lawyers (NUPL), said [...] the claim that Ramon dela Cruz was an NPA and the same person as the namesake of a former member of the Morong 43 is "grounded on questionable bases and circumstances."

The military claimed it was able to identify dela Cruz through his mugshot taken after the arrest in February 2010 and through the names of his parents. Brigadier General Hernando Iriberry, commander of the Army's 7th Infantry Division, said three rebel returnees made a positive identification of dela Cruz.

"The comparison with his supposed mugshots and the similarity of the names of his supposed parents that he allegedly disclosed while under extreme and hostile interrogation in isolated detention is at best self-serving and at worse contrived, if not malicious, Olalia said. [...]

Five of the Morong 43 were kept under military custody. The

military claimed the five admitted to being NPA guerrillas and have returned to the government's fold. Relatives of the five, however, revealed that the ['rebel returnees' were tortured](#) and forced into admitting they were NPA.

"If the military cannot keep its facts straight, at least, it should review its math. Even their convoluted figures do not add up," Olalia said.

No justification for torture

For human rights alliance Karapatan, nothing justifies torture and illegal arrest.

"Whether De la Cruz joined the NPA after his release or not is his personal choice. That does not in any way change the facts of the case. The military illegally arrested, detained and tortured the 43 health workers, period," Cristina Palabay, Karapatan secretary general, said. [...]

Most 'Morong 43' members returned to hills-military

Of the members of the so-called "Morong 43" who had claimed to be health workers wrongly arrested by the Philippine Army last year, 33 of them had reportedly returned to the underground as communist rebels, with one of them ending up shot dead in an encounter with soldiers two weeks ago, the Inquirer learned on Saturday.

A military source told the Inquirer that only Dr. Merry Mia Clamor, health education and training services coordinator for the Council for Health and Development; Dr. Alex Montes, a member of the Community Medicine Development Foundation; midwife Teresa Quinawayan, community health workers Lydia Obera, Delia Ocasia and Reynaldo Macabenta, and nurse Gary Liberal remained as members of "progressive movements."

Another five had turned witnesses against their comrades.

The source requested anonymity as he was not authorized to disclose the information.

Ramon de la Cruz, one of 33 who returned to the New People's Army (NPA), was killed in an encounter with Army soldiers and members of the Philippine National Police (PNP) in Doña Remedios Trinidad town in Bulacan.

The military confirmed that De la Cruz was one of the Morong 43 through his parents, whose names were the same as the ones De la Cruz had given during his interrogation after his arrest in Morong, Rizal, in February 2010, his mugshot following the arrest, and his identification as an NPA member by a rebel returnee.

"It is only sad that they have to die first before people will believe that they are truly NPA members," Army chief Lt. Gen. Noel Coballes said.

Philippine Daily Inquirer, 25.08.2013

MAGUINDANAO MASSACRE

ABS-CBN News, 30.07.2013

Ces Drilon gets new threat after report on Ampatuan lawyer

MANILA - ABS-CBN journalist Ces Drilon has received a new threat via text after reporting on the tax evasion case filed against the lawyer of Maguindanao massacre suspect Andal Ampatuan Jr.

In her Twitter account, Drilon said she received a text message from someone pretending to be her informant in the story on Atty. Arnel Cortez Manaloto, lawyer of Andal Jr.

She said the "informant" wanted to meet her in Bulacan. She later got a threat via text from the same number Monday night. [...]

Drilon said her real informant in the Manaloto story also got a text from someone pretending to be her "telling her that I changed number and asking her to meet me in Bulacan." [...]

Drilon first received a threat after the [airing of her story on the](#)



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[tax evasion case](#) against Ampatuan lawyer Manaloto. The report had a source revealing Manaloto is allegedly the dummy owner of eight of accused Andal Jr.'s properties in Davao City. [...]

A two-part story from the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism also [revealed the sale of the 8 real estate properties](#) of Andal Jr. to Manaloto on May 19, 2011.

The National Union of Journalists of the Philippines earlier condemned the threats against Drilon.

In a statement, NUJP chairperson Rowena Paraan said the nature of Drilon's report and the fact that the message was sent to her personal mobile number "indicates it was likely meant to

intimidate her into backing off from the story she had been pursuing."

NUJP commended Drilon for "making the threat public and urged other colleagues to do the same should they find themselves in similar situations."

"We also urge media outfits to ensure the safety and security of their employees as well as provide them with the training to do so," the NUJP said in a statement.

"Most of all, we challenge the government to fulfill its mandate to protect the lives and liberties, not just of journalists, but of all citizens, by putting an end to the impunity [...].

InterAksyon.com, 14.08.2013

Ampatuan massacre backhoe operator indicted; CHR testifies on 58th victim

MANILA, Philippines - Bong Andal, the confessed operator of the backhoe used in the attempt to bury victims in the 2009 Ampatuan massacre was arraigned on Wednesday and pleaded not guilty to the 58 counts of murder filed against him.

Although an order has been issued to transfer Andal to Camp Bagong Diwa in Taguig City, where the massacre case is being tried and where most of his co-accused are jailed, the backhoe operator will continue to be detained in Camp Crame. There is a pending motion from the prosecution against his transfer.

Andal's lawyer, Romarico Ayson, has also filed a motion for reconsideration questioning the decision of state prosecutors to bar the backhoe operator from becoming a state witness.

Several media organizations as well as some massacre victims' families have voiced concern over Andal's safety if he were to be transferred to Camp Bagong Diwa. Several of the key members of the Ampatuan clan accused of ordering and leading the massacre are detained there.

Andal has admitted to being the driver of the backhoe owned by the Maguindanao provincial government and which was found at the massacre site in Sitio Masalay, Barangay Salman, Ampatuan town.

Of the 58 massacre victims on November 23, 2009, 32 were media practitioners.

Among them was photojournalist Reynaldo "Bebot" Momay, who was officially included among the victims early this year, notwithstanding the fact that his remains have yet to be found. Only his dentures were found at the massacre site.

His inclusion among the victims came after the prosecution presented a bloodstained list of the media workers who were with the ill-fated convoy whose passengers were slaughtered.

Also on Wednesday, officials of the Commission on Human Rights testified at the trial.

Romy Lucero, special investigator of the CHR's National Capital Region office, was asked by private prosecutor Romel Bagares to identify the evidence he recovered at the crime scene and to draw a sketch of the approximate location where the dentures of Momay were found.

Dr. Joseph Andrew T. Jimenez, who was with the CHR forensics team that conducted an investigation soon after the massacre, corroborated Lucero's testimony and also spoke on other details not covered by the previous witness.

PEACE PROCESS

Philstar.com, 17.08.2013

Declaration of independence of another Muslim group threatens peace process

MANILA, Philippines ([Xinhua](#)) - Even before the Manila government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) could finalize a peace agreement designed to end the decades-old armed conflict in the Southern Philippines, a new development has threatened to disrupt the peace process and revive the hostilities in the region.

The Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), through its spokesman, Habib Mujahab Hashim, confirmed last Thursday that MNLF founder and chairman Nur Misuari has declared independence in Talipao, Sulu on Aug. 12.

The MNLF is the original Muslim secessionist group in Mindanao founded by Misuari, a former professor at the University of the Philippines, in the early 1970s.

In signing a peace agreement with the government in 1996, the MNLF agreed to forego its goal of establishing a separate state in Mindanao. In protest over the decision, some MNLF top commanders bolted out and founded what is now the MILF.

Hashim said that Misuari believes that the signing of the framework agreement between the government and the MILF in October last year was technically tantamount to an abrogation of the 1996 peace agreement.

According to Hashim, after declaring the independence of the Bangsamoro Republik in Talipao, Sulu, Misuari also designated himself as the commander-in-chief of the Bangsamoro Armed

Forces (BAF).

The supposed Bangsamoro Republik covers the whole of Mindanao, Sulu and Palawan. But Misuari's legal counsel Emmanuel Fontanilla claimed that the new state also includes the Malaysian states of Sabah and Sarawak.

Fontanilla said that under the proposed constitution of the Bangsamoro Republik, the form of government will be a federal system with the Muslims, Christians and highlanders sharing equal powers in government.

He also hinted that Misuari and the MNLF would be setting up a government in exile abroad.

Malacanang, the seat of the Philippine government, has reacted strongly to the report, saying that Misuari is "misguided" and that he should forget his own interests so that Mindanao can finally attain peace.

"We are for peace in Muslim Mindanao and that's the thrust of the Aquino administration so that the peace dividends can flow to the people of Mindanao," presidential spokesperson Edwin Lacierda said during a press briefing Wednesday.

The agreement that is being finalized by the Aquino government and the MILF calls for the establishment of the Bangsamoro political entity that would have some sovereign powers but would still be under the Manila government.



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The political entity will replace the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) which was formed as an offshoot of the 1996 peace accord with the MNLF and the 1976 Tripoli agreement signed during the martial law regime of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos. [...]

Deputy Presidential Spokesperson Abigail Valte said that so far they have not monitored any untoward development in Mindanao as a result of Misuari's declaration of independence.

But if the situation worsens, the government is ready to take action, Valte said.

Valte said that the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) continues to hope for peace in Mindanao. [...]

AFP spokesman Lt. Col. Ramon Zagala said that they are hopeful that the MNLF will honor the 1996 peace agreement with the government. "We are optimistic that the MNLF will respect and abide by the rule of law," Zagala said but added that the military is "continuing its intensified operation" to monitor and isolate any possible disruption of peace in the predominantly Muslim areas in Mindanao.

In a separate interview, Representative Rufus Rodriguez of Cagayan de Oro City in Central Mindanao appealed to Misuari to recall his declaration, saying that it "will jeopardize" the peace process. [...]

ManilaStandardToday.com, 27.08.2013

Peace talks fail to resolve pending issues

By Joyce Pangco Panares

The peace panels of the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front ended a four-day meeting in Kuala Lumpur over the weekend without signing any of the two remaining annexes needed to complete a comprehensive peace agreement.

According to the MILF, they insisted on upholding the asymmetrical relations for the annex on power-sharing, which defines which powers will be devolved to the Bangsamoro - a political entity that would be created to replace the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

"According to an unimpeachable source, the government peace panel, advertently or inadvertently, approached the issue from the standpoint of a unitary state that negates the principle of asymmetrical relationship. This was resisted by the MILF technical team up to the plenary level by the MILF peace panel," wrote the MILF in its website, www.luwaran.com.

MILF peace panel member Maulana Alonto, said that anything that diminishes the asymmetrical relationship of the Bangsamoro government with the central government is "unacceptable."

The Bangsamoro is envisioned to have a "ministerial form of government" which shall also have powers over the Shariah

FURTHER READINGS

ManilaTimes.net, 31.08.2013

Indigenous women - still at the margins of development

By Judy A. Pasimio

LILAK (Purple Action for Indigenous Women's Rights)

[Here](#) are the thoughts of indigenous women who personify the poorest of the poor in our societies. Hearing what PNoy considered as the accomplishments of his administration, the indigenous women expressed disappointment, sadness and even outrage on the lack of attention on, and the exclusion of the plight of indigenous peoples, and the natural resources, on which this so-called development of the government has heavily relied on and on which the survival of indigenous communities depend on.

Sedition case being readied against Nur Misuari

MAGUINDANAO - A sedition case is now being readied against Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) founding chairman Nur Misuari for declaring independence amid peace talks between the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

Philippine National Police-Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao Director Supt. Noel Delos Reyes told ABS-CBN News said they are now gathering information and evidence against Misuari.

Meanwhile, MILF leaders said they will not dip their hands into the matter.

MILF vice chair for political affairs Ghadzali Jaafar said Misuari's declaration of independence may have been the result of his dissatisfaction with the government over how the 1996 Final Peace Agreement was implemented.

Now, Misuari has false apprehensions when it comes to the Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro, Jaafar said. [...]

Jaafar said they still consider Misuari as one of the Bangsamoro leaders fighting for the same cause.

He called on his former comrade to give the framework agreement a chance and believe in the good it will bring to the Bangsamoro people.

ABS-CBN Central Mindanao, 21.08.2013

justice system.

Under the Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro signed last year, among the powers reserved for the central government are foreign affairs, national defense and external security, coinage and monetary policy, citizenship and naturalization, and postage. [...]

Presidential peace adviser Teresita Deles said asymmetry "fully embodies the constitutional mandate of regional autonomy which establishes another level of government between the central and the local governments."

Alonto said an asymmetric relationship would "extricate the Bangsamoro from the decades-old unitary system of government of the Philippines."

"The issue here is not separation or political independence, but redefining and restructuring the totality of relationship between the Bangsamoro and the Philippine state into one that would allow the Bangsamoro people to have a government of their own that functions and operates more than the genre of failed political autonomy that was conferred on previous autonomous governments and the ARMM, but less than that of complete political independence," he said. [...]