



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, 04.09.2014

Communities, Groups, Resist Ploy to Green-light Mining in Manicani -ATM/PMPI

"Save Manicani Island! No to ore load permit! No to corporated rehabilitation!" this is the battle cry of various Civil Society Organizations (CSO) as they executed mass actions in Quezon City, Taguig City and Tacloban City on Thursday, September 4, 2014.

The action was done to oppose the release of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and Mines and Geosciences Bureau's (MGB) authorization for Hinatuan Mining Corporation (HMC), formerly known as Nickel Asia Corporation to haul and load ore stockpiles from Manicani, Guian, Eastern Samar. [...]

"We are still reeling from the destruction caused by Yolanda to our lives and home and here comes the government taunting us with yet another disaster", Manong Gaeng [Marcial Gomooc, President of Save Manicani Movement or SAMAMO in Eastern Samar] added.

Alyansa Tigil Mina (ATM), Philippine Misereor Partnership Incorporated (PMPI), Philippine Movement for Climate Justice (PMJ), Legal Rights Commission (LRC) and SANLAKAS spearheaded two (2) actions in Luzon, as one group marched from DENR to MGB and another picketed in front of Nickel Asia Corporation's office in Taguig City.

"We condemn the action taken by DENR-MGB authorizing HMC to haul and load ore stockpiles in Manicani because we all know that HMC's intention has always been run by capitalistic greed and not by concern for the environment." said Fr. Oli Castor of PMPI. [...]

"First they lifted the suspension of Marcventures Mining Development Corporation in Surigao del Sur, second Philex was steered clear and now HMC? It's horrifying to think about what tricks they are going to pull next just to cater to the cold-blooded capitalistic intentions of the mining industry." added Fr. Castor.

In a dialogue done by the respective CSOs and PO with the [...] DENR and the [...] MGB, the agencies discussed the reason for the release of the order, which was the hazard posed by ore stockpiles siltation in the bodies of water around the area.

DENR and MGB also stated that they acted upon the endorsement of the Office of Presidential Assistance for Rehabilitation and Recovery (OPARR) requesting for HMC to haul and load ore stockpiles as part of the agencies' rehabilitation and recovery efforts.

According to OPARR's endorsement letter, the disposal of stockpiles is a mitigating measure against any possible adverse environmental effect that may worsen calamities.

Gerry Arrances National Coordinator of PMCJ, a group which also engages in monitoring rehabilitation policies also commented that "this is clearly siding with the mining company in the guise of rehabilitation detrimental to the very victims of Yolanda that OPARR should assist and protect. [...]

Philippine Daily Inquirer, 17.09.2014

Aquino confronted on human rights record in Belgium forum

By Christian V. Esguerra

BRUSSELS, Belgium—President Benigno Aquino III was put on the spot over his administration's human rights record shortly after he delivered a wide-ranging policy speech organized by an independent think tank here.

However, events suddenly took a turn, when a test conducted by the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) in Manicani's bodies of water turned out negative from the hazard posed by siltation. This sparked the questioning of the validity of the endorsement and authorization by SaMaMo and its partner organizations in the national level.

"We are standing by and supporting the position of SAMAMO that issuing the ore load permit is an injustice and should not be tolerated by the government, and we hold MGB accountable to that." Said Jaybee Garganera, ATM National Coordinator.

"We are challenging DENR-MGB to put the welfare of the people and the environment first by honoring EMB's result and declaring the authorization void. We demand the stoppage of processing of HMC's ore load permit, we demand the cancellation of HMC's permit and we demand for DENR-MGB to do what is just and right." asserted Garganera.

On September 1, 2014, the involved organizations and OPARR Secretary Panfilo Lacson conducted a dialogue and discussed the condition in Manicani and the agency's involvement in the situation. [...]

As a result of the dialogue, OPARR committed to do a validation of the EMB result and a meeting with DENR Secretary Ramon Paje to discuss the situation and assess the next steps.

September 2, 2014, SaMaMo received a call from OPARR stating that the agency will act based on the final decision DENR-MGB will release regarding the matter.

Atty. Aaron Pedrosa, Secretary General of SANLAKAS, a network of people organizations of which SAMAMO is a member, slammed the government for condemning the Manicani communities to further harm. [...]

Pres. Good Faith welcomes back Gen. Kill for the good of the people to AFP HQ

Palparan is back to the barracks of the Philippine Army—hishome for more than 30 years, where he was trained and where he cloned his ilk. Malacanang welcomed Palparan's transfer to Fort Bonifacio and BS Aquino, who was in Belgium, called it 'punishment'.

BS Aquino claimed his regime has been 'investigating' human rights violations and boasted of Palparan's arrest, "as if his government initiated the filing of charges against The Butcher," said Cristina Palabay, Karapatan's secretary general. "How can he boast of his task force on extrajudicial killings when there has been no conviction of perpetrators of human rights violations?" she added.

Palabay said it is ridiculous where the President pluckshis statements such as: 'we have adopted a policy that their only deterrence to crime is the certainty of punishment'. "BS Aquino is certainly out of synch with reality."

"The back-to-barracks policy for human rights violators among the Armed Forces of the Philippines is as natural as the rising and setting of the sun, especially under the BS Aquino regime," Palabay said. It happened to the Task Force Kitacom (Kiblawan, Tampakan, Columbio, Malungon) of the 39th and 27th IBPA after the massacre of Juvy Capion and her two sons. "The military barracks are the safest haven for the human rights violators, not only to shield them from prosecution but to also to reward them of their act. And this is what the BS Aquino calls as 'punishment'," added Palabay.

"It's the same as the promotion of military officials to higher positions despite their record of gross human rights violations and charges filed in court against them. How can BS Aquino claim that the previous regime had worse violations of human rights than his regime when he amply rewarded the Arroyo generals Año, Baladad, and Visaya with plum positions in the military hierarchy?" she said.

Palabay also cited the case of Jimmy Capion whose killer, Alde Salusad, remain scot-free despite a warrant issued against him two years ago. The local police unit admitted difficulty in serving Salusad's warrant of arrest for fear of reprisal from the military. Salusad's New Indigenous People's Army Reform (NIPAR) is attached to the 8th IB of the Philippine Army.

"Had he not retired, 'President Good Faith' would have rewarded the 'General Kill for the Good of the People' a similarly higher position in the military. For now, Palparan could just be a 'nameless' consultant in the implementation of Oplan Bayanihan while in his headquarters at Fort Bonifacio," Palabay ended.

Karapatan - Press Release, 15.09.2014

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Shortly after four protesters from Migrant Europe greeted his convoy at the entrance of Château of Val-Duchesse on Tuesday [...] Aquino rejected what he called “blanket statements” detailing how “human rights violations had not stopped” since he took office four years ago.

During the open forum that followed Aquino’s speech, one participant also mentioned the government’s revised counterinsurgency program, Oplan Bayanihan, saying it appeared to “endanger” the lives of some of his own people.

“Well, those are blanket statements and we don’t necessarily agree with them,” he told his audience in a forum organized by the Egmont Institute.

“It is not our policy to encourage or even abet any transgressions of the law. And towards that end, we have been investigating all of these allegations,” he added, citing also the arrest of former Major Gen. Jovito Palparan, who is facing criminal charges over the disappearance of two student activists.

“We have adopted a policy that their only deterrence to crime is the certainty of punishment.”

Aquino acknowledged that the Philippine justice system was slow, but vowed that the government was “trying to do our utmost to advance the solution of all of these crimes.” [...]

The President cited the task force created to go after those behind extrajudicial killings “with the end in view of arresting every culprit regardless of whether it was a media individual, an activist, or any other individual.” [...]

Of 54 cases of media killings, some of which happened prior to his term, he said there had been 10 cases of conviction.

The President also maintained that not all cases of so-called “media killings” were related to the job.

“For instance, in the media killings, some who used to work in media died. Did they die because they were investigative jour-

HRonlineph.com, 23.09.2014

The dangers of more bilateral FTAs

By Joseph Purugganan (Focus on the Global South)

Trade Undersecretary Adrian Cristobal, Jr. was quoted in the papers recently expressing the government’s interest in “exploring more bilateral FTAs” after “the usual consultations and impact studies.”

Cristobal mentioned in particular the possible launch of two negotiations for free trade agreements with European countries, one with the European Union, and another with the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), which includes Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

The EU-ASEAN FTA Network has been monitoring these developments since 2007 when the EU, as part of what it called “New Partnerships with Asia,” launched simultaneous trade talks with Korea, India and ASEAN. The regional negotiations with ASEAN broke down in 2009, prompting the EU to take the bilateral route to further its trade agenda.

It is important to highlight the real nature of these FTAs and the dangers they pose to jobs and livelihoods, people’s health and access to medicines, as well as the broader issue of policy space.

Press statement by the President of the European Council Herman Van Rompuy following his meeting with the President of the Philippines, Benigno Aquino III

I am glad to welcome President Aquino on his first visit to Brussels and to the European Union. [...]

The Philippines’ relations with Europe are historically deep and long. Today, the Philippines can boast the fastest growing economy in Asia. It is an engine of growth in its region and will progressively raise millions of people from poverty. It was also a forerunner in democratic transition in South East Asia, and in this context, I pay tribute to President Aquino’s good governance agenda. The fight against corruption remains a key issue. Democracy, indeed, goes well beyond elections, and the rule of law and respect for human rights are at the heart of it.

In our discussions, we have underlined the importance of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement for our future relations. This agreement, once implemented, will increase our engagement politically and economically and enhance practical cooperation in many areas, such as migration or disaster risk management.

Let me highlight other areas which I discussed with President Aquino:

Firstly, the European Union supports the peace process in Mindanao and I would like to take this opportunity to commend President Aquino for his pivotal role. Just a week ago, a draft law was submitted to the Philippines’ Congress paving the way for greater autonomy in Mindanao. The EU has been invited to monitor the plebiscite in Bangsamoro in 2015 and we are currently looking into that possibility.

Secondly, I look forward to strengthening our trade and investment relations. The European Union is negotiating Free Trade Agreements in the region and remains open to start further negotiations.

Thirdly, the European Union’s development cooperation with the Philippines will more than double in the next six years: it is increasing from 130 million EUR to 325 million EUR with the focus on judicial and legal reform, sustainable energy and job creation.

Fourthly, we have agreed on the importance of enhancing EU– ASEAN relations and on the strategic importance of ASEM in view of the upcoming Summit in Milan.

Finally, we exchanged views on the regional situation. It is essential that all parties seek peaceful and cooperative solutions to maritime issues, in accordance with international law, in particular with the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. The European Union is party to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in South East Asia. This Treaty calls on all parties to settle differences by peaceful means, to renounce the threat or use of force, and to effectively cooperate among partners.

To conclude, I would like to highlight the valuable contribution which Filipino migrants living and working in Europe are making to our societies and to their country of origin. Filipino migrants sent 2.3 billion EUR back to the Philippines in 2013. The European Union is the second largest source of remittances to the Philippines and the largest employer of Filipino seafarers. [...]

European-council.europa.eu, 16.09.2014

nalists? Were they exercising their profession in a responsible manner, living up to journalistic ethics? Or did they perish because of other reasons?” he said.

While the actual texts of the proposed agreements with the Philippines are still subject to, as Usec. Cristobal reported, a process that includes scoping exercises between the parties, it is safe to assume that they will be cut from the same cloth as the other EU FTAs. This means they will resemble existing agreements with Korea, Singapore and more recently Canada, and those that are still being negotiated, like the mega-regional deal called the Trans Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership Agreement (TTIP) between two major trade powers: the United States and the EU.

These agreements are called “New Generation FTAs,” and here lies the danger for the Philippines: they go well beyond the commitment to reduce tariffs on goods and services. They go beyond commitments already made under the World Trade Organisation on Intellectual Property Rights under the TRIPS agreement. They even guarantee the right of corporations to sue governments over public policies that are deemed detrimental to corporate profits.



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One of the most contentious elements of these agreements is the investment chapter, which includes an investor-to-state dispute settlement mechanism (ISDS) which allows corporations to make million-dollar claims against governments under international investment tribunals like the World Bank's International Centre for the Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID) and the UN Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL). The Philippines is no stranger to these multi-million-dollar investment suits. There are two pending cases against the Philippines under ICSID, both involving EU corporations. The first is the \$425-million claim by the German contractor Fraport over the cancellation of the contract to build the NAIA terminal 3. More recently, a case was brought by the Belgian company Baggerwerken Decloedt En Zoon NV over the cancellation of the dredging project in Laguna de Bay in 2011. Both these cases cite as their basis the Philippines bilateral investment treaties with Germany and Belgium, respectively, which contain the ISDS

Rappler.com, 25.09.2014

'Abu Sayyaf taking advantage of int'l attention on ISIS'

Carmela Fonbuena

MANILA, Philippines – The defense department said Abu Sayyaf's [threat to behead their two German hostages](#) is propaganda to ride on the international attention that the Islamic State (formerly ISIS) is getting, said a military general in charge of Western Mindanao.

[...] The military also reiterated that it has contained Abu Sayyaf members in pockets of Sulu. "There is continuous effort by the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police," [Lieutenant General Rustico] Guerrero added.

The local terrorist group responsible for several bombing incidents in the country and kidnappings in the region has threatened to kill the hostages, unless they are paid P250 million (\$5.62 million, 4.4 million euros) and if Germany stops supporting the US-led campaign against ISIS in Iraq and Syria.

Germany responded saying it will [not withdraw support for US action](#) against the jihadists. "There will be no change to our Syria and Iraq policy," said a German foreign ministry spokeswoman. Philippine Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin said military offensive against the Abu Sayyaf will continue. "We will not be

Inquirer Central Luzon, 29.09.2014

Palparan asks CA to quash kidnap, illegal detention case

By Carmela Reyes-Estrope

CITY OF MALOLOS, Philippines – The lawyers of retired Army Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan Jr. asked the Court of Appeals, on Monday, to quash the kidnapping and serious illegal detention case filed against him for the 2006 abduction of two University of the Philippines students in Bulacan province. A security unit composed of soldiers took Palparan to the Bulacan Regional Trial Court (RTC) Branch 14 here on Monday for his trial for the disappearance of UP students Karen Empeño and Sherlyn Cadapan.

Palparan, called the "butcher" of political activists, is detained at the Philippine Army Custodial Center (PACC) in Metro Manila, after the court, on Sept. 15, allowed him to be transferred out of the Bulacan Provincial Jail due to concerns about his security. Judge Teodora Gonzales of the RTC Branch 14 here said she would continue hearing Palparan's case. "Unless there is a temporary restraining order [from the CA] to suspend the proceedings, the court will continue with this case," she said. Lawyer Diosab Formilleza, Palparan's counsel, said they asked the CA to review Gonzales' earlier denial of his client's motion to quash the charges, arguing that the charges against him, like serious illegal detention, were applicable to civilians and not active military personnel. Formilleza said Palparan, the former commander of the Army's

provision.

Another serious issue that is conveniently left out in statements from government about these FTAs is the impact of these agreements on public health and access to medicines. A distinct feature of the "New Generation FTAs" which we expect would be in the EU FTA is the rigid protection of intellectual property rights (IPR). These agreements contain provisions that would effectively undermine the Cheaper Medicines Law and delay the availability of more affordable life-saving medicines. We should be pursuing more protections for our citizens, and especially the poor and marginalized, not corporations and their profits.

These are just some of the concerns that should be raised in the process of consultation and impact assessment that Usec. Cristobal alluded to. We hope that the Trade department would really engage in an honest and transparent assessment of the country's policy with regard to trade and investment agreements.

intimidated by these gestures and actions. We will continue to contain them," Gazmin told local radio *dzRH* Thursday morning, September 25.

The government maintains that ISIS presence in the Philippines remains unconfirmed in spite of reports received by the Philippine Embassy in Damascus that at least 3 Filipino jihadists were killed in Syria in separate incidents in October and December 2013.

Members of the Abu Sayyaf and the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters have [pledged allegiance to ISIS](#), but military officers dismissed them as the rebels' way of giving ISIS moral support. They claimed they have not monitored ISIS support – finances and weapons – going to the Philippines. [...]

The government has created a [technical working group](#) to monitor foreign fighters in the Philippines.

The military stepped up operations against the Abu Sayyaf since last year. [...]

Gazmin confirmed there are ongoing negotiations for release of the German captives through other parties.

7th Infantry Division based in Nueva Ecija province, was charged with kidnapping and serious illegal detention in connection with the abduction and disappearance of the UP students before he retired from military service. But the lawyers representing the families of Cadapan and Empeño said the CA already denied a similar motion filed in 2011 by Palparan's lawyers.

Lawyer Edre Olalia, also the secretary general of the National Union of Peoples' Lawyers (NUPL), said: "Palparan's latest moves to recycle petitions to stop the proceedings have already been denied by the RTC and dismissed by the CA years ago ... They are using the law and legal procedures and all its effects to frustrate justice."

"This [new CA petition is] part of the twist and turns of the government officials who are coddling Palparan ... We want [to hear President Aquino's] position on Palparan," he said. Olalia also criticized Palparan's detention in the PACC. "Now, coming from the Army detention [facility] in Fort Bonifacio, they are 42 kilometers away from this court with the government's money being spent on travel and all the bodyguards escorting him," Olalia said. Palparan's detention in Fort Bonifacio should no longer be an issue, said lawyer Narzal Mallares, another Palparan counsel.



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The court has set a pretrial conference on Oct. 20. After Gonzales ended the hearing, Palparan's security detail failed to bring him out of the courtroom immediately because of

a rally staged outside the RTC building. Erlinda Cadapan, mother of one of the missing UP students, assailed the policemen and soldiers guarding Palparan. [...]

CALAMITIES & CLIMATE CHANGE

Philippine Daily Inquirer, 12.09.2014

COA: 'Yolanda' aid wasted, unused

Audit report notes food spoiled or missing, funds unlisted or unused

By Gil C. Cabacungan

A Commission on Audit (COA) report on the government's "Yolanda" (international name: Haiyan) relief efforts found thousands of food packs, canned goods, bottled water, body bags and rice spoiled or missing or unused; millions of pesos worth of goods and funds unaccounted for, and close to a billion pesos in funds still unused months after the super typhoon pummeled Eastern Visayas.

"Our audit documented many examples wherein quick action was not possible due to longstanding policies that require extensive, time-consuming processes, delaying the delivery of vital supplies and other assistance," said the report last week.

"On the other hand, we also found examples where processes under procurement and distribution of relief goods left the government to possible abuse," it said.

It cited seven weaknesses in the performance of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), Department of Health (DOH), Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), National Food Authority and Office of the Civil Defense. These are low use of funds, procedural lapses or deficiencies in tracking receipts and use of funds, serious flaws in the procurement and contracting process, flaws in documenting flow of donated cash and goods, absence of a unified inventory system, shortcomings in logistics management and delay in the delivery or nondelivery of goods.

"Decision makers find themselves trapped in a struggle between

implementing controls and accountability mechanisms and the demand for rapid response and recovery assistance," the COA said.

In the case of the DSWD, the COA said the agency failed to deliver on time to Tacloban City P69 million worth of bottled water due to lack of transport (the DSWD has moved to cancel 56 percent of the purchase order).

The COA said the DSWD also overstated the amount of family food packs it prepared in its Metro Manila center by P33.3 million. Supplies worth P58 million were spoiled or wasted due to improper storage, the COA said. [...]

For the DPWH, the COA said the agency failed to use the P4.4-million cash donation from Sambo Engineering Corp. of South Korea while P5.395 million worth of donated goods were not recorded.

In the case of the DOH, the COA said the agency did not remit to the National Treasury P13.2 million in unused donations; it did not have agreements covering 93 percent of the P60.5 million total donations it received, which have made liquidation difficult, and 27,808 pieces of body bags were not distributed on time (24,300 cadaver bags were still at the DOH warehouse as of January this year).

In assessing the DILG, the COA noted that the agency failed in preparing for the disaster as the affected LGUs' readiness was given a poor rate of 23 percent, and more than half of the P76 million disaster management funds were not used.

InterAksyon.com, 24.09.2014

PNoy tells UN of climate change efforts but Greenpeace twits failure to push renewables

MANILA, Philippines -- President Benigno Aquino III boasted of his government's efforts to address the impact of climate change on the country but the environmental group Greenpeace twitted him for offering an 'excuse' for his 'anemic track record' in pushing clean energy.

In his address to the United Nations climate summit in New York, Aquino acknowledged that, "many of my people remain vulnerable to disaster brought about by climate change," therefore hampering efforts to make the economic gains of his administration inclusive.

At the same time, he boasted of his administration's efforts to address the problem, including battling illegal logging and "developing a disaster risk financing and insurance policy framework that can reduce the impact of disasters on the poorest and most vulnerable Filipinos."

He also harped on efforts to shift from traditional to renewable energy sources, saying, "We have never lacked in resolve, for example, as regards transitioning towards less traditional sources of energy."

However, he added, "What we lack is the access to technology, financing, and investment that would allow us to accelerate our

strategy."

Reacting to this, Anna Abad, climate justice campaigner for Greenpeace Southeast Asia, said Aquino, "instead of pushing the envelope further on renewable energy ... offered 'lack of access to technology' as an excuse for his government's anemic track record on the subject."

She noted that the Philippines "is already a world leader in geothermal energy and can do the same for solar, wind, mini hydro, modern biomass and ocean technology."

"Renewable energy can meet the country's anticipated energy requirements now, even much faster than building coal-fired power plants," she added, in a reference to Aquino's perceived preference for the fossil-fuel burning plants that have been blamed for serious environmental degradation.

"All it takes is leadership and political will for the country," Abad said. "If he is looking for a justification for the use of emergency powers, removing obstacles to the mainstreaming of renewable energy in the country is the best rationale for it."

"As early as 2008, we have passed a Renewable Energy Act, and are now treading a climate-smart development pathway," Aquino told the UN. [...]

ManilaStandardToday.com, 28.09.2014

Landless 'Yolanda' survivors suffer most

By Ronald Reyes

TACLOBAN CITY—Farming and fishing communities continue to suffer nearly one year after Yolanda struck Leyte and Samar,

according to a network of non-governmental organizations working closely with survivors of the super typhoon.



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They are still unable to avail themselves of the support services and other programs from government agencies and various aid groups, it said.

"The reason why there is a continued delay for their long term support program, like housing and livelihood, is that most of the victims do not have land tenure security or landless, thus their property rights for rehabilitation are always put into question," said Ruelie B. Rapsing, Community and Development Officer of Rights Network, Inc.

Seeing how crucial land ownership is for the victims to make use of aid, Rapsing called on the government to "fast track the resolution of pre-existing tenure and property rights questions, particularly the implementation of agrarian reform in favor of farmers with no land tenure security and land and housing rights for fisher folks with no housing tenure security."

"The pace of resolution of this land security issue will determine to what extent is 'building back better' achievable for the affected farmers. The current pace of the implementation of agrarian reform in general, however, is very slow and this does not bode well for Yolanda survivors with land tenure issues," Rapsing said in a statement.

Rapsing pointed out that government cannot adopt a "business as usual approach" in resolving land and shelter-related proper-

ty rights questions in Yolanda-ravaged areas. "Otherwise, 'building back better' will be a meaningless phrase."

The group claimed that in their dialogues and consultations with the storm victims, like in Barugo, San Miguel and Alang-Alang in Leyte, many of them have yet to receive their Certificate of Land Ownership Award (CLOA) from DAR which, according to the group, should have been awarded to them years back.

Rapsing found out that many local government units "have yet to accomplish their Comprehensive Land Use Plan or CLUP" which, according to him, is a crucial task for an LGU to identify suitable areas for the survivors to be relocated.

"Such long and tedious process would ultimately result in the paralysis of long-term relocation and shelter program for survivors," Rapsing said.

Through a signature campaign, the group has urged the Department of Agrarian Reform and the Register of Deeds to "take the lead in implementing the agrarian reform law."

Also, they are asking concerned local government units and the National Housing Authority to speed up its work in identifying suitable and strategic lands for relocation of displaced typhoon victims. [...]

INSTITUTIONS

Inquirer.net, 01.09.2014

CHR asks for more budget for new laws

By Marc Jayson Cayabyab

MANILA, Philippines - The Commission on Human Rights (CHR) on Monday asked the House of Representatives for additional P34 million in their proposed budget for the implementation of new laws.

During the budget briefing in the House of Representatives on Monday, CHR Chair Loretta Rosales said the additional budget is for the following new laws:

Anti-Torture Act - P10 million

Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act - P4.7 million

Magna Carta of Women Act - P5.1 million

International Humanitarian Law - P5.25 million

Anti-Enforced Disappearance Act - P3 million

Anti-Trafficking Law - P3 million

Human Rights Victims Reparation and Recognition Act - P3 million

In the presentation, Rosales said these new laws were not implemented "due to lack of government budget support."

"New laws have been passed but did not provide for additional human rights resources. [...]," Rosales told lawmakers.

Cagayan De Oro Rep. Rufus Rodriguez told Rosales that he would move for the realignment of the needed funds for new laws.

Sun.Star Bacolod, 06.09.2014

41 Negrenses released thru Justice on Wheels

By Teresa Ellera

FORTY-ONE inmates with cases under the six Regional Trial Courts (RTCs) in Negros Occidental were released Friday with the arrival of the Enhanced Justice on Wheels (EJOW) bus at the Hall of Justice in Bacolod City.

Supreme Court Administrator Jose Midas Marquez said that after more than two hours on Friday, a total of 94 cases in the province were heard, 25 decisions were promulgated, and 69 cases were dismissed.

The commission has also asked Congress to redefine savings so it could use its unspent funds for the new programs.

Without the additional funds, the CHR in the National Expenditure Program has asked for P341.45 million (including Retirement and Life Insurance Premium), or down from its 2014 budget at P347.8 million.

Press Release: Ombudsman's order to dismiss Commissioner breaks impunity in Commission on Human Rights

Human Rights groups welcomed the unprecedented decision of the Ombudsman to order the dismissal of Commissioner Cecilia Rachel V. Quisumbing of the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) after "finding probable cause for Direct Bribery under Article 210 of the Revised Penal Code" and violating section 3(e) of Republic Acts (RA) 3019 and sec. 7 (d) of R.A. 6713. These findings and information would be filed with the Sandiganbayan. In its 27 years since established, this judgment is the first of its kind against a top officer of the CHR.

The findings highlighted elements of corruption and Quisumbing's obvious intent to be recipient of complainant Eugenio's salary differential by taking advantage of her functions and authority as CHR Commissioner"

In addition the complainants alleged that Quisumbing violated the dignity of some of her co-terminus staff by giving oppressive disciplinary actions, demeaning instructions and humiliating them in public. Sometimes, though office staff, they were doing chores more akin to a domestic helper or a family driver. These actions were said to have been brought to the attention of the CHR Chairperson and other Commissioners as early as 2010. No action to rectify the situation seemed to have been taken at that time. Violations continued and accumulated until some staff decided to file charges of corruption, unethical behavior and abuse of authority. [...]

The Philippine Alliance of Human Rights Advocates (PAHRA) sees the decision as a breakthrough against the impunity happening in the Commission on Human Rights. Max de Mesa, Chairperson of PAHRA, points out: "The decision implicitly indicts the leadership and other Commissioners of the CHR, for the delayed justice [...], despite the testimonies and evidences in their hands since last year."

Furthermore, "This shows the imperative to embed into the new Charter of the CHR the accountability mechanism for the Commissioners and the Directors," de Mesa added, "as well as having a more transparent and participative way of selecting the next Commissioners by the President."

The dismissal of Commissioner Quisumbing was based on her violating Section 7 (d) of RA no. 6713 on the Code of Ethics for government employees and also of Grave Misconduct. The Dismissal included "all its accessory penalties". This means "cancellation of eligibility", "forfeiture of retirement benefits" and "perpetual disqualification for re-employment in government service". [...]

HRonlineph.com 09 09 2014



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As to the mediation, of the 33 cases referred, five were successfully mediated, 13 cases were reset, and 12 cases are ongoing. Marquez said the EJOW is a program of the Supreme Court aimed to de-clog the courts and decongest the jails all over the country and to bring justice closer to the poor especially for those who have long been detained and have reached the maximum penalty of the offense they committed.

Sun.Star.com, 18.09.2014

Low budget allotment for WPP hit

By John Carlo Cahinhinan

A PARTY-LIST lawmaker has criticized the insufficient budgetary support being given to the government's Witness Protection Program (WPP) despite the many high profile cases pending at the Department of Justice (DOJ).

Abakada party-list Representative Jonathan de la Cruz said during the plenary deliberations for the proposed P3.5-billion budget of the Department of Justice that that P190.7 million allocation for the WPP next year could only cover two or three high profile cases being handled by the DOJ. [...]

Advertisement

Alvarez said the original budgetary request of the DOJ for its WPP was P219 million, but the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) approved only P190.7 million.

Dela Cruz has also expressed her disappointment after learning from [Negros Occidental Representative Mercedes] Alvarez that personnel assigned at the WPP do not have permanent employment status.

"Why is that the case? The WPP is a very critical program of the

Rappler.com, 22.09.2014

Aquino on judicial review: 'Healthy compromise' needed

MANILA, Philippines - Even in Europe, questions regarding constitutional change continued to follow President Benigno Aquino III.

In an open forum after his speech at AXIXA in Berlin organized with Koerber Stiftung and the Asia Pacific Association, Aquino was asked to clarify anew whether he wants to revise the Constitution to lift presidential term limits and review the role of the judiciary.

Aquino chose to focus his answer on judicial review, which he described as "one of the issues closest to my heart," and avoided the question on presidential term limits.

Aquino said he believes a "healthy compromise" is needed in the Supreme Court's exercise of judicial review, which Aquino has described as excessive.

"During our Martial Law period, whenever there were questions regarding the validity of imposing Martial Law, the court normally would say: that is a political question and they were not competent and not within their purview to decide or pass upon," Aquino said.

"The present Constitution that we have - the 1987 Constitution, has given the judiciary which is a separate branch from the executive and the legislative the authority and the obligation to examine grave abuses of discretion leading to low jurisdiction whatsoever. Now our issue is that this is a power that should be used in restraint, unfortunately it is used rather - it is used too much. Then it seems that we have swung from one end to the other extreme wherein before they didn't want to interfere whatsoever, now, it seems they feel compelled to interfere in anything and everything," he added.

The Philippine Star, 23.09.2014

PNP chief charged with plunder, graft

By Michael Punongbayan

MANILA, Philippines - Plunder, graft and direct bribery charges

For five years of the EJOW, about 8,000 prisoners were already released and 8,000 cases were also settled, he said. [...]

Marquez visited the BJMP district jail in the city and concluded that like any other jail in the country, it is also congested or overcrowded.

The BJMP in Bacolod, he said, has a 200-inmate capacity only but now it is overloaded with around 600 inmates.

government. I don't understand why we don't have plantilla positions (at the agency handling it)," said dela Cruz.

He also asked if these personnel are specifically trained to handle the WPP.

"WPP witnesses require protection in a manner deserving of witnesses in high profile cases," the party-list lawmaker stressed. Alvarez noted that there are 318 personnel assigned to the WPP, 247 of whom have contractual status while 71 are organic, meaning they belong to the different units of the DOJ. Of the 247 contractual personnel, 210 are assigned to security protection while the remaining 37 are doing administrative work. [...]

Alvarez said the Justice department has proposed for the amendment of the "The Witness Protection, Security and Benefit Act," and one of the proposals is to regularize the status of employees under the WPP.

Dela Cruz vowed to help in pushing for the immediate amendment of the law. [...]

The relationship between Aquino and the Supreme Court soured after the High Court declared 3 mechanisms under the administration-backed [Disbursement Acceleration Program \(DAP\)](#), a scheme meant to stimulate the economy, as unconstitutional.

Weeks after the decision, Aquino, in a television interview, said he was open to the idea of [revising the Constitution](#) to curb the powers of the SC and allow a 2nd presidential term.

In the House of Representatives, Aquino allies have started to reevaluate how the Judiciary Development Fund is being handled after the decision was handed down. Current proposals seek to transfer the safekeep of the fund to the National Treasury away from the SC if approved. However, hearings on JDF are currently suspended pending the resolution of the motion for reconsideration filed on DAP.

[Chief Justice Maria Lourdes Sereno](#), meanwhile, has kept her distance from the issue. Asked to react to the President's statements in a rare press conference last month, Sereno refused to engage in a word war with the President.

While Aquino acknowledged that the Supreme Court is presently working on judicial reforms, he said he wanted to ensure that the reach of the judicial branch would not go into "extreme."

"So what we are envisioning in this dialogue is to find that healthy compromise that gives them the power to provide the check and balance but doesn't tend itself to want to use of a power that is very, very strong and very powerful," he said.

The forum in Berlin is one of the many stops in [Aquino's recently concluded trip to Europe](#). He arrived in Boston Sunday morning, September 21.

have been filed with the Office of the Ombudsman against



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Philippine National Police (PNP) chief Director General Alan Purisima for his allegedly amassing ill-gotten wealth and receiving bribes for the construction of a mansion inside Camp Crame. The Coalition of Filipino Consumers (CFC) said it filed the complaints yesterday with the Office of the Ombudsman after Purisima failed or refused to release his statement of assets, liabilities and net worth (SALN) despite clamor from various groups and concerned citizens.

The filing of the complaints comes as the PNP is trying to shake off its image as a rogue organization due to the involvement of a number of its officials in criminal activities, including kidnapping and extortion.

Manila Bulletin, 28.09.2014

More solons oppose return of death penalty

Lawmakers strongly opposed yesterday the reimposition of death penalty, believing that it is not the antidote to the rising cases of crimes in the country.

Speaker Feliciano "Sonny" Belmonte Jr. said it "is not the answer to the rising incidence of crimes in the country."

"The reimposition of the capital punishment won't fly," he said after Iloilo City Rep. Jerry Trenas cited the need to revisit the Revised Penal Code and reimpose the Death Penalty Law following the increasing brutality of criminals who prey on the old and the weak.

The return of the death penalty was sought following the latest series of criminal activities, including the EDSA "hulidap" case involving police officers; the killing of a seven-year-old girl in Pandacan, Manila; the murder of a businesswoman in front of her husband two days ago, and the murder of the mother of

Rappler.com, 24.09.2014

Angry solon holds military budget over 'HR violations'

By Carmela Fonbuena

MANILA, Philippines - At 5:30 am on Wednesday, September 24, Gabriela Representative Luzviminda Ilagan, who was livid over the military's alleged human rights violations in Abra in early September, successfully deferred the second reading approval of the P144-billion (\$3.2-billion*) budget of the Department of National Defense (DND) and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP).

"Pending the compliance of the military to these two requests, I move to defer the approval of," Ilagan declared [...], but before she could finish her motion, presiding officer Quezon City Jorge "Bolet" Banal suspended the session, and later, the deliberations on the DND and AFP budget.

No help came for the defense and military officials, who were in full force at the plenary, to support Manila Representative Zenaida Angping in defending their budget. At 5:30 am, there were only about a dozen solons left - mostly members of the leftist Makabayan bloc - and the matter couldn't be put to a vote without a quorum.

Ilagan, who followed 5 other colleagues in the leftist Makabayan bloc in grilling the defense budget since deliberations started midnight Wednesday, detailed the alleged human rights violations of the military in the Cordillera Region.

She zoomed in on the death of a Recca Noelle Monte, who died in the early September military operation in Lacub town where troops allegedly used civilians as human shields as they pursued top New People's Army (NPA) officials.

The leftist lawmakers have always taken advantage of the budget hearings - perhaps the only opportunity to demand the military to explain reports of the troops' human rights abuses.

The military, for its part, has committed to immediately end the 4-decades-old communist insurgency so it can focus on territorial defense.

"It is my position that it is the responsibility of this House as part

CFC's Perfecto Jaime Tagalog said the indirect bribery charge stems from the PNP chief's alleged admission that he received money and construction materials from his Mason brothers for the construction of his official residence at Camp Crame. In the PNP, the structure is called the White House.

Purisima is also being accused of hiding the true value of his alleged Nueva Ecija mansion, which he claims to be worth only P3.7 million. [...]

Ready with answers

[...] "These are allegations and if there are charges filed, it will be answered in the proper forum," [PNP spokesman Chief Superintendent Reuben Theodore] Sindac said. [...]

actress Cherry Pie Picache.

Buhay party-list Rep. Lito Atienza said that reimposing the death penalty is not the solution to the breakdown in the country's peace and order situation. [...]

"The problem is the lack of effective and efficient law enforcement," he said. "Certainty of arrest is the best deterrent to crime."

Atienza and Cavite Rep. Elpidio "Pidi" Bargaza Jr. said that before thinking of re-imposing the death penalty, reforms in the country's judicial system should be first implemented.

"Even before we consider re-imposing the death penalty, we should think first of reforming our justice system. Because in the present system, only the poor or those who can't afford lawyers or to post bail, or who don't have money to bribe corrupt policemen, fiscals, and judges will get executed," Atienza said. [...]

of its power of the purse to ensure that the budget of DND will not be used to violate human rights and international humanitarian law. It is also about time that the DND and AFP take seriously the issues of human rights raised against the military establishment and not just brush them aside with sweeping denials and public avowals about a new AFP," she said.

The armed forces considers the operation conducted September 4 to 5 as a "major tactical victory" that supposedly caused a "setback to the ranks of the NPA."

The military reported a total of 8 NPA rebels killed, including high ranking rebel commanders operating in the region. [...]

Members of the 41st Infantry Battalion of the 5th Infantry Division received medals for the "successful campaign." The Gold Cross Medal was awarded to Second Lieutenant Joe Mari S Landicho, the head of the operating troops, and the Bronze Cross Medal to Lieutenant Colonel Rogelio Noora, Commanding Officer of 41st IB.

But an emotional Ilagan lambasted the military's celebration and presented in plenary the details of an autopsy report conducted by the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) on the death of Monte, one of those supposedly killed in combat in Lacub, Abra. The military maintained it was a legitimate combat operation. But the autopsy report that Ilagan read showed that Monte died from torture and sustained no gunshot wound.

"The family of the victim is crying for justice. The family had the body autopsied by the NBI and what does the report state? She had no gunshot wounds but she was full of marks of extreme physical torture, beatings using blunt objects," Ilagan said, and then read the horrific details in the autopsy report.

This was when Ilagan began to argue in favor of holding the DND and AFP budget. She made two demands:



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- For the Philippine Army to submit the report on the military operation conducted on September 4-5
- Bring Second Lieutenant Jose Mari Landicho, the head of the operating troops, and Lieutenant Colonel Ro-

gelio Noora, commanding officer of the 41st IB, to the plenary hall to explain the death of Rica Noel Monte. The DND and AFP officials are expected to return for another day of grilling on Friday, September 25.

CURRENT CASES OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

BicoIToday.com, 31.08.2014

New Extrajudicial Killings: BCPAI-Masbate chair, Bayan Muna-Baao (CamSur) farmer-coordinators gunned down

By Reynard Magtoto

CITY OF NAGA, Bicol Region — Two peasant leaders, involved in this week's coco levy protest activities, were shot dead within 24 hours in separate incidents. The victims were the Masbate chair of Bicol Coconut Planters Association, Inc. (BCPAI) and the Bayan Muna-Baao coordinator in Camarines Sur.

The two killings added again into the list of recorded extrajudicial killings in the Bicol Region under President Benigno Simeon Aquino III's watch, according to Human Rights report.

According to Karapatan-Bikol, two years left for BS Aquino's term and yet impunity is as faster as the motorcycle-riding gunmen firing their guns.

BCPAI-Masbate chair Vicente Hugo was shot down along the road of Brgy. Del Rosario, Uson in Masbate midnight of August 25. Hugo was also the barangay captain in Arado, Uson, who wanted to resolve the case of land ownership of barangay site against the Kho political clan.

According to Murphy of Masbate People's Organization, Hugo was supposed to be present in the national consultation [...] in

Guinubatan, Albay on August 27-28.

The said event highlighted issues surrounding small coconut farmers like the privatization of coco levy-acquired assets, the coco levy fund recovery and the coco-lisap infestation. His death became an additional report of grievances to the national council of Kilusang Mangbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP).

The following day at 11:30 noon, Bayan Muna-Baao coordinator Librado Adoptante Jr. was shot three times in Baao, Camarines Sur, by two unidentified hooded gunmen riding in motorcycle.

According to Camarines Sur Ecumenical Movement for Justice and Peace (CSEMJP) report, Adoptante Jr. was passing by Brgy. San Vicente, Baao on his way home after visiting Dr. Robosa Hospital when the armed men intercepted and shot him at the left chest side and two shots at the head.

The assailants were suspected as military men. Since 2006, the Army's 42nd IBPA and CAGFU men had monitored and visited the Adoptante family. The last visit at his home by the military was last December 2013. They suspected Librado as NPA member.

HRonlineph.com, 01.09.2014

Teens exposed to hazardous work in Surigao mining firm -CTUHR

Exposed to many dangers posed by heavy physical tasks, toxics from metal ores and unsafe transfers to and from a barge stationed in the middle of the sea, "Jodel" (not his real name), 15, together with five other teenagers work most of the day in a mining company in Surigao del Sur, Center for Trade Union and Human Rights (CTUHR) correspondents in CARAGA region reported this August.

As a barge operator in Clarence Ty Pimentel Sr. Construction and Mining Corporation (CTP-CMC), Jodel, and his co-workers lift a 500-kg waterproof tarpaulin to cover a barge loaded with nickel ores. Such task in itself is physically-demanding and can cause serious physical strain to young bodies. Moreover, risks and hazards are increased as no protective equipment, not even life-jackets, are provided by the company in case of sea accidents. Jodel and other barge operators also face regular danger as they cross the sea using only a tiny boat to get to the mineral-filled barge in the middle of the sea from the pier.

Other than the measly wage of P268, Jodel and his co-workers in CTP-CMC, do not receive other benefits nor any form of security in case of an accident. Worse still, a percentage of their earnings reportedly go to their subcontractor, Charlita Cabadonga, who is

also the village chief of Adlay, Carrascal Surigao del Sur. Cabadonga also discourages the child workers to participate in and join a union.

CTP-CMC was founded by Clarence Ty Pimentel Sr. in 2006 and currently employs 2,000 workers. It has 12 subcontractors mostly headed by the proprietors' son, Mr. Clarence Ty Pimentel Jr.

Meanwhile, CTUHR slammed the continuing exposure of children below 18 years old to hazardous work especially in highly lucrative industries like mining and plantations. According to the group, low-wages, contractualization, and lack of livelihood for families are persisting problems in mining and plantation areas pushing children to work even in hazardous and difficult jobs to augment family incomes.

In 2012, CTUHR's study, Children of the Sunshine Industry, revealed that one out of four workers in palm oil plantations in CARAGA region are children below 18 years old. Currently, CTUHR is also a partner of the Ecumenical Institute for Labor Education Research (EILER) in the Bata-Balik Eskwela, a project funded by the European Union, which aims to bring child laborers to school through alternative schooling, livelihood, and public advocacy.

Asian Human Rights Commission – Urgent Appeals Programme, 08.09.2014

PHILIPPINES: Two activists killed for opposing mining and banana plantations

CASE DETAILS: (Based on the documentation by Alliance for the Advancement of Peoples Rights (KARAPATAN) and Citizens Alliance Unified for Sectoral Empowerment - Davao del Sur (CAUSE))

CASE 1: Activist opposing mining operation killed in front of his wife

On 7 May 2014, at 7pm Ernel Wata Taduyan (35) was shot in the feet in their residence at Kiblatong village, Davao del Sur. [...] According to Rubelinda [his wife] the perpetrators were six armed men allegedly from elements of the 73rd Infantry Battal-

ion, Philippine Army under Lt. Col. Patricio Amata. Ernel was inside his house when he was shot. His wife begged the soldiers not to kill her husband. She could not see their faces clearly because it was dark due to a power interruption. Ernel implored his wife to take care of their three children before going into the children's room. He sustained wounds in different parts of his body that caused his death. Investigators recovered 43 empty M16 shells. After the incident, Ernel's family worried and feared for their lives, yet his wife still wants to continue



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advocacy for her husband. According to neighbours and relatives, men in motorcycles were seldom seen in the community. However, there were some persons pretending to buy goods in the local stores while inquiring about Rubelinda's whereabouts. Ernel's relatives were also harassed after his death. They were told that they would be killed next. After Ernel was buried, suspected intelligence agents and elements of 73rd IBPA were continuously looking for Rubelinda and her family to "negotiate." On May 8, 2014, Rubelinda had accused them publicly, thru TV Patrol Mindanao, as perpetrators of her husband's death. The commanding officer of 73rd IBPA denied the incident and said that they only conducted *Oplan Bayanihan*, an anti-insurgency program of the government, on the basis of respect for human rights. According to Rubelinda, in April 2014, she and Ernel were accused of being supporters of the New People's Army (NPA). They were warned by three military of the 73rd IBPA and told to stop supporting the rebels. If they did not comply, they would be listed in the "Order of the Battle", list of individuals by the security forces usually targeted for extrajudicial killings. Rubelinda denied the accusation. Rubelinda believes they were targeted and harassed to stop them from participating in the campaign against the Anti-Coal Fired Power Plant (CFPP) and mining in Malita. The couple are members of Church People's Advocacy for the Integrity of God's Creation-Malita Chapter (CPAIGC-Malita Chapter). This is a network of CAUSE-DS, active on environmental issues like CFPP and mining that are destructive to the ancestral lands and environment of the indigenous people like the Taga-Kaulo tribes. The network continues facilitating discussions in the village regarding the imminent environmental threat from CFPP of the San Miguel Corporation. This business is owned by Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco who has started construction work in

Sun.Star Davao, 11.09.2014

Eastmincom hit for alleged harassment

By Ruji Peter S. Abat

THE Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU)-Southern Mindanao lambasted the Eastern Mindanao Command (EastMinCom) for its alleged harassment on union leaders and members. KMU-Southern Mindanao secretary general Romualdo Basilio, in an email to Sun.Star Davao, blasted the army's counter-insurgency program *Oplan Bayanihan* citing various cases where union leaders and members were allegedly abused. "The most recent case involved Rogelio Cañabano, vice-president of Bigkis ng Nagkakaisa ng Manggagawang Apex Mines (BINA-ADLO-KMU) who was hounded by soldiers belonging to the 71st Infantry Battalion (71st IB) at his own home in Brgy. Kinuban, Maco, Compostela Valley on September 9, around 6:30 p.m. This was the fourth time that soldiers barged inside his home to interrogate him about his union leadership, details of union activities, list of all union members and identification of all ADLO-KMU organizers in the area. The soldiers also took pictures of him and his house. The first instance was on August 7. Cañabano filed a blotter report in Maco on August 13. On August 25 and 26, soldiers again went to his home and

Press Statement – Karapatan, 18.09.2014

Karapatan demands pullout of troops in Abra and Agusan del Sur

"As it is, life is already hard for indigenous peoples defending their ancestral lands from mining companies and other government projects [...]" Cristina Palabay, secretary general of Karapatan said. The human rights group called for the immediate pull out of

Barangay Colaman, Malita, Davao del Sur even though there is remaining opposition. In one of his business conferences, President Aquino promised the corporations that they can operate without impediment. And the government will pay any operational losses. It has 26 ongoing mining applications in Malita, Don Marcelino and Jose Abad Santos in Davao del Sur. In 2011, there were three documented extrajudicial killings in Malita: Tano Palacay, Zaldy Calibay and Dioquino Squadro all perpetrated by elements of the 39th and 73rd IBPA. CASE 2: An indigenous man shot dead for opposing incursion of a banana plantation on his ancestral lands. On the evening of 20 May 2014, neighbors noticed suspicious-looking people roaming around and looking at the residence of Tony Bago and his family at Sitio Kibarot, Lagumit village, Malita, Davao Occidental. The next day at 9am, Jun-jun Bago, nephew of Tony Bago said that two men in a motorcycle went to Tony's house. Tony and his nephew were going to buy fish when the two men stopped them. The men were wearing balaclavas and riding a yellow XR Honda motorcycle without any license plates. According to Jun-jun, his uncle assumed that the two men wanted to buy fish. The men stopped and asked Tony if he knew the person in the photo. The men also asked him if he knew Tony Bago. He answered I am sir (Ako Sir). Right after he answered the man took his gun out and shot Tony in the neck and his right arm. Tony shouted at his nephew to run while the two perpetrators rode off in the direction of Don Marcelino, Davao Occidental. According to the police investigation a .45 caliber gun was used in the shooting. Tony Bago actively struggled to defend his ancestral lands and strongly opposed the entry of the banana plantation of Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco. Overall, about 300 hectares of ancestral lands will be affected by the large-scale mining in Malita and the neighboring municipalities.

interrogated him about his involvement in the union," Basilio said. He also cited the case involving a union bloc of the Musahamat Farm Inc. wherein troops of the 72nd IB allegedly interrogated union members regarding the torching of the farm's equipment on August 23. "The union officers were astonished to find military personnel in the office instead, who asked them questions about the torching incident and took their pictures using planted tarpaulins and reading materials associated with the underground communist movement," Basilio said. In view of Basilio's statement, KMU-Southern Mindanao has conducted a picket outside the EastMinCom headquarters in Panacan. "Harassment and threats are counter-insurgency techniques designed to diminish dissent in trade unions, where the right to protest against unfair working conditions and all manner of oppression is visibly exercised. This is a violation of the workers' right to organize and freedom of association," Basilio said.

military troops in La Paz, Agusan del Sur and in Lacub, Abra as it received reports of forced evacuation, grave coercion, disruption of classes and other human rights violations due to military operations of the 26th and 41st Infantry Battalion Philippine Army. [...]



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Evacuation in Agusan del Sur

In Brgy. Lydia, La Paz, Agusan del Sur, over 450 Manobo evacuees, half of them minors, were surrounded by more than 30 battle-ready soldiers of the 26th IBPA on September 10. The evacuees left their homes after the military intensified its operation in the Lumad communities, believed to be a move to clear the area for mining operation of Makilala and Malampay mining companies.

These companies, through the Bagani Force, were coercing the community members to sign a memorandum of agreement since 2013 for the entry of said mining companies. But, the Manobo refused.

Last August 9, the 26th IBPA with the paramilitary group Bagani Force conducted an operation in the community. They threatened to massacre the entire community of Mintake-i, including the teachers of the literacy-numeracy learning center administered by Rural Missionaries of the Philippines-Northern Mindanao Region (RMP-NMR). As a result, Mintake-i residents left their homes and went to the forests to avoid the AFP troops and Bagani Forces.

The RMP-NMR reported that on August 12, 2014, days after the evacuation, a group of five Lumad, with three minors who were students of the RMP-NMR school, roamed around the forest to look for food. The military shot at the group, who fortunately were able to escape.

As military operations intensified, more community members evacuated. As of August 29, 2014, 118 families from six communities [...] converged at the barangay proper of Lydia to seek refuge. [...]

Even the classes of RMP-NMR learning centers were disrupted affecting 75 children. The schools in Mintake-i, Libon, and Liwangwangan were tagged by the military as NPA schools,

making them targets of military operation.

Use of civilians as shields in military operation

Similar military operation is on-going in Lacub, Abra that has resulted in the extrajudicial killing of Noel Viste on September 5, the use of some 24 Tingguian indigenous people as human shields during combat operation, indiscriminate firing leading to the evacuation of some six families and the suspension of classes in some of the affected barangays.

In September 12, Cordillera Human Rights Alliance called for the immediate cessation of military operations in Lacub, Abra.

Noel Vista of Bgy. Poblacion was **killed** after he was taken by said soldiers. Nicasio Asbucan was **forced to guide** the soldiers and was detained from September 5-7. Asbucan showed signs of acute stress disorder when the soldiers turned him over to Chief of Police of Lacub on September 7. The AFP coerced him to name Jay-ar Balaoag, Brgy. Capt. Of Lan-ag, Lacub as the NPA who fired and killed Noel Viste.

Also on Sept. 5, between 9:00-10:00 p.m., army personnel of the 41st IBPA in Sitio Bantugo, Poblacion, Lacub **indiscriminately fired** their weapons. [...]

Bantugo Elementary and High School and Our Lady of Guadalupe High School suspended classes from September 5 to 8. The residents of Talampak agreed not to let their children attend school in Bantugo until the detachment is removed. The soldiers remained, despite the communities' opposition.

"The victims are those who sweat on their fields to live. They built their own schools because the government cannot provide for them. The government failed to serve them and the only known government presence is through the military that harass, coerce, kill, and abduct people and bomb communities. These same communities are victimized during martial law and continue to this day," Palabay ended.

InterAksyon.com, 19.09.2014

Right groups demand freedom for ailing political prisoners as Bililbid detainee dies

MANILA, Philippines -- Groups advocating freedom for the country's political prisoners called on government Friday to release ailing prisoners after a detainee of the New Bililbid Prison in Muntinlupa City died of a lingering illness at the jail hospital.

The *Samahan ng Ex-Detainees Laban sa Detensyon at Aresto and Hustisya* said Benny Barid, an inmate of the maximum security compound, died 11 a.m. Thursday at the NBP Hospital, where he had been confined for the past three years.

They said Barid had been suffering from "chronic asthmatic bronchitis with emphysema" and could no longer walk, adding that fellow political prisoners were the ones who sought ways to get him the medicines he needed.

Barid's death came a year after political prisoner Alison Alcantara, 55, died of pneumonia, sepsis and fatal arrhythmia at the Philippine General Hospital, where the two organizations said he was rushed "only after he fell into a coma at the NBP Hospital."

SELDA and *Hustisya* said that 53 of the 504 political prisoners in the country are ailing.

"We dare (President Benigno III) Aquino to immediately release

ailing political prisoners on humanitarian grounds," SELDA spokesman Roneo Clamor said in a statement.

"The poor and inadequate health services that the government provides endanger the lives of the relatively more vulnerable sick and elderly political prisoners. The meager budget allotted to prison inmates makes jails and detention facilities barely habitable, unsafe and hazardous to the health and general well-being of prisoners. Keeping the sick and elderly political prisoners longer in prison leads to serious health complications that could be life-threatening," he added.

SELDA and *Hustisya* said Barid had been a subject of constant harassment by the government. He was already a political prisoner during the Marcos dictatorship until he was granted amnesty by then President Corazon Aquino.

In 2004, he was again arrested on subversion and illegal firearms possession charges. Although these were dismissed, his lawyer was murdered. The next year, the military raided his house and detained him for allegedly keeping weapons.

The last time he was arrested was in 2006, when, according to the groups, "his child was allegedly hostages by the military to force him to surrender."

Sun.Star Cagayan de Oro, 25.09.2014

Lumad groups, NGOs demand justice for slain tribal leader

By Jigger J. Jerusalem

SEVERAL tribal groups and nongovernment organizations have taken a unified stand in calling for the speedy investigation of the suspects responsible for the September 13 killing of Cagayan de Oro Higaanon tribal leader Fausto Orasan.

Orasan, 64, who was also popularly known as Datu Sandigan, was shot to death at Sitio Cabalang, Barangay Tuburan, while on his way home to Barangay Pigsag-an.

City Local Environment and Natural Resources Office (Clenro) chief Edwin Dael said Orasan's slaying could be due to his staunch stand against illegal mining and logging activities in the city's hinterland villages.

Dael said he (Orasan) was also an advocate of the eco-tourism project being undertaken by the city government with the participation of the local tribal communities headed by Orasan.



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Investigators at Lumbia police said recently they have already identified two persons who they suspect as Orasan's assailants.

Inspired

In a statement sent to this paper, the groups said Orasan's death has not deterred them and has even inspired them from fighting for their cause as indigenous peoples, particularly on issues affecting their existence such as environmental degradation and ancestral domain.

"We, the leaders of the indigenous peoples' communities of the Higaunon and Subanen tribes gathered in Iligan City, call on the Government of the Philippines, specifically the Commission on Human Rights (CHR), the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), the Philippine National Police (PNP) and the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) to investigate this murder and ensure that justice will be done in the killing of [Datu

Sandigan] and perpetrators be brought to justice," the group said in the statement.

"Even though the Higaunons are peace-loving people, our lives are being threatened and so we are ready to assert and defend our rights against all those who want to destroy our lands and desecrate nature," said Datu Diamba Rolando Soong of the Higaunon Tribal Council of Iligan City, in the statement. [...]

In this time when the indigenous peoples and the majority of the Filipinos are still facing massive corruption, the collusion of police officers with criminals and the failure of the State to protect those who dedicate their life for the cause of human rights and the environment: "We demand that all responsible government agencies will fulfill their duties to prove to us that the State is still working for the rights and welfare of its citizens." [...]

DavaoToday.com, 29.09.2014

Activist shot after anti-pork forum in Tagum City

DAVAO CITY – A peasant organizer was shot by unidentified gunmen right after a forum on the people's initiative against "pork barrel" in Tagum City.

Dexter Ian Celebrado, 29 years old has just attended the Inter-Provincial Forum on the People's Initiative to Abolish Pork Barrel when he was shot by still unidentified assailants at around 4:30 PM today.

Police Inspector Janet Tirador, chief investigator of the Tagum City Police Office, said Celebrado was shot by gunmen riding a red Honda TMX motorcycle and sustained "non-fatal" wounds. Celebrado's companion reported that he was hit in his upper pelvic area and nape and that he is now recovering from the incident.

According to Hanimay Suazo of human rights group Karapatan Southern Mindanao, some of the participants of the forum have

earlier monitored suspicious men who followed Librando when he left the forum venue at the Tagum City Cultural and Trade Center Pavilion.

The forum also served as the launching of the People's Initiative in the province of Davao del Norte initiated by the Makabayan Coalition and attended by Bayan Muna Partylist Congressman Carlos Zarate.

Celebrado is a community organizer for the militant farmer's organization Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP). The victim was active in the campaign against militarization of peasant and lumad communities in the province.

"We condemn in the strongest possible term this fascist act against activist," said Sheena Duazo regional spokesperson of Bagong Alyansang Makabayan.

UPDATES ON CASES OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

Manilatimes.net, 12.09.2014

DOJ orders NBI to probe Dagupan radioman shooting

By Jomar Canlas

JUSTICE Secretary Leila De Lima on Friday ordered the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) to probe the shooting of Orlando "Orly" Navarro, president of the Pangasinan Press Club and station manager of DWIZ FM Music and News Radio Dagupan. Navarro had earlier asked De Lima to investigate Dagupan Mayor Belen Fernandez, whom the broadcaster tagged as one of the possible suspects in the crime.

In a one-page memorandum to Director Virgilio Mendez, De Lima gave the NBI 15 days to submit an initial report on the incident.

De Lima wanted the assassins and the mastermind to be unmasked and file the necessary charges before the courts of law.

"In light of the foregoing, and pursuant to this department's continuing commitment to eradicate media killings and other forms of violence and threats to the security and life of media practitioners, the [NBI] is hereby directed to immediately conduct a thorough investigation into the alleged incident, towards identifying the perpetrators, including the masterminds, if any, behind said attack and filing appropriate charges," De Lima's memorandum stated.

Navarro on Thursday wrote De Lima asking for the investiga-

tion of Fernandez, her ally Marlon Quebral, Dagupan Chief of Police Christopher Abrahano, former Pangasinan Provincial Director Marlon Chan and former Criminal Investigation and Detection Group in Pangasinan head Freddie Laoyan.

Navarro said that he was criticizing Fernandez's administration and he included the mayor's name in the affidavit he submitted to the DOJ so that authorities will have a lead in the conduct of their probe.

Navarro was wounded at the back of his left shoulder when a still unidentified gunman shot him on August 26 in Dagupan City.

Meanwhile, Fernandez welcomed any investigation on her involvement in the failed attempt on the life of Navarro.

"As expected, Mr. Navarro has somehow managed to find a way to link my name to this crime, and even went as far as urging Justice Secretary Leila De Lima to investigate me. I welcome any and all investigations, Madame Secretary, and I assure you of my full cooperation. The sooner it is established how ridiculous this allegation is, the sooner I will be able to concentrate on my duties to serve the city," said Fernandez in a statement emailed to The Manila Times. [...]

Sun.Star Cebu, 17.09.2014

'No conspiracy' in lawyer's death, says police official

A POLICE officer accused of killing lawyer Nestor Archival asked a state prosecutor to reconsider the resolution indicting him, along with two others.

Senior Insp. Joselito Lerion, through his lawyer Inocencio dela

Cerna, filed a motion for reconsideration seeking reversal of Acting Provincial Prosecutor Jesus Rodrigo Taga-an's resolution, arguing that there was no evidence to establish a conspiracy.

"For this office to rule the existence of motive by the sheer fact



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that numerous cases were filed by the late Atty. Archival against HPG 7, if not baseless, is bereft of any precedence in law," read Lerion's motion.

Dela Cerna said they are also asking Taga-an to inhibit from the case after the respondents felt "attacked" in his resolution.

In his 37-page resolution dated Aug. 28, Prosecutor Taga-an found enough evidence to charge Lerion, Senior Supt. Romualdo Iglesia, and PO1 Alex Bacani with multiple murder and frustrated murder.

Iglesia and Bacani also filed their motions seeking reconsideration of their indictment.

Taga-an, in his resolution, said the respondents "conspired" to murder Archival, aide Candido Miñoza and his driver Alejandro Jayme in Barangay Coro, Dalaguete last Feb. 18.

On the other hand, Taga-an dismissed the complaint against Chief Insp. Eduardo Mara, the former HPG provincial chief, and SPO4 Edwin Galan.

In the motion, dela Cerna said that the closed circuit television videos failed to establish the vehicles used to ambush the victims.

Dela Cerna said that log book entries did not prove that the impounded vehicles were the same vehicles used to carry out

the crime.

Making such conclusion without concrete proof would be "purely innuendo, speculative and born out of an imaginative mind."

Dela Cerna also questioned the prosecutor's conclusion giving credence to the theory that HPG 7 officials are using impounded vehicles for their "nefarious activities" by interchanging plate numbers of the seized vehicles.

Making such speculation without proof would "seriously cast doubt as to the partiality, integrity and neutrality" of the prosecutor's office to rule on the case.

Dela Cerna also said there was no evidence to prove the policemen ambushed the victims in retaliation to Archival's filing of extortion charges against the HPG 7.

"If we will follow this line of thinking, it will create a dangerous precedent wherein law enforcers will be the primary suspects if transgressors of the law and their representatives meet their untimely death."

The defense also asked Taga-an to inhibit from hearing their motion.

The motion also sought the dismissal of the complaint for "insufficiency of evidence."

Inquirer Mindanao, 18.09.2014

Arrest warrant out for gunman in killing of Davao Norte radioman

By Frinston Lim

TAGUM CITY, Davao del Norte, Philippines—A regional trial court judge here has issued an arrest warrant against the suspect in the December 2013 slaying of radio block timer Rogelio "Tata" Butalid, police authorities confirmed on Thursday.

Lawmen have launched a manhunt for a certain Renster Azarcon after Judge Virginia Tejano-Ang of the 11th Regional Trial Court Branch 1 issued the warrant for his immediate arrest last Wednesday, said Chief Insp. Francis Sonza, head of the police's Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) in Davao del Norte.

Sonza said his office was also conducting a background check on Azarcon, including the suspect's alleged links to influential individuals in the region.

"We're prioritizing the manhunt against Azarcon in order to solve as soon as possible the killing of (Butalid)...Part of that efforts, we would also be updating our "Most Wanted" list and probably put him on the top three," Sonza said in an interview over Tagum radio DXKS.

The 44-year-old Butalid was leaving Radyo Natin station along Sobrecarey St. in Magugpo Poblacion village shortly after his 9 a.m. program when shot several times by a lone gunman with a cal. 45 pistol.

Butalid was host of "Ang Kamatuoran" (The Truth), an hour-long program paid for by the National Electrification Administration-controlled faction of the Davao del Norte Electric Coop. (Daneco), which has been embroiled in a bitter dispute with rival faction allied with the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA).

[...] A special investigation task group formed by the Philippine National Police has suspected politics to be one of the motives of the radioman's killing as Butalid was just six months into his last term as councilman in Barangay (village) Mankilam.

Sonza said they have been checking on reports the suspect could

still be in Southern Mindanao, although he declined to provide details.

Following the creation of the Task Group Butalid, police were able to get hold of a witness who identified Azarcon as the man who repeatedly shot the broadcaster-politician. [...]

Hours after the Dec. 12 murder, Mayor Allan Rellon set aside P100,000 from his own money as bounty for the identification and arrest of the suspect or suspects. This pot soon grew and now stands at P600,000.

As this developed, the NUJP [National Union of Journalists of the Philippines] said a colleague of the slain Maramag, Bukidnon broadcaster Joas Dignos has received threatening text messages after reporting on an anti-illegal drugs operation conducted by the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) in Kalilangan, also in Bukidnon.

JB Deveza, NUJP media safety coordinator, said Mars Downyben Medina, program director of Radyo Abante-Maramag, claimed he began receiving threats to his life after the arrest of five suspects and the seizure of about P7 million worth of shabu in Kalilangan on Sept. 12.

Medina anchors the daily early morning news program of Radyo Abante. He also hosts a block time program of the provincial government aired every Wednesdays over four radio stations in Bukidnon.

Medina said the text messages specifically referred to the September 12 drug bust. The sender, he said, had warned him that supposed drug lords were after him for reporting on the arrests.

At about the same time, Deveza said a policeman who has been AWOL (absent without leave) also visited Medina at the station and tried to convince him to stop reporting on illegal gambling.

He said the policeman offered the broadcaster money in exchange for the station's silence on illegal gambling operations in the province.

Inquirer.net, 18.09.2014

2 alleged gunmen in killing of Pangasinan town mayor arrested

By Julliane Love De Jesus

MANILA, Philippines — Two alleged killers of a town mayor in Pangasinan were arrested before dawn Thursday in Sta. Rosa, Laguna province, a police official confirmed.

Superintendent Pergentino Malabed, Sta. Rosa chief of police, told INQUIRER.net in a phone interview that the unidentified gunmen were arrested during an operation by the Criminal



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Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) on a fighting cock farm in Barangay (village) Macablang. Six were brought to the police station, including a female around 4 a.m. Thursday but Mabaled said only two were identified as Urbiztondo Mayor Ernesto Balolong Jr.'s assailants.

Sun.Star Cagayan de Oro, 19.09.2014

Lumad acquitted of harassment raps vs. NBI, police

By Mario C. Manlupig Jr.

AFTER over three years in trial, the harassment charges hurled by the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) and some local police officers against a Higaonon tribe member in Opol town, Misamis Oriental had been dismissed, proving the defendant's innocence.

Due to lack of sufficient evidence, Judge Michelia Capadocia of the Opol Municipal Trial Court favored Edwin Baranggot last Tuesday in her decision acquitting him from direct assault allegations of some law enforcers.

The NBI and some police officers who escorted the security guards of a plantation firm in Opol alleged Baranggot of attacking them on March 10, 2011. [...]

Baranggot, Higaonon member of "Pangalasag" (Indigenous shield), however, said it was the security guards of A. Brown Company Inc. (ABCI) and authorities who "harassed and terrorized" him.

Pangalasag is a community-based indigenous organization resisting oil palm plantation expansion of A. Brown in Opol.

In a statement sent through email by the civil society group Kalumbay on Wednesday morning, it said seven Higaonon members were about to cut down some bamboo trees within the ranch owned by the Paras family when guards from the ABCI prevented them from doing so.

The statement added that the Lumads decided to go another way.

"An hour later, armed men followed them. The men, who said they were from NBI suddenly fired at them. Baranggot was beaten up, threatened and illegally detained at the Opol Police Station," it added.

According to Jomorito Goaynon, chair of Kalumbay-Northern Mindanao, Baranggot's companions were able to escape.

Mindanews, 26.09.201

1,500 Moro massacre victims during Martial Law honored

GENERAL SANTOS CITY- The national government has finally recognized around 1,500 Moro residents of a village in Palimbang town in Sultan Kudarat province who were killed in a massacre 40 years ago as martial law victims.

Commission on Human Rights (CHR) Chairperson Loretta Ann Rosales personally gave the recognition on Thursday to the victims' families in line with the 40th year commemoration of the infamous September 24, 1974 Malisbong Massacre.

She personally met with some of the survivors and relatives of the victims in a visit at a mosque in Barangay Malisbong in Palimbang town where the massacre happened. [...]

The CHR chief was referring to the enlistment or inclusion of the survivors and the families of the massacre victims as among the claimants of the P10-billion fund that was set aside by the government for the monetary remuneration of human rights victims during the martial law regime of the late President Ferdinand Marcos.

Such move was provided for in Republic Act 10368, or the Human Rights Victims Reparation and Recognition Act of 2013, a law recognizing and providing reparation to victims of human rights violations during Martial Law.

CHR personnel facilitated the filing of the claims with the Human Rights Victims' Claims Board of the Malisbong Massacre victims. [...]

Killed in the shooting were Balolong and his police security detail, Police Officer 1 Eliseo Ulanday, and supermarket electrician, Edmund Meneses. [...]

Malabed said the men will be turned over to the CIDG headquarters in Camp Crame on Thursday.

Goaynon said Baranggot was later transferred to the region's NBI office in Cagayan de Oro where he was charged with direct assault.

Baranggot is a staunch supporter to end operations of the ABCI plantations on the lands where Higaonons till for banana, coconut and other crops.

The ABCI has been buying lands in the area from the local government where they plant oil-producing palm trees.

Goaynon said they welcome the decision of the court, adding Baranggot is somehow relieved and happy of its decision.

However, Goaynon said they would not stop to advance their real cause -- to win back the ancestral domain that is due to the indigenous people. [...]

He added: "This is just timely given that the court proceedings have far outstretched the Pangalasag members' financial resources, considering that most of them have been forced out of their farms [...]"

Elusive justice

Meanwhile, two years after his brutal death, justice for Gilbert Paborada, former chair of Pangalasag, still remains elusive.

On October 3, 2012, Paborada was shot eight times in different portions of his body at a close range while on board a motorcycle in Barangay Puntod, Cagayan de Oro.

Paborada's wife Daisy told Sun.Star Cagayan de Oro in a previous interview of her dismay over the elusive justice on the death of her husband.

Daisy strongly believed Paborada's demise was hugely related to land dispute.

She appealed to authorities for the re-investigation of his husband's demise as suspects remain unidentified until today.



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lost their sanity due to grave torture during interrogations," it said.

Based on the group's estimates, around 1,500 male Moros aged 11 to 70-years old were massacred inside the Malisbong mosque

MAGUINDANAO MASSACRE

Sun.Star Cagayan de Oro, 19.09.2014

Media ban on Ampatuan massacre questioned

THE National Union of Journalists of the Philippines (NUJP) has questioned the decision of Quezon City Regional Trial Court to ban media from covering the proceedings of the Ampatuan Massacre case on Wednesday.

In a statement, the NUJP said Mike Frialde of The Philippine Star, Evan Orias of Malaya, and Ces Drilon of ABS-CBN were barred from covering the case proceedings.

"NUJP is baffled after receiving reports from colleagues who were refused entry into the makeshift court inside the Quezon City Jail Annex in Camp Bagong Diwa this morning, September 17, where trial for the 196 accused in the Ampatuan Massacre case is being held," the statement said.

The Defense panel was supposed to present its first witness for the hearing of the bail petitions filed by the accused, it added.

Citing Frialde's account as published Wednesday in www.philstar.com, the NUJP said Frialde and Orias were stopped by a certain PO3 Marlon Buenaflor from entering the main gate of Camp Bagong Diwa [...].

"The two reporters proceeded to the jail annex after Frialde confirmed with Inspector Aris Villaester, public information officer of the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology-National Capital Region that they could cover. But Buenaflor followed them, insisted they could not proceed, and told them to leave," the statement said.

Drilon shared a similar experience on Twitter. [...]

PEACE PROCESS

Sun.Star, 01.09.2014

Bill proposes to include Moro history in college curriculum

By John Carlo Cahinhinan

A LAWMAKER has proposed the inclusion of Moro history, culture and identity as an elective in the higher education curriculum.

House Deputy Speaker Pangilian Balindong (Lanao del Sur, 2nd district) said House Bill 4832 mandates all tertiary educational institutions to offer Moro history, culture and identity as an elective subject, highlighting the positive relations among the tripeoples, especially between Muslims and Christians, including shared origins and other points of commonality.

Balindong said history deals with the issues of ethnicity and respect that are brought to the fore in those situations of minority and majority relationships.

"The mandatory study should include an understanding of what is called the Moro problem, which is the historical and systematic marginalization and minoritization of the Islamized ethnolinguistic groups, arguably constituting a Moro nation which is the Bangsamoro, in their own homeland in the Mindanao islands, first by colonial powers Spain, then the United States of America, and more recently by successor Philippine government, dominated by an elite having a Christian-Western orientation," Balindong said.

"While Filipino and Muslim cultures may have differences, it is a fact that they are bound by a common heritage, the land they

while some 300 houses were destroyed and burned by government forces.

The massacre occurred two years after the declaration of martial law.

NUJP said that when Drilon inquired with BJMP, the agency told her that the courtroom was too full to accommodate the press.

Drilon's tweet added this incident happened days after she did a story on the alleged smuggling of guns, money, and mobile phones into the jail facility by the Ampatuans. [...]

NUJP noted that media outfits and organizations had been allowed to cover the case proceedings provided they use no cameras and recording devices.

"The sudden change in policy this morning is surprising, to say the least," it said.

NUJP learned from the Quezon City Regional Trial Court that the witness presented Wednesday was the 14-year-old daughter of former ARMM governor Zaldy Ampatuan, and that the court barred coverage because she is a minor.

Section 22 of the Rules on Examination of a Child Witness gives the court the prerogative to exclude "all persons, including members of the press, who do not have a direct interest in the case," when minors are presented to the witness stand. [...]

"Was today's incident a mere lapse in communication among the Court, the police, and the BJMP? Especially with the recent exposés and attempts to abort the delivery of justice for our colleagues and their families, we could only hope it is," the [NUJP] statement concluded.

call Philippines, and they have a lot in common, on top of which, is the clamor for peace," Balindong said.

The lawmaker said that the past relations and understandings of the other greatly influence the relations of today. [...]

"The only concern is making this a mandatory elective because the new general education curriculum would have to be revised if we require this mandatory, meaning we have to go through the process of consultation again," Sangalang said.

ALCU executive director Dr. Dalisay Brawner said that Moro culture is equally important with other major cultures such as where the institutions are located.

"On a personal and professional level, my recommendation is that we leave it to the educational institutions because at any rate there is a window for at least three elective subjects in our new CHED curriculum and in order not to jeopardize the importance of other major cultures in the country," Brawner said.

Under the measure, the agencies concerned shall consult recognized experts on Moro History, culture and identity as well as recognized resource persons on the Mindanao peace process and Muslim-Christian dialogue in the formulation and creation of the Moro History, Culture and Identity Course, including the writing, printing and publication of textbooks and other reading materials.

Inquirer Mindanao, 18.09.2014

MILF forms political party for envisioned Bangsamoro elections

DAVAO CITY, Philippines - The political party that the Moro Islamic Liberation Front has put up so it could field candidates

in the anticipated elections in the future Bangsamoro autonomous entity is now functional.



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Ghadzali Jaafar, MILF political affairs chief, said on Thursday that for the MILF, the final struggle for the Moro peoples' fight for autonomy and right to self-determination meant they have to join the mainstream by participating in the envisioned election in the new political jurisdiction.

Even before the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro was signed by both parties earlier in 2014, the MILF's Central Committee has already called for a meeting to discuss the direction of the political and electoral struggle, Jaafar said. [...]

"Before we made our decision, we conducted consultations all over Mindanao and asked them to give out their recommendations," Jaafar said.

After a few months, the Central Committee agreed to formally name its new party the United Bangsamoro Justice Party and declared that it would participate in the future regional and local elections.

He said that the UBJP has been fully organized after the selection of its officials. [...]

He said the UBJP has also opened its doors to prospective mem-

bers.

"This party is open to anyone, whether they are members of the MILF or not," he said. But he immediately added that the MILF has put up some mechanisms to keep unscrupulous politicians out of the party.

"We know that (the possibility that unscrupulous politicians will enlist) and we will not allow that to happen," Jaafar said.

Considering that the proposed new political entity would be the product of the MILF's long struggle, Jaafar expressed hope that their political party would dominate the elections. [...]

In the final draft of the BBL, the proposed political system will be parliamentary in form.

The Bangsamoro Parliament will be composed of party representatives, district representatives and sectoral representatives. The parliament will have a titular head.

The chief minister, who will head the ministerial government, shall be elected by majority votes by the members of the parliament.

ManilaStandardToday.com, 29.09.2014

Talks to disarm MILF get going amid BBL dispute

By Christine F. Herrera

AN ally of President Benigno Aquino III said Sunday that the Palace-proposed Bangsamoro Basic Law was "not a faithful reproduction" of the peace framework agreement between the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) because key provisions are missing in the bill.

Zamboanga City Rep. Celso Lobregat referred particularly to the provision on the decommissioning of MILF combatants that was absent in the bill.

But Cagayan de Oro Rep. Rufus Rodriguez, chairman of the House special ad hoc committee on the BBL, said there was no need for the decommissioning provision to be incorporated in the bill since the Palace and the MILF have already agreed, signed the accord and are now disarming the MILF fighters.

"As we speak, the Palace is already carrying out the disarming of the MILF combatants as provided for in the in the peace agreement between the government and the MILF," Rodriguez told the Manila Standard.

"In fact, the government's and the MILF peace panels are again meeting in Kuala Lumpur this week to thresh out how to go about the decommissioning," Rodriguez added.

But Lobregat, a member of the ad hoc panel, insisted that it was important to make the decommissioning part of the basic law.

"The BBL is the law that will govern the implementation of the Bangsamoro peace deal between the government and the MILF. What would stop the MILF from taking up arms again later on?

No law would stop them from doing that," Lobregat said.

Rodriguez countered that the peace agreement binds both the government and the MILF and they must uphold every provision signed under the accord.

Lobregat on Sunday also complained that a provision in the basic law should categorically state that Palawan and Puerto Princesa City and Zamboanga City will be excluded from the Bangsamoro entity.

The BBL, Lobregat said, provides that areas with Muslim population of more than 10 percent "may opt to join the political Bangsamoro entity." Zamboanga City, he noted, has a Muslim population of 27 percent.

Palawan and Puerto Princesa officially asked Congress to exclude them from the Bangsamoro since the province and city only have 7 percent to 8 percent Muslim residents.

"Palawan and Puerto Princesa City and Zamboanga City are not covered by the Bangsamoro. Palawan was only mentioned in the bill for historical reasons," Rodriguez said.

"As to Zamboanga City, they may have a Muslim population of more than 10 percent but the BBL requires that this area must be contiguous to areas that are more populated by Muslims. Zamboanga City is not contiguous to Muslim territories. In fact, the sea separates it from Tawi-Tawi, so it is not contiguous," Rodriguez said.

FURTHER READINGS

Amnesty International, September/ October 2014

WIRE: Memories of War

In the Chapter "how does amnesty stop torture?" Amnesty researcher, Hazel Galang talks about "Perseverance in the Philippines". Galang details the strategy of AI in addressing torture, and points to the need to hold perpetrators accountable. Click [here](#) to access the WIRE.