



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
Sun.Star Davao, 14.07.2014

Mayor: Tagum Death Squad is real

TAGUM City Mayor Allan L. Rellon confirmed on Monday the existence of the so-called "Tagum Death Squad" carrying out extrajudicial killings in Davao del Norte, allegedly organized by government officials, including a former town mayor.

Rellon, in an interview with the Sun.Star Davao, confirmed the existence of the death squad after he was asked about the peace and order situation and whether a death squad is real or rumors only to annihilate the likeness of the city. [...]

Reports, quoting some ex-death squad members, revealed that the death squad worked under a cover of authority as security aide of the City Government's Civil Security Unit (CSU), which Rellon said he learned this when he personally visited a former death squad member [Romnick] who has been hospitalized years ago.

[...] Rellon said men like Romnick were hired at the CSU, regardless of whether they were degree holders or not. He added that under his term, he already changed the CSU to Security Management Officers (SMO) and replaced its members with "legitimate ones."

"We are now really redirecting on the defining the role of our security management officers. As security aides of the city, force multipliers of the police and military, we already professionalized them all. These are passers of criminology course waiting to be official members of the AFP/PNP," Rellon said.

He added that he also pulled out the issued firearms from the

former CSU members and gave it to those qualified members of the SMO. The City Government also conducted a universal drug test to all the SMO members to ensure that their personnel are drug free, he said.

Rellon said anyone from his personnel who will be tested positive in drug test will be automatically fired from the service. [...] Last month, the Philippines Congress took its step against the unlawful killings by local officials by calling for an urgent investigation into these death squad killings that was earlier exposed by the Human Rights Watch (HRW).

House Resolution 1222 directs the Congressional Committee on Human Rights to "conduct an immediate investigation, in aid of legislation, on the extrajudicial killings perpetrated by the Tagum Death Squad and allegedly created by local government officials in Tagum City, Davao Del Norte."

The resolution was made based on the Human Rights Watch's revelations about the existence of a death squad in Southern Mindanao allegedly organized, equipped and financed by then Tagum City Mayor Rey Uy and elements of the local police and municipal government, which the former mayor earlier denied.

In a 71-page report, the HRW detailed the activities of the Tagum Death Squad, which carried out at least 298 extrajudicial killings of undesirables from 2007 to 2013. No one was prosecuted. Among those murdered were children as young as nine and 12, criminals, and those who didn't even fit the profile - such as a journalist and businessman.

Press Release - Task Force Detainee Philippines/ Alyansa Tigil Mina, 19.07.2014

Green activists and rights groups launch campaign asking PNoy to prioritize peoples' rights and environment over profit from mining

[...] A week before President Benigno Aquino's 4th State of the Nation Address (SONA) on July 28, rights groups, environmental activists and advocates intensified their call for PNoy to act decisively on what according to them is the root cause of grave abuses on human rights and environment impacted on mining affected communities.

They reiterated the need to scrap the Mining Act of 1995 and certify as urgent the legislation of the Alternative Minerals Management Bill (AMMB).

The group is holding a nationwide appeal addressing President Aquino, through maximizing all forms of actions, including appeal letter sending, mass actions and social networking site.

[...] "Not acting on this law is a clear violation of human rights. It is submitting the peoples' rights and welfare to corporate greed and thus promoting corporate impunity," Jaybee Garganera, head of Alyansa Tigil Mina (ATM) said pertaining to the Mining Act of 1995.

"We have recorded numerous human rights abuses perpetrated by Mining Companies and human rights violations by some government personnel but the government remains numb and we received no decisive actions to address them," Emmanuel Amistad, Executive Director of Task Force Detainees of the Philippines (TFDP) lamented.

"The bill to increase revenue from mining that was proposed

and crafted by the MICC and that was submitted to the Office of the Presidents is not enough," Garganera added.

"Although we welcome this proposal as a development, we see it as treating issues on mining as mere income and profit concerns and neglecting the issues of rights and environment," he added.

The group explained that, "what our country needs is a law that would benefit us as a nation in a holistic manner - rights-based, environment friendly - and not in a profiteering, greed driven and destructive way. [...]"

[...] In the middle of plunder, graft and corruption controversies in the government, the group cited that on the issue of mining, there are also alleged practices of corruption that concerned government agencies are allegedly involved in.

Senator Juan Ponce Enrile, who is facing charges on PDAF Scam is also the head of a political dynasty in Cagayan which has condoned and abetted the proliferation of black sand mining in the province despite repeated raids and arrests of miners with no proper permits.

"There are only two years left for President Aquino to once and for all heed the call for the scrapping of this law that causes not only too much suffering on our people but also destruction to our environment, PNoy must act now!" Amistad concluded.

The Philippine Star, 22.07.2014

3 lawmakers endorse impeach raps vs Noy

By Jess Diaz

MANILA, Philippines - Three party-list representatives endorsed the impeachment complaint filed yesterday by 28 militant groups and individuals against President Aquino with the House of Representatives.

Their endorsement of the complaint made it the first valid impeachment case against the President.

Reacting to the filing of the impeachment complaint, presidential spokesman Edwin Lacierda said it is up to the President's



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allies in Congress to do what they believe is appropriate.

In separate resolutions of endorsement, Representatives Neri Colmenares and Carlos Zarate of Bayan Muna and Fernando Hicap of Anakpawis said they have read the complaint and found it to be "sufficient in form and substance."

The three, who belong to the Makabayan bloc, along with Makabayan chairman former Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo, accompanied the complainants led by Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) to the House to file their complaint.

Ocampo said he wanted to give the complainants moral support.

A fourth Makabayan member, Rep. Antonio Tinio of Alliance of Concerned Teachers, was present during the filing but did not sign as an endorser.

Asked why he did not sign, Tinio said, "I am reserving my signature for another complaint that may be filed."

Bayan's co-complaints include Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption, Confederation for Unity, Recognition and Ad-

vancement of Government Employees, Citizens Crime Watch, Migrante, Kilusang Mayo Uno, and Scrap Pork Network.

Among the individual complainants are retired Archbishop Oscar Cruz, Bishop Emergencio Padillo of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines, Bishop Joselito Cruz of Iglesia Filipina Independiente, former representatives Lisa Maza of Gabriela and Rafael Mariano of Anakpawis, and Concepcion Empeño, mother of missing student activist Karen Empeño.

[...] Bayan and its co-complainants accused Aquino of "culpable violation of the Constitution" by pooling public funds under his Disbursement Acceleration Program (DAP).

"The unconstitutional and void acts include premature pooling of funds that are not in reality savings, the cross-border transfer of funds to augment the appropriation of other offices outside the executive branch, funding of projects that are not covered by the General Appropriations Act (annual national budget), and the use of unprogrammed funds," they said.

Rappler.com, 29.07.2014

Barangay official tagged in Sulu ambush that killed women, kids

By Carmela Fonbuena

[...] MANILA, Philippines - The Sulu provincial government tagged an unnamed barangay official as a possible suspect in the Sulu [ambush that killed 23](#) on Monday, July 28, an incident that now appears to be the result of rido or clan war.

The barangay official supposedly worked with the Abu Sayyaf, which the military said is behind the ambush.

Among the victims are women, children as young as 2, and the elderly, with one as old as 85.

"We condemn the barbaric act of the perpetrators, the suspects of which are some followers or supporters of a certain barangay official in cooperation with suspected Abu Sayyaf members, who ambushed and massacred and killed at least 23 passengers, mostly women and children," Governor Abdusakur "Totoh" Tan II and his father Vice Governor Abdusakur Tan said in a joint statement issued by the provincial Public Information Office.

Sulu has been witness to recent bloody incidents involving the Abu Sayyaf, but the ambush shocked government officials and security forces especially because it happened while Muslims all

over the world were observing Eid al-Fitr. It also coincided with the State of the Nation Address of President Benigno Aquino III. The victims were aboard a Tamaraw vehicle when they were ambushed in Barangay Lower Talipao in Sulu's Talipao town. They were supposed to join festivities in neighboring Maimbong town. [...]

'Difficult to comprehend'

The military earlier tagged Abu Sayyaf leaders Indang Susukan and Sibih Pisih as behind the ambush. The assumption was they were after the Barangay Peacekeeping Action Team (BPAT) that was with the convoy.

On the ground, however, there have been talks of rido or a clan war.

Governor Mujiv Hataman of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao also hinted of a rido. He said it's the first time it happened on Eid al-Fitr. [...]

Pursuit operations against the identified Abu Sayyaf members are now a priority, according to the military. The police also augmented its personnel in Talipao. [...]

Rappler.com, 29.07.2014

SONA 2014: What Aquino did not say

[...] MANILA, Philippines (UPDATED) - In his [5th State of the Nation Address](#) on Monday, July 28, President Benigno Aquino III was quiet on the West Philippine Sea dispute with China, chose not to quarrel with the Supreme Court, and did not mention the fact that 3 Philippine senators are now in jail due to the pork barrel controversy.

And this time around, he did not blame former President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo for the country's woes. (READ: [Full text of the President SONA](#))

The 3 issues that he skipped, however, have been some of the biggest challenges that the President had to face this year. The pork barrel scam scandal, while it broke in 2013, culminated in the sensational arrest of opposition senators Juan Ponce Enrile, Jinggoy Estrada, and Ramon "Bong" Revilla Jr.

The President also spent the past two weeks slamming the Supreme Court for its decision declaring schemes under Malacañang's Disbursement Acceleration Program (DAP) unconstitutional.



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While Aquino mentioned in his SONA the benefits from DAP and the fact that the government should heed the Court ruling, he did not talk about the Supreme Court or the judiciary at all. Chief Justice Ma Lourdes Sereno watched the address at the Batasan Pambansa.

FOI, ASEAN, power shortage

Due to the pork barrel and DAP controversy, various sectors have once again pushed for the passage of a Freedom of Information law. But [he did not mention the FOI](#).

The President also did not tackle the country's preparations for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Economic Community by 2015 [...]. This marks the start of free trade among the organization's 10 member-states allowing free flow of goods and services - including basic education services. [...]

Given what's happening in the Middle East and conflict areas where OFWs live, Aquino skipped mention of key global developments that continue to affect and displace Filipino workers abroad.

On the looming power shortage, the [President did not give any indication](#) that he will invoke emergency powers to deal with the problem - as requested no less than by his energy secretary, Jericho Petilla. [...]

Philippine Daily Inquirer, 30.07.2014

NCRPO chief claims tactic led to 'zero injuries'

By Julie M. Aurelio

MANILA, Philippines—For the Commission on Human Rights (CHR), the use of water cannons to turn back protesters during President Aquino's delivery of his fifth State of the Nation Address (Sona) on Monday violated UN standards and was not necessary for a "very manageable" mass action. The commission on Tuesday said it would seek an explanation from police officials in charge of crowd control for the Sona. The inquiry, the first in years to focus on the use of water cannons against protest marchers, could make law enforcers think twice about the tactic, which the CHR said is "permissible only in the event of widespread public disorder."

[...] The investigation could give rise to administrative and criminal cases—for grave misconduct or physical injuries—being filed against liable police officials, he [CHR spokesman Marc Titus Cebreros] said.

Red-tinted water

Authorities used four fire trucks to repulse protesters with jets of red-tinted water as the latter tried to break through layers of security barricades composed of concrete barriers, steel fences, concertina wires, freight containers and phalanxes of antiriot personnel.

Among those drenched in the dispersal on Commonwealth Avenue was CHR Director Gilbert Boiser, who was monitoring the rally.

Meanwhile, Kilusang Mayo Uno chair Elmer Labog recalled that the police also sprayed tinted water on protesters during the Marcos dictatorship and that the use of water cannons on Monday was an "overkill."

[...] "We were just protesting and airing the real state of the nation."

Rights experts agree

Human Rights News July 2014

Indigenous Peoples - for truth, justice, peace & equality! - 2014

STATE OF THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES ADDRESS

We [...] the indigenous leaders of indigenous communities in Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao[...] together in solidarity with our friends, allies and partners have gathered [...] to convey the true state of the indigenous peoples in Philippines.

TRUTH

We are the indigenous peoples of the land - peoples descended from ancestors and communities who have been time immemorial occupants and owners of territories in Mindanao, Visayas, and Luzon. Ancestral domains - land and natural resources - is life; life is our ancestral domains. We, indigenous peoples respect our ancestral domains, which will be inherited and taken care of by generations to come. We are peoples with our own culture, beliefs, customs, traditions, and laws.

JUSTICE

What is legal is not necessarily just. Philippine state policies fail to address our concerns and realities as indigenous peoples. These policies are insensitive to our diverse cultures. They do not correct and remedy historical and present injustices, and human rights violations and abuses that we continue to suffer.

1. Policies on mining and other extractives, plantations, and other exploitation of land and natural resources continue to trample upon our rights as first stewards of the land, and our right to consent or dissent to activities encroaching upon our ancestral domains. Mining destroys our territories, degrades our bodies by chemicals, and compromises our health especially indigenous women. Mining fails to justly compensate for the loss of resources, and leaves our territories unrehabilitated and in its plundered state.

We are victims of militarization and human rights violations because of the entry of these companies. Violence and threat of violence is used to suppress our voices, including extrajudicial killings of indigenous leaders.

The promised benefits of policies on the extraction, development and utilization of natural resources continue to be enjoyed only by the private powerful few while, like beggars, we are left to wait for dole-outs from culturally insensitive projects like the 4Ps Program; or compelled to abide by policies ignorant of the real situation of indigenous women such as the prohibition for traditional healers to assist in childbirth, or disallowing birth to occur at home.

2. The Joint Administrative Order No. 1 series of 2012 by the NCIP, DENR, DAR and LRA compromised our basic and legal rights and resulted in the further delay in the processing of the certification of titles over our ancestral domains. We reject policies like JAO1 that do not have our participation in its formulation, and which are deliberately made complex resulting in the delay of the processing of CADTs and ultimately, in the denial of our rights.

Meanwhile, with other marginalized peoples, communities and sectors, we, indigenous peoples, have our ways to resolve land and other conflicts. We will not be deceived by projects or activities like the National Greening Program (NGP) by which fake indigenous leaders were created as well as fake NGOs, and which make us compete against each other, or fight against our co-equals and fellows, whom like us are similarly exploited and downtrodden.

3. We, as indigenous peoples, have our own governance, our own Indigenous Political Structures (IPS). [...] We recognize the women in our community as equals and partners in decision-making. The state policy of "IP mandatory representation in local legislative councils" has generally been used by local political elites for their own selfish interests. While we do not entirely reject this "IP mandatory representation in local legislative councils" - we reject fake "representatives" that are chosen by LGUs, by the NCIP, or by any person or entity that do not have our mandate nor represent our true and collective interest, and which only satisfy a person's or a few's greed.

PEACE

We are indigenous peoples; we have the right to self-determination. We, too, want lasting peace in Mindanao. We support everyone who works for the attainment of peace in Mindanao. We support the full inclusion of indigenous peoples rights in the core area in the Bangsamoro Basic Law and full exclusion of the adjacent IP territories. We recognize the diversity of indigenous peoples and communities in Mindanao. We affirm that our identity as indigenous peoples is intrinsically linked with our ancestral domains. Lasting peace in Mindanao can only be achieved if all rights are recognized, respected and protected and no one is excluded.

EQUALITY

We, indigenous peoples, are human beings and as such are not inferior to anyone. We condemn any form of discrimination, separating us from the rest of the Filipino people through health, education, access to food and peaceful living.

WE ARE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND WE CONTINUE TO ASSERT OUR RIGHTS!
UNITED, WE SHALL STRUGGLE! [...]

Hronlineph.com, 26.07.2014

Cebreros explained: "Regarding the legality of using water cannons, human rights experts agree that it is permissible only in the event of widespread public disorder where law enforcement operations would be actually hampered without their use." [...]



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'Calibrated, preemptive response'

National Capital Region Police Office chief Director Carmelo Valmoria, who oversaw the implementation of the Sona security plan, defended the use of water cannons, saying it was a "calibrated, preemptive response."

"Without that, things may have gotten worse and led to physical contact between the antiriot policemen and protesters. More

people would be hurt," Valmoria said.

The NCRPO chief pointed out that for the first time in many years, no one from both sides went home injured from a Sona protest rally. "No one was hurt, so in our point of view it was a successful operation. We just hope that they also respect the human rights of our policemen on the frontline." [...]

CALAMITIES & CLIMATE CHANGE

Hronlineph.com, 29.07.2014

SONA 2014: More work needed in inclusive risk reduction -Oxfam

Following his fifth State of the Nation Address (SONA), we, a consortium of international aid agencies that has been working to realise inclusive, community-based disaster risk reduction (ICBDRR) in the aftermath of Typhoon Haiyan, had hoped President Benigno Simeon Aquino III reported extensively on his administration's state of risk reduction efforts both in terms of rehabilitation and recovery of Haiyan-affected areas and the broader disaster risk reduction (DRR) policies.

Nine months since the strongest typhoon to ever make landfall hit the country, thousands are still living in tents in coastal areas. When Glenda hit the Visayas two weeks ago, more than 7,000 people in Haiyan-affected areas sought cover anew. Back in April 2014, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) already cited that only 53 out of 643 or 8 per cent of evacuation centres can be used in Eastern Samar.

These communities are being exposed to tremendous risk and uncertainty. They urgently need to know when permanent relocation will move forward, what other settlement options they have, and what the implications will be for their livelihoods. They must be consulted in ongoing and meaningful ways to ensure any settlement measures represent truly durable solutions.

In this respect, the SONA would have been an opportunity for the President to update the nation on its plans for recovery and the critical role that DRR will play in ensuring that we truly "build back better". The Reconstruction Assistance for Yolanda (RAY) plan was released by the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) in December 2013 but is now woefully out of date as the transition from emergency relief to recovery and rehabilitation is underway. Further, the National Disaster Risk Reduction Management Council (NDRRMC) Post-Disaster Needs Assessment, which is key to strengthening transparency and accountability, has yet to be released. These documents are critical to better understand the substance of a few LGU's "rehabilitation and recovery plans", which the President said he recently approved.

With a clear trend of increasingly frequent and intense natural hazards, the government must lay out a strengthened commitment to enacting and implementing policies that increase our nation's resilience to disasters. Renewed efforts and scaled-up resourcing are needed following the massive impact of typhoon Haiyan, which exposed weaknesses in existing prevention, preparedness and mitigation efforts. In particular, it further highlighted the disproportionate impact such a disaster has on women, children, persons with disabilities and isolated communities. The Gender-Based Violence Area of Responsibility, led by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) has previously observed the limited security, inadequate bathing and latrine facilities and lack of privacy in evacuation centres as well as the limited number of female police officers in hard-hit areas. A recent Oxfam paper also suggested the continuing vulnerability of women and children whose families are still struggling to find sources of livelihood.

Hence, the administration must iterate its policy direction on DRR, ensuring that the sunset review of Republic Act 10121 or the Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction Management Act of 2010 truly strengthens the impact of this law at regional, provincial and local levels, among others. We urge the President to lay down his commitment to ICBDRR, including the strategies and mechanisms that will ensure the meaningful participation, protection, and much-needed livelihoods of vulnerable individuals and families.

'Glenda' damage reaches P7.3 b

By Francisco Tuyay, Alena Mae S. Flores and Florante S. Solmerin

THE damage brought by typhoon "Glenda" hit P7.3 billion even as the death toll from the storm surged to 94 and the number of those injured reached 317, the government said on Sunday.

The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council said the damage to agriculture hit P6.3 billion and to infrastructure P1 billion, surpassing the P5-billion damage caused by typhoon "Milenyo" which killed 297 people in 2006.

The council said the Bicol region was the hardest hit by the storm as the damage there reached P3 billion followed by Region IV-A, Region IV-B, Central Luzon and Region VIII. [...]

ManilaStandardToday.com, 21.07.2014

INSTITUTIONS

Philippine Daily Inquirer, 02.07.2014

RH law constitutional, SC rules

By Tarra Quismundo

MANILA, Philippines—The Supreme Court on Tuesday ruled that the Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health law "is not unconstitutional," rejecting all petitions questioning the controversial legislation, including pleas to restore the penal provisions to its implementing rules and those seeking its in-toto nullification.

In a unanimous vote, the high tribunal en banc denied "all motions for reconsideration, subject to the same positions indicated by the specific Justices on the specific section declared to be unconstitutional."

8 provisions still unconstitutional

But while it upheld the constitutionality of the RH law, the high court retained its April 8 ruling that eight provisions under the original law's implementing rules and regulations were uncon-

stitutional, including those providing penalties for healthcare professionals and public officers who refuse to provide reproductive healthcare, and the need for marital or parental consent for those seeking these services. [...]

Rejected petitions

Among the petitions that were rejected was a plea for reconsideration filed by the Filipino Catholic Voices for Reproductive Health, which sought to restore the penal provisions in the law, and the petitions of the Task Force for Family and Life Visayas and Pro-Life Philippines Inc., which had asked the court to strike down the law.

The RH law was passed in 2012 following years of vigorous debate amid strong Catholic Church opposition. It provides for universal access to reproductive healthcare, including sex educa-

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tion, maternal care and contraception.

Philippine Daily Inquirer, 06.07.2014

Cordillera militia gets DAP projects

BAGUIO CITY—Funds for a project promised to the militia of slain rebel priest Conrado Balweg, which were allocated using the Disbursement Acceleration Program (DAP), have been “well spent” and used “in good faith,” according to leaders of the Cordillera region on Friday.

The Supreme Court this week ruled that the DAP was unconstitutional because it was a usurpation of Congress’ power of the purse.

But the high court said what the DAP had financed, like ongoing road or bridge projects, that were implemented in good faith would not be affected by the program’s nullification.

Many of the projects funded by the DAP were roads and bridges, “which previous administrations never undertook before and after martial law,” and must qualify as services “done in good faith to the Cordillera people who have long been neglected,” said Mayor Gabino Gangangan of Sadanga town, Mt. Province. Balweg, a former communist rebel, formed the Cordillera People’s Liberation Army (CPLA) to champion indigenous peoples’ rights during the administration of the dead dictator Ferdinand Marcos. The Marcos regime initiated development projects that displaced mountain communities in the 1970s and 1980s.

DAP for peace

The DAP included “a Comprehensive Peace and Development Intervention package worth P8.59 billion... to foster peace, development and reform in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, as well as an additional P1.82 billion for peace and development activities with [CPLA] and the Moro National Liberation Front,” according to an Oct. 12, 2011, news release from the Department of Budget and Management.

The inclusion of CPLA projects in the DAP apparently fulfilled a July 4, 2011, closure agreement between CPLA and President Aquino to conclude peace negotiations that were started by his late mother, former President Corazon Aquino, shortly after the 1986 EDSA People Power Revolution.

The closure deal, facilitated by the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (Opapp), granted CPLA various concessions, including projects in upland communities, said Gangangan, who took part in the agreement as head of the Cordillera Bodong Administration, CPLA’s political arm.

In exchange, the militia agreed to disarm and disband, transforming itself into a social economic organization called the Cordillera Forum on Peace and Development.

But the DAP allocation for CPLA was cited among the anomalies raised by the party-list group Bayan Muna, one of many organizations that questioned the DAP before the high court last

year.

The Bayan Muna petition questioned the allotment of P1.8 billion in Opapp funds for “so-called peace projects” that “do not meet the criteria of economic stimulus and benefits to the poor.”

Leadership feud

Before the DAP was challenged last year, CPLA officials who signed the closure agreement quarreled over leadership. A faction of the militia also refused to abide by the July 2011 deal with the government.

“These are internal rifts that should not concern the government. What is important is that the Palace fulfilled many of our requests and many communities are now benefiting from the roads,” Gangangan said.

The DAP allocation for CPLA projects was coursed through the government’s Payapa at Masaganang Pamayanan (Pamana) program, which aids communities in conflict areas.

The closure agreement stipulated that the government would spend as much as P246 million for CPLA livelihood and community projects, according to the Opapp website.

Marlon Walang, the Department of the Interior and Local Government’s (DILG) Pamana coordinator in the Cordillera, said many of the projects had been completed since 2011 and some were in various stages of construction.

The projects were identified by CPLA and validated by various government agencies before these were implemented, Walang said on Thursday.

Roads, canals

A list provided by the DILG showed that 19 of more than 50 village projects that began in 2011 had been completed: the improvement of roads and an irrigation canal in Luba town, Abra province (P14 million); concreting of roads and completion of bridges in San Isidro, Manabo and Licuan-Baay towns, Abra (P26 million); and new roads and farming warehouses, complete with solar-drying facilities, in Conner and Pudtol towns, Apayao province (P28.8 million).

Also completed were a road and farm tramlines in Bakun and Kibungan towns, Benguet province (P54 million), and a road and multipurpose gymnasium and peace center in Hingyon town, Ifugao province (P5.3 million).

The DILG list showed that 11 other CPLA projects that were started in 2011 had been completed but funds either had not been released in full to pay their contractors or had not been turned over officially to their beneficiaries. Among these projects were potable water systems in Banaue town, Ifugao, and in Licuan-Baay town, Abra. [...]

Philstar.com, 17.07.2014

Phl wants AFP modernization, not arms race - PNoy

By Alexis Romero

MANILA, Philippines - President Aquino on Thursday said there is no slowing down in modernizing the armed forces but clarified that the upgrade efforts are not meant to stir tensions in the region.

Speaking during the opening of the Asian Defense, Security and Crisis Management Exhibition (ADAS) in Pasay, Aquino said the government would seize every opportunity to make the military - regarded as one of the weakest in the region - more efficient.

“All that we have achieved in this sector is not only because of our all-out support for our troops, but also because we are guaranteeing companies a level-playing field—that our decisions will be made based on which bid offers maximum benefit to our troops for the best possible price,” the President said.

“Clearly, if this event is any indication, we have no plans of slowing down,” he added.

Aquino, however, clarified that the Philippines, which is embroiled in a territorial dispute with China, is not shifting toward a more militaristic position.

“I must emphasize: Our efforts seek to modernize the capabilities of our security sector is to address the needs in human disaster response arenas and for our own internal defense,” he said.

“None of these actions are meant to increase tensions in the region; rather, they are meant to address our domestic problems and issues.”

Aquino went on to discuss the government’s move to upgrade the military’s capabilities, which he claimed, had been neglected



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for a long time.

He said his administration has released more than P40 billion to modernize the armed forces, higher than the P26-billion dis-

bursed by the previous leadership in a span of almost 10 years.

[...]

Rappler.com, 22.07.2014

New AFP chief tells troops: Ignore politics, no HR violations

MANILA, Philippines - Newly appointed [Armed Forces chief Lieutenant General Gregorio Catapang Jr](#) started his tour of military camps on Tuesday, July 22, to issue his first orders to the troops.

No collateral damage. No human rights violations. Don't be distracted by the ongoing political dynamics in the country. Continue IPSP (Internal Peace and Security Plan) Bayanihan.

Catapang, who [assumed command](#) of the 120,000-strong armed forces last week, started his tour at the Northern Luzon Command (Nolcom) in Tarlac, where he was commander. He

also visited the 1st Air Division Headquarters in nearby Pampanga. [...]

The IPSP Bayanihan is the counter-insurgency strategy of the armed forces that was developed by military officers such as his predecessor and classmate, retired AFP chief General Emmanuel Bautista. Both belong to the Philippine Military "Dimalupig" Class of 1981.

"The IPSP Bayanihan is bringing us peace and we should all protect this peace from those who seek to test its merits," he said.

Inquirer Mindanao, 24.07.2014

Indigenous community representative gets to sit in General Santos city council

By Allan Nawal

GENERAL SANTOS CITY, Philippines - The appointed representative of indigenous communities to the Sangguniang Panlungsod (city council) here was formally sworn into office on Wednesday.

Blaan chieftain Mario Empal took his oath before Mayor Ronnel Rivera and will be sitting as member of the city council starting the next regular session.

"We asked for this a long time ago and it was only now that this was realized," Empal said, as he credited Rivera for appointing a lumad representative to the city council.

Representatives from the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) and the National Commission on Indigenous People (NCIP) have certified that Empal's appointment as

13th member of the council was in order.

They cited a DILG circular and Section 16 of the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act of 1997 that provided that IPs must be given mandatory representation in policy-making bodies and other local legislative councils. [...]

Under the appointment papers, Empal will have a three-year term, which officially started on Wednesday.

"We finally have an IP representative in the SP that will push for the welfare and rights of our IP constituents," Rivera said.

Rivera said aside from ensuring that IP rights and welfare are guaranteed, Empal would also be performing duties as regular councilor. [...]

Philippine Daily Inquirer, 28.07.2014

Martial law body negotiating access to DND, Nica records for claimants

BAGUIO CITY - A human rights body tasked with compensating martial law victims has negotiated access to old government records, including confidential military operations, that led to human rights violations during the regime of the late strongman Ferdinand Marcos.

Lina Sarmiento, chair of Human Rights Victims' Claims Board (HRVCB), said the government's security sector, including the Philippine National Police and the National Intelligence Coordinating Agency (Nica), had committed to open the records to people who require documentary evidence that they or their relatives were abducted, jailed, tortured or even killed during Marcos' martial law.

Sarmiento said legitimate martial law victims were entitled to a share from a P10-billion reparation fund that HRVCB is required to distribute by the end of 2016, provided the incidents happened between Sept. 21, 1972, and Feb. 25, 1986.

Some of these victims, however, are too old and the documents proving that they were victims of atrocities, such as arrest warrants, may have been destroyed or have deteriorated, Sarmiento said.

Only these government agencies may help prove their right to reparations, she said.

Sarmiento, a retired police chief superintendent, said HRVCB was discussing how best to access valuable information kept by the Department of National Defense and the Armed Forces of the Philippines, including "black operations" (a term for highly confidential military operations) that may have led to the disap-

pearance of activists during the Marcos regime.

This may include access to soldiers or military officials who took part in these operations, she said, if civilian and military laws allow the state to compel retired soldiers to discuss their martial law assignments.

Sarmiento said the government was offering reparation so survivors of state-led atrocities could move on.

But she did not reply when asked whether providing claimants information about their detention may eventually lead to lawsuits against their abusers.

Sarmiento said the agency intended to open up liaison offices by the end of July to help claimants secure documents from the police and military offices. [...]

But Sarmiento said those who signed up would undergo an adjudication process before they are recognized as legitimate claimants and before the agency determines how much reparation they are entitled to.

The gravest atrocity, like murder, entitles a victim's heir to a much higher reparation, according to RA 10368.

Sarmiento said claimants have until November this year to gather evidence from the PNP, Nica and other agencies before HRVCB studies their applications.

The HRVCB has received more than 5,000 applications after visiting the cities of Angeles, Lucena, Calbayog, Tacloban, Cebu, Iloilo, Bacolod, Cotabato, Legazpi and San Fernando (La Union province). [...]

Philippine Daily Inquirer, 30.07.2014

Action Network Human Rights- Philippines

House members back passage of information law

By DJ Yap

MANILA, Philippines—President Benigno Aquino III may not have mentioned the Freedom of Information Bill in his State of the Nation Address, but lawmakers, at the prodding of Speaker Feliciano Belmonte Jr., expressed support Wednesday for its passage.

In his speech at the opening of Congress' regular session on Monday, hours before the Sona, Belmonte pushed for the passage of an FOI law in the spirit of Section 7, Article 3 of the Constitution that recognizes the right of the people to information on matters of public concern.

"We must craft a viable FOI Law to promote greater transparency and strengthen accountability in government, without unduly restricting the latitude of options for government action in the delivery of services to the public and in responding expeditious-

ly to the needs of our people," he said.

Responding to Belmonte's call, a number of congressmen expressed support for the FOI bill, which would mandate the disclosure of public records.

The Senate has passed its version of the FOI bill but it remains pending in the House of Representatives.

In a statement, Deputy Speaker Giorgidi Aggabao said that with the Speaker himself making a special pitch, there was now "a big chance" the FOI bill would pass this session.

"The only kink I see would be the busy schedule of Congress. The budget hearing plus the impeachment complaints would surely occupy a good part of our time," said Aggabao, representative of Isabela. [...]

CURRENT CASES OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

Sun.Star Cebu, 07.07.2014

Call center agents assert labor rights

THE Inter Call Center Association of Workers (ICCAW) Cebu challenged the Department of Labor and Employment (Dole) and the City Council of Cebu to provide measures against call centers that deprive their agents of their rights.

Sylvio Dorig Jr., the vice president of ICCAW, said there were major issues concerning the BPO workers that need to be addressed.

The group suggested that the Dole visit call centers every month to monitor if they have permits to operate and urged the City Council to have an ordinance implementing a cash bond in Cebu so that call centers will not just leave the agents anytime.

Dorig said the main problems that they faced were the insurance of the agents, the government-mandated benefits and the lack of due process in an administrative hearing.

They were also concerned about stopping contractualization of the call centers.

Dorig said that denying workers security of tenure is also denying them their benefits.

Last Sunday, ICCAW conducted their seminar that serves as an orientation of the call center agents on how to protect labor

rights.

[...] The worker's union is set to file cases against some call centers in Cebu with the National Labor Relations Commission (NLRC) for depriving workers of their rights.

ICCAW also accused Blu Connect and Support Safe of fraud, having ghost employees, illegal dismissal of workers and non-remittance of government-mandated contributions.

However, BluConnect owner Bella Fabricante denied the allegations in the previous articles of Sun.Star Cebu.

"The call center was just for the investments, and not for protecting their agents," Dorig said.

ICCAW is composed of 920 call center agents in Cebu.

The group is hoping to gain support from the lawmakers who passed bills in Congress, such as Rep. Zajid Mangudadatu (Maguindanao, 2nd district), who filed House Bill 4414, which says that BPO employees shall be paid an additional pay amounting to 25 percent of their basic salary for work undertaken during the graveyard shift.

Sen. Miriam Santiago also filed Senate Bill 57 or the Magna Carta for Call Center Workers Act last year.

DavaoToday.com, 10.07.2014

Open-pit mining consultation marred with reported harassment

By John Rizle L. Saligumba

DAVAO CITY - A leader of a small-scale miners group complained that Army troops harassed him to keep him out of a public consultation on open-pit mining operations.

Nationwide Development Corporation-St. Augustine Gold-Copper Ltd (NADECOR-SAGCL) and Napnapan Mineral Resources, Inc. (NMRI) in Pantukan conducted the consultations last July 3.

Indug Kautawan (People Rise) in Pantukan Leader Rogel Otero said Army troops warned him that he was on their "OB (order of battle) list."

Indug is a group of farmers, indigenous peoples and small-scale miners formed in the wake of Typhoon Pablo that struck the province in December 2012.

Otero said soldiers belonging to the 71st IB were led by one Lieutenant [...]Hernaes and a former New People's Army member named Toralba confronted him on the morning of July 3.

"[...] I ask a certain Toralba what OB means. He said that if they see me [downtown] they will blow my head up," said Otero.

"It means I can no longer go to the consultation and to anywhere without the threat of death," Otero said.

Otero said Toralba accused him to be a member of the com-

munist group's milisayang bayan (people's militia). [...]

Capt. Ernest Carolina, deputy chief of the 10th Infantry Division Philippine Army's public affairs office, said an officer of 71st Infantry Battalion denied the accusation of Otero.

Carolina said Lt. Hernaez confronted Otero because of the statements of the alleged ex-NPAs.

Karapatan Spokesperson Hanimay Suazo said they are helping Otero in filing for a criminal case against Lt. Hernaez and "other responsible persons involved in the incident."

Carolina said 71st IB Commander Lt. Colonel Dennis Tanzo "welcomed the filing of a case to answer inquiries regarding the incident."

For Otero, the soldiers are in "tandem with the private guards of the company in silencing us who have been vocal against the open-pit mining of the company."

February of this year, miners were surprised that they were allegedly required to acquire identification cards by Nadecor for them to enter the company's mining tenement. [...]

Based on estimates, Nadecor's tenement alone could produce some 100,000 tons per year of copper and 500,000 ounces per year of gold for 22 years.

Action Network Human Rights- Philippines

Rappler.com, 07.07.2014

NPA admits killing Bukidnon mayor

By Karlos Manlupig

DAVAO CITY, Philippines – Days after [Mayor Mario Okinlay](#) of Impasugong, Bukidnon, was shot dead, the New People's Army (NPA) took responsibility for it, saying it was carried out in the name of "revolutionary justice."

Alan Juanito, spokesperson of the NPA's North Central Mindanao Regional Operations Command, said Okinlay had been involved in alleged counter-revolutionary activities.

Juanito said Okinlay had been aiding the military in implementing counterinsurgency campaigns in the communities, particularly in the conduct of psychological warfare activities and in forcing civilians to surrender as communist combatants.

"Bullets from a sniper team of the New People's Army under the South-Central Bukidnon Sub-Regional Command ended the life of the rabid counter-revolutionary mayor Mario Okinlay of Impasugong, Bukidnon at 8:00 AM of July 2, 2014," Juanito said. The NPA said [...] that Okinlay was warned by the revolutionary movement about his involvements with the military and in the counterinsurgency campaign as early as 2006. [...] "The citizens of Impasugong endured his oppressive and

exploitative rule for a long time. He has grabbed lands from no less than 50 people, promised them compensation then left the poor landowners waiting for years as they watched their lands in Impasugong converted to oil palm plantations. During elections, he hit back on voters who did not vote for him. There have also been cases of harassment and manhandling of civilians who opt to suffer in silence for their own safety," Juanito said.

The family and the military outrightly condemned the attack and are currently pressing for justice.

Major General Ricardo Visaya, commander of the military's 4th Infantry Division, vowed that state security forces in the area would not stop their operations to flush out the rebels responsible for Okinlay's death. [...]

"For the family, relatives, friends, and loved ones of Mayor Okinlay, the whole 4th Infantry Division condoles for his death. [...] Since the start of his career as Mayor of Impasugong, he never failed to deliver what was best for his people and until his last breath, his love and passion for serving his people are still imprinted in the hearts and minds of everyone," Visaya added.

Bulatlat.com, 11.07.2014

Activist gunned down in Bicol - 'An Army soldier shot me'

By Janess Ann J. Ellao

MANILA – "An Army soldier shot me," Edgardo Lopez, 40, told witnesses after he was shot by a man wearing a cap and riding a motorcycle at around 5 a.m., today, July 11, in Albay.

Lopez, who was president of the Bicol Coconut Planters Association Inc. in Albay, apparently identified his killers as military men. Karapatan-Bicol suspects that the assailants belong to the 901st Infantry Brigade of the Philippine Army.

Lopez was delivering bread to a store in Mayon village, Daraga when a man riding a motorcycle without a plate number fired at him. He sustained six gunshot wounds. He died at the Bicol Regional Training and Teaching Hospital at around 10 a.m. In an interview with *Bulatlat.com*, Vince Casilihan of Karapatan-Bicol said Lopez was very active in the fight of coconut farmers for the multi-million coco levy fund.

Casilihan added that Lopez is the 50th victim of extrajudicial killing in their region alone under President Aquino.

Before he was killed, Lopez had been harassed by the military. Casilihan said soldiers had gone to Lopez' home and branded him as a collector for the New People's Army (NPA). They also threatened him to stop joining protest actions. In April, several soldiers surrounded Lopez's home, claiming to be looking for NPA guerrillas. The soldiers said they could have killed Lopez along with the rebels if they found them there.

Bicol region has the highest number of extrajudicial killings both under then President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo and now under Aquino. [...]

Karapatan documented more than 200 extrajudicial killings under Aquino as of June 2014.

DavaoToday.com, 12.07.2014

Two UP profs assail surveillance

By John Rizle L. Saligumba

DAVAO CITY – Two university professors here claimed they were "tailed" across three provinces by motorcycle-riding men whom they believed to be members of "state security forces".

Professors Myfel Paluga and Andrea Malaya Ragragio of the University of the Philippines Mindanao said they were in General Santos City doing a "research reconnaissance" and are supposedly going back to Davao City when they noticed a motorcycle-riding man following their vehicle 8 am of July 6.

"[...] We decided to go around the city for 2-3 hours to confirm our suspicion and he is indeed still following us," said Ragragio in a press conference Wednesday. [...]

She said that when they reached Digos City (about two hours away from General Santos City), they decided to enter a mall to "lose" the man.

"We changed our clothes inside the mall but when we got out hours later, we were surprised to see over five men aboard motorcycles looking directly and blatantly at us," she said.

Ragragio said that the men "have no typical physical features but all of them have a single earpiece on the ear that seemed to be attached to a (short wave) radio."

[...] "An hour later, we decided to ride the same vehicle again

straight to Davao City." [...]

"I know several people who have become victims of such pattern of surveillance like Karen (Empeño) and Sherlyn (Cadapan) are now disappeared and several others who were killed," she said.

Ragragio said only one of the motorcycles followed them to Davao City until they reached a mall where motorcycles are not allowed to the parking area.

[...] While Paluga said he has no idea on the particular motive of the men, he said "it maybe because of their being open to advocating peoples issues."

Paluga is the chairperson of UP Mindanao's Department of Social Science and is involved in various advocacies for indigenous people's groups and the environment.

Ragragio is an AB Anthropology graduate from UP Diliman [...]. She is also a Davao Today columnist.

Paluga said that he, Ragragio and several members of their research team have been "visible and vocal against policies of the state and state security forces leading to the [evacuation of Talaingod Manobos](#)." [...]

[...] Ruth Gamboa, colleagues of Paluga and Ragragio and the



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president of the All *UP Workers Union*, said all of society “should thank these professors instead because they have commitment to their work.”

“If suspicions are held against them because of the knowledge they got from their research, they should be confronted but not put to such risks to their life. [...]” she said.

In a news report, Lt. Col. Norman Zuniega, chief of the 10th Infantry Division’s Public Affairs Office denied the accusation saying it is not the “policy” of the Armed Forces of the Philippines to “target civilians” and that they “have no funds for it.” Meanwhile, Mary Anne Sapar, spokesperson of Gabriela South-

Sun.Star, 21.07.2014

Kin of slain farmer cry for justice

THE family of the farmer killed by members of a military unit in the village of Mayang, Iloilo last Thursday consulted the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) to call for justice.

Consolacion Larbo, the victim’s mother, said they are bringing the case to the CHR and the village council to file a resolution that states that the victim is a civilian and not a member of the New People’s Army (NPA) or any rebel group.

In July 18, the victim, who is suffering from nervous breakdown, told his mother he will harvest corn and pineapples. He was

Pinoyweekly.org, 22.07.2014

Alleged ‘death squad’ roams freely in relocation site

By Ilang-Ilang D. Quijano

The house that was peppered with bullets barely two weeks ago did not even have any police tape to indicate a crime. Only a thin plastic sheet covered the window from where two masked men aboard a motorcycle fired eight shots from a .45 caliber gun at around 11:00 a.m. on July 10, killing Nathaniel Bacolod, 19, Junmer Paraon, 22, and their 50-year old aunt Susan Mamaril.

They say that a person’s life is worth very little in Southville village, an off-city relocation site in Brgy. San Isidro, Montalban, Rizal, where thousands of urban poor families driven away from their homes in Metro Manila now live.

Junmer and Nathaniel were members of the urban poor group Kadamay (Kalipunan ng Damayang Mahihirap), while Susan was a local leader of the women’s group Gabriela. Two more of their kin, Roberto Moral, 20, and Pascualito Perlito, 21, were wounded in the incident.

Local police were quick to [attribute the crime](#) to a “fraternity war.” But residents say that the murders was not an isolated incident, but only one of the latest killings carried out by an alleged “death squad.”

According to Kadamay, they have monitored at least 32 killings in Southville since January 2014. Most of the individuals killed, mostly by masked men aboard motorcycles, were said to be involved in drugs, estafa, and petty quarrels with neighbors.

Indications point to a local death squad similar in nature to those that operate in Davao and Tagum cities—one that arrogates power unto itself as judge, jury, and executioner.

Hard life in relocation

Early morning of July 11, only a day after the killings of Nathaniel, Junmer, and Susan, another two individuals—Armando Calag, 35, and Marietta Bilabis, 43—were gunned down by motorcycle-riding men a few blocks away. [...]

Life in off-city relocation sites like Southville is exceptionally hard—most jobs and source of livelihood are in Metro Manila, around an hour and a half away. Those who try to earn a living

ManilaTimes.net, 22.07.2014

Father seeking justice for daughter killed in Compostela Valley

By Al Jacinto

ZAMBOANGA CITY: The father of a girl shot by government

ern Mindanao, a militant women’s alliance, also presented to the press conference alleged threats against her person for the second time this year. [...]

Sapar, with three other leaders of progressive groups, filed a police blotter last March after also being tailed by motorcycle-riding men.

Sheena Duazo, spokesperson of militant group Bayan, blames Oplan (insurgency operation plan) Bayanihan for the “threats, intimidation and extra-judicial killings of activist and ordinary people advocating the rights of farmers and workers and oppressed sectors.”

seen by the military unit carrying a bolo and was shot in the head.

Larbo said her son’s body was seen the next morning lying in a shallow canal along the road but is already carrying a .12 gauge shotgun.

Human rights group Karapatan has dispatched a fact-finding mission, believing that the atrocity is a violation of international humanitarian law. [...]

in Montalban do so as tricycle drivers and scavengers in the nearby dumpsite. [...]

Nathaniel and his mother were among those who led the fight against demolition in their former homes in Brgy. Corazon de Jesus, San Juan City. Maritess is also the spokesperson of Kadamay-National Capital Region.

[...] Susan was known to be active in the struggle of Montalban relocatees for social services, particularly for electricity. Four years after Southville was constructed, relocatees still do not have their own electricity lines. Rather, they are being charged exorbitant electricity fees by the housing developer, Baque Development Corporation—the owners of which are wives of military officers, residents say. [...]

‘They do not deserve this’

Mario*, also a community leader, shares the views of the families’ victims on the existence of a death squad which, he said, possibly operates under the local government. [...]

[...] Meanwhile, the local police have not only failed to prosecute killers or keep the killings in check—they are also distrusted by the residents themselves.

Allegedly, police set up a checkpoint only a block away from the street where Nathaniel and the others were killed, but failed to respond to the crime. [...]

Mario believes that the rising number of killings in Southville cannot be swept under the rug as merely drug-related or petty acts of violence attributed to ordinary residents. [...] he believes that persons of authority are involved in the alleged cleansing or gun-for-hire operations—who they are remains a mystery. [...]

Kadamay, meanwhile, calls on Jejomar Binay, chair of the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council, and the Commission on Human Rights to conduct an immediate investigation into the killings in Southville. [...]

*Not their real names. Identities were withheld for security considerations.

soldiers during a military operation in 2007 was killed by gun-



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men in Compostela Valley on July 19, the Children's Rehabilitation Center said on Tuesday.

The center said Gregorio Galacio was shot by suspected state agents in Kahayag village, New Bataas town. He had been seeking justice for nine-year-old Grecil Buya, who was bathing in a stream when shot by soldiers who tagged her as member of the New People's Army.

The Children's Rehabilitation Center condemned the murder of Galacio.

"For seven years, Tatay Gorio had longed for justice for his daughter's death. His family's cry for justice is now even louder as another state-sponsored killing has taken over their family," said the center's executive director Jacqueline Ruiz.

Bulatlat.com, 29.07.2014

Arrested SONA protesters are Cory land beneficiaries

By Dabet Castaneda

MANILA — The two protesters arrested just a few minutes before President Aquino delivered his State of the Nation Address yesterday, July 28, are beneficiaries of a housing project of the late President Cory Aquino.

Dr. Ma. Luisa Garcia, 46, and Rosita Labarez, 57, president and vice-president of the Controlled Economic Zone Federation, Inc. (Cezfed), led residents of Barangay Holy Spirit to protest the impending bidding of the 13-hectare residential area, which sits within the 23-hectare property of the National Government Center Housing Project (NGCHP). This area is right in front of the Sandiganbayan along Commonwealth Avenue where the presidential convoy passed by on its way to the House of Representatives for SONA 2014.

In an interview with *Bulatlat.com* inside the Camp Karingal police station in Quezon City, Garcia said they have just wrapped up a short protest program when QCPD Station 11 commander Superintendent Victor Pagulayan ordered her arrest. Meanwhile, Labarez said she was trying to protect Garcia from arrest when the police saw her and arrested her as well. [...] Lawyer Ephraim Cortez of the National Union of Peoples' Lawyers (NUPL) said Garcia and Labarez were arrested for violating BP880 (Batas Pambansa Bilang 880) or The Public Assembly Act of 1985. The law requires protesters to secure a written permit when conducting public assemblies in a public place. Cortez, however, said the protesters did not need a permit as the residents held their protest in front of their community.

Sun.Star Pampanga, 30.07.2014

5 more farmers shot in property dispute

By Ferth Vandenstein Manaysay

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO -- The City of San Fernando Police here said on Tuesday that another five farmers were shot while holding a meeting about the demolition operations being conducted in a farmland at Barangay Maimpis, City of San Fernando.

The farmers, who were brought to the nearest hospital on Monday, were identified as Inocencio Galang, 65; Alfredo Catacutan, 67; Jessie Dela Peña, 50; Jaime Gulapa, 56; and Jun Jacinto, 44, who was allegedly pistol whipped by a security guard identified as Anthony Gliban, 33, police said.

Hansel Galang, one of the witnesses of the incident, said the farmers were "recklessly shot" by the roving security guards.

"The security guards fired a warning shot as soon as they noticed that we were gathering near the area. The next thing we knew they were already running after us while pointing their guns at us," said farmer-witness Galang.

Galang further shared that around 60 security guards surrounded a group of 89 farmers who assembled near the disputed area in an attempt to talk about the ongoing demolition operations.

The security guards were allegedly sent by the Great Star Security

"Tatay Gorio was an ardent advocate for justice, not only for his daughter, but to all victims of human rights violations. His death will be another case of extra-judicial killing of human rights advocates that will be lined up together with over a thousand of politically-motivated killings during the Arroyo and now Aquino administration that have eluded the wheels of justice," she added.

Ruiz said Galacio was the family's sole breadwinner and his death is another setback to his wife and three children.

"The Aquino government's blatant disregard on human rights brings him to the persecution of the people. In his four years in office, he has proven through his blood-stained record that his government should be put to an end," Ruiz said.

The NGCHP is one of eight projects named by the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council (HUDCC) as those that are in danger areas in Metro Manila, [a report from gmanetwork.com](http://gmanetwork.com) last year said.

Garcia and Labarez [...] were released past 9 p.m. of the same day. No formal charges were filed.

Use of taser gun

Meanwhile, the police used a taser gun against a driver and his 12-year-old daughter, human rights group Karapatan reported.

Cristina Palabay, Karapatan secretary general, said policemen approached the jeepney of Rodel Torotola [...]. The policemen asked for Torotola's driver's license and when the latter refused to turn it over, a policeman fired a taser gun on Torotola. Beside him was his 12-year-old daughter, who was also stunned.

Taser guns, a kind of a stun gun, are used to immobilize persons who pose threat to authorities.

Dr. Genevieve Rivera-Reyes, a member of the medico-legal team during the SONA protest, said there was no reason for the police to use the taser gun [...].

Palabay noted it was the first time that the group witnessed such overkill security measures.

Container vans, barbed wire, concrete barriers and thousands of policemen and soldiers blocked the protesters last Monday.

An official of the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) who witnessed Monday's protest condemned the police brutality against the protesters. [...]

ty Incorporated to protect the area as per the request of lawyer Eligio Mallari, the claimant of the disputed 130-hectare agricultural land within the bounds of Barangay Maimpis.

Superintendent Edilberto Pitallano, city chief of police, said that a demolition team hired by Mallari was executing the writ of demolition under an LRC case issued by Judge Amifait Fider-Reyes of the City of San Fernando Regional Trial Court branch 42. [...]

Not the first time

The shooting incident is just a part of a series of violent incidents ever since the demolition operations started last July 9.

During the first week of demolition operations, five farmers were detained for four hours due to obstruction of justice, the City of San Fernando police said.

Last July 18, two unidentified men also allegedly shot Guillermo Padua, 32, in the midst of negotiations between the farmers and the demolition team. [...]

According to another witness, the demolition team immediately escaped after the incident on board a white truck, an orange van, and three jeepneys [...].



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Due to the previous incidents, the Barangay council requested the security team of the demolition operations to leave the disputed area.

The security team initially agreed to barangay's proposition, according to the village councilor Nestor Manarang. [...]

Human rights violation

Meanwhile, the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) Central Luzon office said last week that it will probe on the shooting incident as the agency believes the demolition team violated the rights of the farmer group when it shot one of their members.

Mallari, a former CHR chairperson during the Arroyo administration, assumes that the Department of Agrarian Reform-approved site is already non-agricultural.

Lawyer Jasmine Regino, regional director of CHR, said that the

commission is now making efforts to get the statements of the victims and the witnesses of the incident.

Additionally, Regino relayed that the CHR is always ready to provide assistance should the farmers decide to pursue a case against the demolition team. [...]

No bullets recovered

The San Fernando police, who probed the area after the shooting incident, failed to recover even a single gun bullet, which may serve as an important piece of evidence against the security guards. [...]

Currently, the City of San Fernando police are still investigating the incident while the five farmers are still recovering in the hospital. One of the victims, Barangay Chairman Romy Dizon said, is now blind after sustaining a gunshot wound in the head.

UPDATES ON CASES OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

Bulatlat.com, 01.07.2014

Agrarian reform personnel involved in destruction of crops in Luisita

By Ronalyn V. Olea

MANILA - For nearly a decade, Charlito, also called Gerry, and Dina Catalan have been tilling a two-hectare land in Mapalacsiao village inside the Hacienda Luisita. They planted palay, vegetables and banana and sold their crops for a living.

On June 25, at around 10 a.m., 64-year-old Dina was picking some squash leaves [...] when personnel from the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) provincial office, Edison Diaz, chief-tain of Lourdes village and his men and scores of policemen arrived.

"They told me the land we have been tilling has been awarded to Diaz," Dina said in Filipino in an interview with *Bulatlat.com*, June 30.

A few minutes later, Diaz, on board a red tractor owned by the DAR, destroyed all the crops of the Catalan couple. DAR employees identified as a Atty. Narciso, Beth Ocampo, Oca Atillo and sheriff Alfredo de Mes did not stop him. [...]

"We earn by selling banana and vegetables, enough to put food on the table," Dina said. "Now, we have nothing. I have to do laundry work so we could eat." [...]

Collective farm

Earlier that same day, at around 7:00 a.m., the same group went to the local headquarters [...] of the Alyansa ng mga Manggagawang-Bukid sa Asyenda Luisita (Ambala) in Silangan Street, Mapalacsiao village.

The DAR officials demanded that Ambala abandon the area because the lots were already allocated to other farmworker-beneficiaries (FWBs), particularly residents of another barangay, Lourdes, via the DAR's [...] raffle draws last year.

Ambala members negotiated and asked the officials to honor a previous agreement forged last May 16 between Ambala and local barangay officials in Hacienda Luisita, Diaz included, to settle disputes among residents and FWBs peacefully, particularly taking into consideration the rights of farmers with existing crops and those who have spent years of toil to develop farmlots for food production.

[...] at around 8:00 am, a red big tractor owned by the DAR,

manned by Diaz himself, proceeded to destroy Ambala's crops. More than a dozen fully-armed policemen stood by to serve as security while the group destroyed the crops.

Destroyed were around half a hectare of sweet potato (camote) scheduled for harvest on July 15 [among others][...].

DAR liable

Dina blamed the incident on DAR's raffle system of land distribution. The Catalan couple and other Ambala members in Balete and Mapalacsiao have been assigned lots in Motrico, Pando and Parang towns while those in Lourdes village, like Diaz, are assigned lots in Mapalacsiao.

Mapalacsiao is four kilometers away from Parang and eight to nine kilometers away from Motrico and Pando. Lourdes village, meanwhile, is three kilometers away from Mapalacsiao. [...]

Dina said the DAR personnel should be held accountable for the destruction of their crops.

"I am angry," Charlito said. "What could I do? They are powerful. They are from the government." [...]

In a statement, Ambala said, "The DAR is only posturing that it wants to install legitimate beneficiaries, but it only seeks to evict farmers engaged in palay and vegetable production to make way for the Cojuangcos' sugarcane aryendo."

Under the aryendo or lease system, Cojuangco financier agents offer P7,000 (\$160.29) a year lease to cash-strapped farmer-beneficiaries using documents from the DAR [...].

Ambala said that through the aryendo system, lots are re-concentrated back to the control of the Cojuangco-Aquino clan to sustain the sugarcane needs of the Central Azucarera de Tarlac sugar mill, even before the actual physical land distribution.

From the start, Ambala has been calling on the DAR to honor their collective farming, which is allowed under the CARP. The DAR refused and insisted on the raffle system of land distribution.

The Catalan couple is not giving up. "We will plant again," Dina said. "We will not allow them to drive us away." [...]

Sun.Star Davao, 03.07.2014

Charges set to be filed vs lawyer's killer

By Ivy C. Tejano

THE Special Investigation Task Group (SITG) is set to file charges before the City Prosecution Office (CPO) against the suspect in the murder of former Public Attorney's Office (PAO) lawyer Emmanuel L. Acuña Jr.

Davao Police Regional Office (PRO) deputy director for operations Sr. Supt. Aaron Aquino, in a press conference [...] said police authorities will soon file the charges.

"The suspect has been identified. [...] We are still in the process

of completing our investigation [...]," Aquino said. [...]

The Davao City Police Office (DCPO) earlier received information that the "person behind the murder" of Acuña will surrender anytime soon. [...]

Acuña, who used to serve at the public attorney's office, was shot in Lanang, Davao City on May 30 after sending off his girlfriend at the parking area of a bank. The victim sustained wound in his head and later died at the hospital.



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The task group Acuña has been looking into a love triangle or crime of passion as the motive behind the murder case of the lawyer. A witness said a man wearing white shirt was seen running after Acuña while firing a gun at him. The shooter then got in a black pick-up and sped off.

Sun.Star Pampanga, 04.07.2014

Exec: No politics in 'hacienda row'

PORAC -- Mayor Condralito Dela Cruz denied Friday that Porac officials "have a hand" in the on-going land dispute in Hacienda Dolores.

The mayor's reaction came after reports that the Philippine National Police (PNP) Headquarters in Camp Crame, Quezon City will now secure and maintain peace and order in the hacienda due to alleged involvement and influence of local politicians.

During a recent meeting held at the Department of Interior and Local Government-National Police Commission center in Manila between the Aniban ng Nagkakaisang Mamayan ng Hacienda Dolores (Aniban) and LLL Holdings, Inc., the land developer, it was reported that Porac Police requested for the transfer of the responsibility of security after violence escalated. [...]

He told Sun.Star Pampanga that the alleged "influencing of the

Bayan Muna Representative Carlos Isagani Zarate, who is also the chair of the Union of Peoples Lawyers in Mindanao (UPLM), in behalf of other lawyers, earlier condemned Acuña's murder and called on authorities to solve the case and arrest the perpetrator as soon as possible.

case" may have been misconstrued by their moves to find an amicable settlement to the dispute.

"All we want is that the issue between the Aniban and the developer be settled peacefully at the soonest possible time. But it is in the courts now and all we can do is help in maintaining peace and order and stop further violence," he said.

Chief of police Neil Miro added that their request for assistance from the PNP headquarters may have been "misunderstood."

"Our request was for the proper PNP unit to conduct the inventory of reported high powered firearms there. [...]" he said. [...]

The Pampanga Police Provincial Office will then submit a special report on the Hacienda Dolores controversy with their assessment and recommendation.

Philstar.com, 11.07.2014

AFP to respect court decision in Rosal daughter's case

By Alexis Romero

MANILA, Philippines - The military vowed to respect whatever decision handed by the court on the case of suspected communist rebel Andrea Rosal but is standing by its claim that she is a key figure of the New People's Army (NPA).

Armed Forces public affairs chief Lt. Col. Ramon Zagala said the Judge Advocate Generals' Office is still verifying the status of Rosal's case, which was reportedly dismissed by a local court.

[...] Zagala said Rosal has not publicly denied membership in the NPA, the armed wing of the communist movement in the country.

Earlier reports have quoted Edre Olalia, secretary-general of the National Union of People's Lawyers, as saying that the Pasig Regional Trial Court had cleared Rosal of kidnapping and mur-

der cases filed against her.

Rosal, however, will remain at the Taguig City jail to face a murder case filed against her.

Rosal, then eight months pregnant, was nabbed on March 27 by the military and National Bureau of Investigation personnel in Caloocan City.

Military officials said Rosal was arrested by virtue of warrants of arrest for kidnapping and murder issued in Mauban, Quezon. She was also tagged in a criminal case for attempted homicide filed in Luisiana-Cavinti in Laguna.

Rosal gave birth to a baby girl on May 17 but the infant died the following day. [...]

Asian Human Rights Commission, 21.07.2014

PHILIPPINES: Torture victim is grateful to those who helped him in his release

On June 23, we reported that Fernando Obedencio, a torture victim, was released after the court dismissed the fabricated charges laid on him for possession of illegal drugs. He was detained for nearly nine years.

The Moro Women Centre (MWC), the local group who documented and provided legal assistance to Obedencio, and the Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC), has exposed his case in public to draw the government's attention.

In August 2013, the AHRC expressed concern on the undue delay in the trial of his case since his arrest in September 2005

[...]. The court also failed, once again, to hear his case on schedule on October 2013 [...].

With the assistance of Dominador Lagare, human rights lawyer who represented Obedencio in court, he filed a petition asking the court to dismiss the case against him. His lawyer argued that the evidence against his client is very weak.

On June 23, the court granted Obedencio's petition, and dismissed the charges on him [...].

After his release, Obedencio has expressed his gratitude to the MWC, the AHRC and those who supported him [...].

Sun.Star Bacolod, 24.07.2014

Slain judge's son hits police for failure to arrest suspects

THE son of slain judge Henry Arles lamented Wednesday the failure of the police to arrest until this time the four suspected assassins of his father.

Philip Arles said that he doubts the seriousness of the police to arrest Rustom Puro, Marvin Salve, Gerald Tabujara, and Emmanuel Medes, who are free to go around their respective residences in Cauayan, Ilog and Kabankalan City. [...]

The Department of Justice recommended the filing of murder case against seven respondents, including Puro, Salve and

Tabujara, who are members of the Revolutionary Proletarian Army-Alex Boncayao Brigade (RPA-ABB). Medes is a casual employee of the municipal government of Ilog.

The three other respondents, Jessie Daguia, Eddie Fortunado, Alejandro Capunong, are also RPA-ABB members. They are detained with the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology in Kabankalan City.

Arles, then presiding judge of the Regional Trial Court Branch 61 in Kabankalan, was gunned down by men on board a tricycle



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while he was on his way home [...] on April 24, 2012. The Arles siblings also filed a murder complaint against former Negros Occidental Vice Gov. Genaro Alvarez Jr. and his son, former Ilog mayor and now vice mayor John Paul, and Cauayan Vice Mayor Jerry Tabujara, the alleged masterminds, but the DOJ dismissed the complaint against them due to insufficient

Phistar.com, 24.07.2014

Detained NDF consultants hit 'first-class' jail construction

By Dennis Carcamo

MANILA, Philippines - Female political prisoners at the Taguig City Jail (TCJ) on Thursday scored the government for constructing a "first class jail" for high profile detainees, such as Senators Bong Revilla, Jinggoy Estrada, Juan Ponce-Enrile and others involved in the pork barrel scam.

[...] The so-called state of the art jail is one of the projects allegedly funded by the Disbursement Acceleration Program (DAP). While the total cost of the jail construction remains unknown, an amount of P20 million from DAP was allocated for the said jail. [...] The facility can house three inmates in a room and will have a courtroom for the hearing of cases.

"Detainees in regular jails suffer are cramped in small spaces, there is shortage of beds; and there is lack of water supply and facilities for those who are sick," they said.

The political prisoners who are in the Taguig City Jail-female dorm are National Democratic Front of the Philippines peace consultant Ma. Loida Magpatoc, Gemma Carag, Marissa Espedido, Pastora Latagan, Evelyn Legaspi, Rhea Pareja, Miguela Peniero and Andrea Rosal.

Maria del Torres, the four-month pregnant women's rights activist was also detained at the TCJ-FD before she was brought to the Taguig-Pateros District Hospital due to threatened abor-

evidence.

Meanwhile, Philip Arles said they are planning to file a petition to transfer the detention of Daguia, Fortunado, and Capunong from the BJMP-Kabankalan.

Earlier, the Supreme Court granted his petition to transfer the trial from Kabankalan to Quezon City RTC.

tion.

The nine female political prisoners share the fourth floor of the TCJ with 130 other female inmates, with four cells allotted to them.

Some 28-35 detainees occupy the 6 meters by 3 meters cell. In each cell, at least 24 inmates use the triple bunk beds meant for 18 persons only; the rest of inmates sleep on the cold cement floor.

At the female dorm, the 1 meter by 30 meter corridor also serves as visiting and activity area for the 139 prisoners. The infirmary at the female dorm has neither a faucet nor a comfort room.

Female detainees said they live under such conditions while they see Gigi Reyes, who is also detained in the same jail for plunder charge, in her own room beside the warden's office on the first floor.

The women prisoners said they see much restaurant food is coming inside the TCJ for Reyes while they had to make do with the measly P50 a day food ration. [...]

"This will only widen the gap among prisoners. What do we need a first class jail for if almost all of the jails in the country do not meet the national and international standards?" they said.

PEACE PROCESS

MindaNews, 30.07.2014

GPH, MILF peace panels meet anew to finalize draft BBL; Senate, House leaders await draft BBL

By Carolyn O. Arguillas

COTABATO CITY - The peace panels of the government (GPH) and Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) are going to hold a "lengthy meeting" starting Aug 1 to finalize a "mutually acceptable" draft Bangsamoro Basic Law for submission to Congress, Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process Teresita Quintos-Deles said.

Deles told ANC [...] that the intention is "[...] they will meet until they finish the task".

Deles' announcement came on the same day leaders of both the Senate and the House of Representatives vowed in their respective opening remarks at the second regular session of the 16th Congress that they were just waiting for the submission of the draft Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL).

"We shall also work on the Bangsamoro Basic Law that will put an end to the decades-old conflict in Mindanao. It is our hope that Malacanang can transmit to us the proposed basic law as soon as possible," Senate President Franklin Drilon said. [...]

House Speaker Feliciano Belmonte acknowledged the "clamor for a BBL."

"Current realities challenge us to reexamine existing legislative policies on the governance of parts of Mindanao," he said, adding that the 16th Congress is "given the signal opportunity to

make history by passing a responsive Bangsamoro Basic Law that shall establish a solid framework for genuine peace and enduring stability in Mindanao within the bounds of the Constitution." [...]

The draft the Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL) was submitted to Malacanang (Office of the President) by the MILF-led 15-member joint government-MILF Bangsamoro Transition Commission on April 22. It took Malacanang two months to hand over the reviewed draft to the MILF on June 21.

MILF chair Al Haj Murad Ebrahim and MILF peace panel chair Mohagher Iqbal, also chair of the BTC, met with President Aquino in Hiroshima on June 24 [...].

Iqbal would later say the proposed revisions "heavily diluted" the BTC draft and would render the future Bangsamoro less autonomous than the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) that it seeks to replace.

The BTC passed a resolution on July 3 raising their concerns about the reviewed draft and elevated the matter to the peace panels who, despite three meetings [...] failed to reach [...] a draft "both sides can fully support and endorse."

Deles said the aim of the "lengthy meeting" starting August 1 is to finalize the draft BBL that would be submitted to Congress.

Inquirer Mindanao, 30.07.2014

Cops' release could help reopen talks with Reds, says Aquino adviser

By Allan Nawal

DAVAO CITY, Philippines - Monday's release of four police-

men held hostage by communist rebels for three weeks was an



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act of “goodwill” that may lead to a resumption of the stalled peace talks with the National Democratic Front, presidential adviser on the peace process Teresita Quintos-Deles said.

[...] The four policemen were seized during an NPA raid on a police station in the town of Alegria in Surigao del Norte last July 10.

[...] Deles said the release of the four captives through negotiations showed that issues could be resolved peacefully.

Jorge Madlos, NDF spokesperson, admitted that the negotiations were rough because of disagreements over the duration of a ceasefire but both sides eventually settled on a five-day localized ceasefire so that the policemen could be returned to their families.

Madlos said the NPA agreed to set aside the scheduled “trial” of the policemen in deference to the agreement forged with Interior Secretary Manuel Roxas II.

[...] “We reiterate our openness and serious intent to pursue peace negotiations with the (Communist Party of the Philippines) on the basis of a time-bound and doable agenda. We believe that our people deserve nothing less from the two parties than that they resume peace talks, which can offer a clear roadmap to a just and doable political settlement,” she [Deles] said.

Deles said for negotiations to resume, the communists have to “come to the table to find common solutions to our problems in peaceful dialogue, as Filipinos first and foremost.”

Peace talks with the communists were stalled when the NDF withdrew from the negotiating table over disagreements on the coverage of the Joint Agreement on Security and Immunity Guarantee.

It accused the government of insincerity.

FURTHER READINGS

Rappler.com, 28.07.2014

FULL TRANSLATION: Aquino's 5th State of the Nation Address

Good afternoon.

This is my fifth SONA; only one remains. We have a saying: Those who do not look back to the past, will never get to where they wish to go. Therefore, today it is only right for us to reflect on what we have gone through.

This was our situation in the past: To dream was an absurdity. We had a senseless bureaucracy; padded contracts had become the norm; and corruption was endemic to the system. [...]

Please click [here](#) to view the full translation of the Aquino’s 5th State of the Nation Address.