

# Decommissioning of 40K MILF combatants to encourage other groups

**MANILA** – The successful decommissioning of 40,000 Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) combatants could encourage other armed groups in Mindanao to turn in their weapons and return to the folds of the law, according to Presidential Peace Adviser Carlito G. Galvez.

"We will ensure that the MILF combatants who will undergo the decommissioning process will receive a decent comprehensive and sustainable socio-economic package," Galvez declared during Inter-Cabinet Cluster Mechanism on Normalization (ICCMN) meeting at the Malacañang Palace on Tuesday (Aug. 13).

"Now, if the other armed groups will see the fruits of this process, I believe they will be encouraged to join in the decommissioning process," he said.

Aside from the various Moro fronts whose members still bear weapons, there are still other armed groups operating in Mindanao such as private armies, communist insurgents, and extremist organizations.

According to the Presidential Peace Adviser, the main goal of the government is for non-state armed groups to become irrelevant in the country.

Galvez said that based on his informal conversations with representatives of these armed groups, some of them have already expressed their desire to be part of the decommissioning process.

"The willingness to give up their firearms is already a sign that they want to change their lives," he said.

**Normalization Track**

Under the Normalization Track, the combatants, their families

and communities will receive a comprehensive socio-economic package which includes social protection package, sustainable livelihood programs, capacity-building trainings, health benefits and educational assistance.

Through these interventions, it is envisioned that the ex-fighters will be able to return to mainstream society, and the six government acknowledged MILF camps and communities will be transformed into peaceful, productive and resilient communities.

For this year, at least 30 percent or 12,000 combatants will be decommissioned and their weapons put beyond use. Another 35 percent of the MILF forces will undergo the same procedure next year, while the rest will undergo the process until 2022 in time for the Exit Agreement between the government and the MILF.

The Normalization Track is anchored on the Annex on Normalization of the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro signed between the government and the MILF in 2014.

It is being carried out simultaneously with the Political Track of the peace agreement, which includes the ratification of the Bangsamoro Organic Law, and the establishment of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

President Rodrigo Roa Duterte earlier signed Executive Order No. 79 or the Annex on Normalization to consolidate whole of government-whole of nation peacebuilding initiatives under the Normalization Track.

Normalization is a multi-faceted strategy

which encompasses the key aspects of security, socio-economic development, sustainable livelihood, political participation, confidence-building, and transitional justice and reconciliation.

**Funds Approved**

Early this month, the Office of the President instructed the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) to release the PHP2.024-billion Normalization Fund for the 12,000 MILF combatants.

The Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process also entered into an agreement with the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) last week to manage the "immediate cash assistance" for the decommissioned combatants.

More than half of the funds are allocated for the cash assistance to be given to the combatants. The remaining funds will be used for the training, operationalization and sustainment of the Joint Peace and Security Teams (JPSTs).

The 6,000-member composite team is composed of military and police personnel, and MILF combatants. Its main function is to provide security in the areas where MILF forces will undergo the decommissioning process.

At present, there are about 225 MILF-Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Forces (BIAF) who are undergoing basic military training in Camp Lucero in the town of Carmen in North Cotabato.

**Normalization Phase on track**

Representing Cabinet Secretary Karlo Nograles, Undersecretary Jo Ann Burgos said "everything is proceeding as planned for

# PSWDO AND RJJWC HOLD CONSULTATION DIALOGUE ON JUSTICE SYSTEM'S 5 PILLARS



More than 90 members of the 5 Pillars of Justice System comprised of Family Court Judges, Prosecutors, Public Attorneys Office (PAO) Lawyers, Philippine National Police (PNP), and Local Social Welfare and Development Officers convened at the Ceremonial Hall of the Provincial Capitol Building in Trece Martires City on August 09, 2019 for a consultation dialogue to assess some prevailing issues of the youth and address the local government unit's concerns in handling children in conflict with the law (CICL) cases.

Officer-in-Charge of PCLEDO and PSWDO Consultant Atty. Khervy Reyes warmly welcomed all the attendees. In his message, he stressed out everyone's efforts to resolve the proliferation of juvenile crimes and proper implementation of Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act in the entire province. Meanwhile, on behalf of Governor Jonvic Remulla, Provincial Administrator for Community Affairs Mr. Alvin Mojica, shared updates on the progress of constructing the Bahay Pag-Asa in the municipality of Indang. He also emphasized the provincial government's continuous support to programs and projects that will cater the minors and provide immediate action in accordance with the law.

Head Secretariat of the Regional Juvenile Justice and Welfare Committee Ms. Joanne Caño discussed and elaborated the enhanced process flowcharts explaining the R.A. 9344 as amended by R.A. 10630. The flowchart shows basis on how to manage CICL cases and Child at Risk (CAR) for assessment of Law Enforcement Officer (LEO), LSWDO, Katarungang Pam-

barangay, and Women and Children Protection Desk (WCPD).

Police Chief Master Sergeant Vivian Bernas presented the CICL cases of Cavite for the two previous years. A total of 96 cases were received in 2017 while 95 cases in 2018. She also mentioned the need for temporary shelters or facilities in some areas of the province.

PSWDO Social Welfare Officer I Ms. Aurelia Cainday-Mendoza conveyed the consolidated issues and concerns in handling CICL and CAR submitted by different LSWDO in line with the implementation of R.A. 9344. During the forum, panelists were Judge Adeliza H. Magno- Gingoyon of RTC Branch 4 (Family Court)- City of Imus, Judge Raquel V. Aspiras- Sanchez of RTC Branch 3 (Family Court)- Tagaytay City, Judge Flordeliz E. Cabanlit- Fargas of RTC Branch 5 (Family Court)- Trece Martires City, Asst. City Prosecutor-OCP Imus Atty. Glenn Raymond Paradela, Head of Protective Services Division-DSWD Ms. Eloisa Rogado and Ms. Caño. Every difficult topic was discussed and clarified for easy understanding. They also provided suggestions that can help eliminate the crimes and problems.

Highlight of the event was the commitment setting wherein each pillar was asked to write down their promises which signify their dedication in protecting the welfare of children and promoting harmonious relationship.

The event was facilitated by the Provincial Social Welfare and Development Office (PSWDO) in collaboration with the Regional Juvenile Justice and Welfare Committee (RJJWC) Region IV-A CALABARZON. -- (PICAD)

the implementation of the Normalization program for the new Bangsamoro Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao.

Burgos said the ICCMN "is mandated to ensure the timely, appropriate and efficient delivery of services under the Normalization program in the Bangsamoro."

She said the national government is determined to effectively implement a Whole-Of-Nation approach as it helps to capacitate the BARMM interim government.

"We need to get all government agencies to seriously work together, especially when it comes to peace and development in Mindanao," Burgos said. (PR)

# PNP beefs up 'cyber-patrolling' vs. terror attacks

**MANILA** -- The Philippine National Police (PNP) will strengthen its cyber-patrolling to curb illegal and terrorism-related activities in online platforms.

Brig. Gen. Dennis Agustin, PNP Anti-Cyber-crime Group (ACG) director, said this measure includes thorough gathering of information and details to thwart any possible illegal activities.

"We are now looking into some online sites that may serve as a platform to promote and provide open grounds to plot and exhibit violence and terrorism," Agustin said.

The PNP-ACG has also conducted a probe on a Philippines-based

website that is being linked to the recent mass shooting incident in the United States that left more than 20 people dead.

Agustin, in a report, revealed that the present owner of "8Chan" or Infinite Chan/Infinity Chan" Jim Watkins is probably still in the Philippines but has since moved out of his leased apartment.

The website 8Chan, which allegedly contains racist posts and commentaries, is reportedly owned and maintained by an American who has been living in the Philippines for more than a decade now.

It is being linked to the mass shooting in El Paso, Texas as the site allegedly allows posting of racists commentaries that may spur a person to carry out attacks.

Agustin said cyber-patrolling will also help determine and confirm the whereabouts of Watkins and his online operations since he is currently based in the country.

PNP chief Gen. Oscar Albayalde earlier assured that the police force remains vigilant and continues to be aggressive in intelligence and information gathering to quell any possible terror threats.