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MANILA -- The victims' families see justice coming soon in the case of the Maguindanao massacre. "We are hoping that promulgation of judgment will be this November in time for the 10th anniversary of the Ampatuan, Maguindanao massacre, November 23, 2009," lawyer Nena Santos, one of the private prosecutors in the case told a media briefing in Quezon City on Tuesday. Santos said they are expecting a guilty verdict for "all principal accused", if not for all 197 co-accused in the case. The attack resulted in the death of 58 people, including 32 journalists and media workers, the single worst peace-time incident involving the killing of newsmen. Other victims were family members and supporters of the Ampatuan clan's political foe, Esmael Mangudadatu. "(A)fter the massacre, there were already political personnel, or personages

that occupied the different positions in the province of Maguindanao and several politicians already occupied different positions aside from the Ampatuans. Yes, they (Ampatuans) still have municipalities where they are mayors, vice mayors, or relatives are in the Sangguniang Bayan in the areas where the Ampatuan clan control, so there are about 6 of them in Maguindanao," Santos said. Santos said a number of factors caused the delay in resolution of the case. "Maraming dahilan (There were a lot of reasons). They all said napakarami ng akusado, pangalawa, ang daming defense counsels, ang daming change of lawyers, ang daming motions filed, witnesses na tinakot, pinatay, pina-recant. Ito lahat, (There was a lot of accused, defense counsels and changes of lawyers, a number of motions filed, witnesses intimidated, killed

and forced to recant their statements. All these) (are) a confluence of events)," she said. The Quezon City Region-

al Trial Court earlier turned down a plea by accused Datu Andal "Unsay" Ampatuan to delay the promulgation of the court's judgment in the cases arising from the Maguindanao massacre. In her five-page order, Branch 221 Judge Jocelyn A. Solis-Reyes denied the motion to re-open trial with a motion to suspend period to set the promulgation of judgment filed by Ampatuan on October 14.

New deportation rules to take effect in 2 weeks: DOJ

MANILA -- New rules on deportation appeals will take effect in two weeks, a Department of Justice (DOJ) official said Wednesday as Department Circular 023, or the Omnibus Rules and Regulations on Appeals, on immigration and immigration-related matters was published in a newspaper of general circulation. "These rules will take effect after 15 days," Justice Undersecretary Markk Perete told reporters. The new rules include provisions that foreigners ordered deported will have to leave in 30 days even though their appeals are still pending before the DOJ, following the requirements of the Administrative Code, Perete said. He, however, said the proposed refinement on the visa on arrival policy of the Bureau of Immigration (BI) remains unresolved.

"It's still under study. We hope to complete our study and recommendation on the draft proposal within the month," Perete said. In July last year, the BI ordered the deportation of Australian nun Patricia Fox for engaging in political activities in the country, a violation of the terms of her missionary visa. She appealed the order at the bureau but it was later junked. Fox's missionary visa expired on Sept. 5, 2018 but she was given a temporary visitor's visa with a 59-day validity. She eventually left the country on Nov. 3, 2018. In July this year, Foreign Affairs Secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr. proposed the removal of the visa on arrival policy for Chinese nationals visiting the country. He said Chinese nationals must undergo a vetting process at Philippine consular offices before securing a visa. (PNA)

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PNP donates P2-M relief goods to Mindanao quake victims

MANILA -- The Philippine National Police (PNP) on Wednesday said it has provided PHP2 million worth of relief goods to the victims of the recent earthquakes that jolted parts of Mindanao. PNP spokesperson, Brig. Gen. Bernard Banac said PNP officer-in-charge (OIC), Lt. Gen. Archie Francisco Gamboa arrived in Makilala, North Cotabato on Wednesday to turn over the relief goods which include food, water, tents among others. "Yes, at present our OIC is visiting quake-affected areas to personally turn over PHP2 million worth of relief goods to earthquake victims," Banac told reporters in a press briefing Wednesday.

Banac said the relief goods came from the donation of all PNP personnel who were previously asked by Gamboa to donate at least PHP10. He added that all goods were received by officials of the local Disaster Risk Reduction Management Councils (DRRMCs).

On Monday, Gamboa assured that the PNP will provide financial assistance to the policemen affected by the swarm of earthquakes in Mindanao. Meanwhile, a total of 2,756 PNP personnel in Northern Mindanao, Davao and Soccsksargen regions were fielded for search, rescue, and relief operations in the affected areas. Three earthquakes hit parts of Mindanao in October. On October 16, a magnitude 6.3 earthquake struck Tulunan, North Cotabato around 7:37 p.m. at a depth of eight kilometers. On October 29, a magnitude 6.6 hit the southeastern part of Tulunan, North Cotabato around 9:04 a.m. again which reportedly caused damages to some of the structures in Mindanao. On October 31, a magnitude 6.5 earthquake struck Tulunan, Cotabato anew with a depth of two kilometers. (PNA)

“Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and He will flee from you.” – James 4:7