

Duterte slams Iceland for abortion policy

MANILA -- President Rodrigo Duterte on Tuesday night lambasted Iceland for legalizing abortion but expressed concern in ensuring the human rights of drug syndicates.

Duterte said he hoped that Iceland, which recently sponsored a resolution at the United Nation Human Rights Council (UNHRC) to look into the government's anti-illegal drug campaign would "freeze in time".

"Iceland allows the slaughter of the fetus inside the womb of the mother up to six months. P**** i** nila. They worry more of the drug lords at itong mga (and these) who are pushing drugs, killing our citizens, and creating a social dysfunction in almost all tinamaan (being affected)," Duterte said, during the 31st anniversary celebration of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CA-

RP) at the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) main office in Quezon City.

"Tapos tinuturuan ako kung ano ang gawin ko (And then you teach me what to do). I am sorry for you. That's why you are condemned there in the ice forever. I hope you will freeze in time," he said.

Duterte said that although he supported several family-planning methods, including contraception after seeing how poor Filipinos have suffered, he will not allow an abortion policy in the country.

"Of course, abortion is out of the question. I will not allow it. Just like itong (this) Iceland who initiated that signature campaign to condemn us sa (when it comes to) extrajudicial killing," Duterte said.

Duterte described Iceland's policy of allowing abortion as "shameless".

"You allow an innocent human being already thriving and living inside the mother's body. Pagkawalang hiya itong mga puti talaga (These white people are shameless)," he added.

Iceland currently allows for an abortion until the end of the 22nd week of pregnancy.

Duterte also pointed out how Iceland failed to see how several civilians get killed every day because of the illegal drug trade.

"Hindi nila naintindihan, 'yung mga g***** 'yan. Kaya itong mga Iceland, palibhasa ice ang kain, wala namang tubig 'yan eh. Bobo ang mga p***** i** niya (They don't understand. That's why the people from Iceland, since they eat ice, that's not water. They're stupid)," Duterte said.

Iceland's resolution prompted Duterte to "seriously consider" cutting ties with the Nordic country. (PNA)

219 ex-MILF combatants finish military training as peacekeepers

CAMP LUCERO, North Cotabato -- Two hundred nineteen former combatants of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) completed their 26-day basic military training (BMT) here Tuesday (Aug. 27) to serve as peacekeepers.

The training is a requirement for the former combatants to become part of the composite Joint Peace and Security Team (JPST). The graduates will now form the 6,000-strong JPST contingent that will be composed of 3,000 MILF, 1,600 Philippine National Police (PNP), and 1,400 Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) members.

The 6,000-member JPST will be divided into several teams whose main task is to maintain peace and security in the MILF communities that will undergo the normalization process within and outside the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM).

The Normalization Track is part of the implementation of the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro which the government and the MILF signed in 2014.

At the heart of the Normalization Track is the decommissioning of 40,000 MILF combatants wherein their weapons will be put beyond use. The MILF camps will also be transformed into peaceful, progressive, and resilient communities.

The entire process is expected to be completed within a three-year period, starting this year until 2022 in time for the signing of the Exit Agreement between the government and the MILF.

On September 7, President Rodrigo Roa Duterte is expected to lead the public launching of the decommissioning process of the MILF combatants and their weapons.

Historic event

Speaking on behalf of the BARMM Interim Chief Minister Ahod Ebrahim, Al-Hajj Mu-

rad, Minister of Finance, and Budget and Management Eduard Guerra described the graduation ceremony as a historic event for the Bangsamoro peace process.

"You are now part of history as you will be the first batch of JPST to be deployed where you will be joining your comrades from the PNP and contingents from the Army," Guerra said.

"I am really impressed. This is beyond my expectations. You really persevered in your training. You keep that perseverance and patience in your hearts and minds," he added.

Joint efforts as one security force

Though the participants belong to different organizations -- MILF, AFP, and PNP -- being members of the JPST has united them as one peacekeeping force.

"Wala na tayong pinagkaiba, iisa na tayo ngayon... Napakahalaga ng inyong gagawing tungkulin sa decommissioning process na mag-

Taguig reclaims 90% of public roads used for private purposes

MANILA -- In line with President Rodrigo Duterte's directive, Taguig has reclaimed 90 percent of its public roads being used for private purposes, Taguig City Mayor Lino Cayetano said on Wednesday.

Cayetano said the accomplishment comes halfway into the 60-day deadline imposed by the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) for all roads in every local government unit to be cleared of obstructions.

The DILG imposed the deadline after Duterte, in his fourth state of the nation address last July 22, asked all the local government units (LGUs) to reclaim all public roads to lessen traffic congestion.

"In Taguig, we have made sure that all roads are being used, accessed and fully utilized by the public," Cayetano said.

Though Taguig City government has already been conducting clearing operations since 2010, Cayetano said Duterte's directive has inspired the city council to pass an ex-



ROAD CLEARING. Taguig City personnel in one of their road clearing operations in line with President Rodrigo Duterte's directive to local government units to reclaim public roads. Taguig City Mayor Lino Cayetano said the city is now 90 percent compliant. (Photo courtesy of Taguig PIO)

ecutive order focusing on a long-term solution to improve mobility in the city.

"We just intensified our clearing operations and we are continuing to work with the community so we can move to the next phase of our mobility operation," Cayetano said.

He said there is a need to improve policy, transform the culture of the people and build infrastructure to sustain the cleared roads.

The city has an existing Vehicle Pedestrian and Mobility Plan

he concluded.

Functions of JPST

Two hundred JPSTs will be created and deployed throughout Mindanao. Each team is composed of 15 MILF members, eight policemen, and seven soldiers.

The JPST will be under the oversight of the Joint Peace and Security Committee (JPSC), which is composed of six officials -- one representative each from the AFP, PNP, and Government Implementing Panel, and three coming from the MILF leadership.

Aside from securing MILF communities that will undergo the decommission process, JPSTs will also help track and document private armed groups and other lawless elements, as well as "reduce and control" the proliferation of undocumented firearms in

the concerned areas.

Moreover, the JPST are expected to help enforce the existing ceasefire agreement between the government and MILF, and prevent the outbreak of hostilities.

MILF-BIAF ready for Normalization Process

During the graduation ceremony, the former MILF combatants reunited with their families after their almost month-long training. The graduates were also provided with financial and food assistance.

"Masaya kaming lahat pati yung mga kasama ko na natapos na ang training namin pero hindi pa dito nagtatapos ang lahat. Dapat ay pagbutihan namin ang aming trabaho hindi lang pag-secure ng Bangsamoro kundi sa ikakabuti ng mamamayan dito sa Mindanao (We are all happy, including my com