

## **POWS Release on Humanitarian Grounds despite AFP ignorance of International Humanitarian Law**

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The Merado Arce Command-Southern Mindanao Regional Operations Command – New People's Army has ordered the release of Sgt. Napoleon P. Gerasmio of the Army Reserve Command (ARESCOM-Philippine Army, SN 760645) and Sgt. Huberto C. Corbita of the Special Operations Command (SOCOM-AFP, SN 780628) after 12 days of captivity as Prisoners of War (POWS) of the Conrado Heredia Command-Front 20 Operations Command-NPA. The issuance of this order is a unilateral act of the revolutionary political authority over the POWs and is based on humanitarian grounds. We have given due consideration to the appeals made by their respective families and those that emanated from well-meaning friends in the various sectors, including those from the GRP local government units.

The arrest of the Philippine army enlisted personnel is a legitimate military action by the New People's Army. Despite the mouthful of desperate distortions spewed by 10th ID-AFP officers, they cannot do away with the fact that International Humanitarian Law clearly extends a blanket of legitimacy to such actions. The AFP officialdom is ignorant of Protocol II of the Geneva Convention which defines as legitimate military targets all members of the armed forces of warring parties in an armed conflict, except their medical personnel and religious chaplains. That the two POWS are armed and active in the over all conduct of their military functions that form a direct and integral part of the AFP's counter revolutionary war is an incontrovertible fact. Hence, the deafening silence by these AFP mouthpieces on this matter is conspicuously suspected.

Contrary to the 28th IB-AFP Lt. Col. Bienvenido Datuin's infantile pronouncements, the arrest, appropriate declaration as POWS, custodial detention, investigative proceedings and release on humanitarian grounds by a proper political organization manifest, among others, the existence of a revolutionary system of laws, justice and governance that asserts itself against the ruling semi-colonial semi- feudal system.

Indeed, the masses and the numerous POWS can see the ocean of difference between the puppet and abusive AFP and the revolutionary people's army.

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