

## **US Troops Involved in Counter-Guerrilla Operations in Mindanao**



Remains of US Humvee after hitting IED, killing 2 US soldiers in Sulu, Philippines, September 29, 2009

### **US troops engaged in counter-guerrilla operations in Bukidnon**

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The National Democratic Front (NDF)-Mindanao has received more information regarding the actual participation of US soldiers in combat operations in Mindanao. This time, the operations are not just in Basilan and Sulu, but in other areas of the island as well. According to confirmed reports, US military personnel have been playing an active role in combat operations against the NPA in the hinterlands of Bukidnon.

Four separate incidents were initially cited. Around mid-February and in early July, US soldiers were seen participating in combat operations in Quezon, Bukidnon. These troops, together with a unit of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), engaged an NPA unit in a firefight and committed fascist acts against the residents in the area. In April and again in September, US troops were also sighted with AFP soldiers in Valencia and Malaybalay asking local residents for possible NPA locations and even intimidating civilians in the area.

Aside from these reports, the NDF-Mindanao has also received similar information from reliable sources in South Cotabato, Central Mindanao and the Davao provinces.

The increasing participation of US troops in combat operations in Moro areas have become even more common. Last September, at least two US soldiers were killed in an armed attack against a convoy of US troops in Indangan, Sulu.

Earlier that month, US troops in a knee-jerk reaction to a nearby grenade explosion fired their guns indiscriminately at the port of Jolo, Sulu, damaging dock facilities and a nearby mosque. Back in 2002, a US Army serviceman, Sgt. Reggie Lane, embedded among troops of the 18th IB, shot Buyong-buyong Isnijal, a farmer in Basilan whom a combined team of US and Filipino soldiers raided his house.

These reports increasingly expose the lies behind the template pronouncements of US officials denying the actual involvement of its troops in combat operations in Mindanao. They provide further evidence that US troops belonging to the Joint Special Operations Task Force (JSOTF)-Philippines have been joining AFP units engaged in counterrevolutionary operations in the island.

Even as US and Philippine officials are quick to deny that US soldiers are engaged in combat operations, they do not deny that the US military has been actively involved in providing the AFP with combat and aerial intelligence as well as logistical support to AFP ground operations.

These incidents point clearly to increasing US military intervention and fascist atrocities in league with local puppet troops.

The NDF-Mindanao will continue to expose incidents of US military involvement in actual combat operations in the country, especially against the revolutionary forces and the people. Local commands of the New People's Army in Bukidnon have been instructed to closely monitor the movements of US soldiers and their participation in counterrevolutionary and antipeople military activities.

The NDF-Mindanao supports the recent efforts by Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago, chair of the senate committee on foreign affairs to review the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA). We, however, believe that these efforts must not simply lead to amending some vague provisions of the agreement. Instead, the NDF-Mindanao echoes the call of patriotic Filipinos nationwide for the abrogation of the VFA, the Military Logistics Support Agreement (MLSA) and other one-sided military treaties.

It is these agreements that provide the framework for the US to permanently station its troops in the Philippines, engage in outright military intervention and wage war against the national democratic revolutionary movement in the country.

The NDF-Mindanao calls on the Filipino people to wage an allout, renewed, aggressive and sustained campaign against continuing US military intervention in the country.

We also urge the American people to demand the pullout of American troops permanently stationed in the Philippines and the cessation of US military interventionism in the country. We call on our Filipino compatriots in the US and other countries to help heighten public awareness in their host countries and internationally about US military intervention in the Philippines.