

# CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS: Tukanalipao, Mamasapano Incident

Account of the Ceasefire Mechanisms under the GPH-MILF Peace Process

25

JANUARY 2015

## First notice of the firefight to the GPH-AHJAG

**5:37AM** GPH-AHJAG Chair BGen Manolito Orense receives a call from SAF Commander PDir Getulio Napeñas, Jr., asking him to inform and coordinate with the MILF through the MILF-AHJAG that the SAF will conduct an operation in a few minutes. BGen Orense tells PDir Napeñas that he would try to coordinate with MILF-AHJAG Chairman Atty. Abdul Dataya despite the very short notice.



**05:42AM** PDir Napeñas calls BGen Orense to inform him that they were withdrawing from the area and asks for assistance.



**05:47AM** BGen Orense calls 601 Bde Commander Col Melquiades Feliciano and instructs him to coordinate with local MILF commanders to halt the firing and provide assistance to the withdrawing SAF troops.



**05:53AM** BGen Orense sends SMS to PDir Napeñas:

*“09175120085 – sir paki coordinate lang ke col mel feliciano, 601bde cmdr re your withdrawal para maalalayan nila kyo from the milf.”*



- PNP-SAF – Philippine National Police Special Action Force
- GPH – Government of the Philippines
- MILF – Moro Islamic Liberation Front
- ID – Infantry Division
- IB – Infantry Brigade
- BIAF – Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Forces
- BIFF – Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters
- CCCH – Coordinating Committee on the Cessation of Hostilities
- AHJAG – Ad Hoc Joint Action Group
- IMT – International Monitoring Team

## First notice of the firefight to the GPH-CCCH from the MILF-CCCH



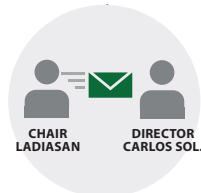
**6:38AM** Government CCCH first learns about the firefight via an SMS from MILF-CCCH Chair Rasid Ladiasan to GPH-CCCH Chair BGen Carlito Galvez and its Head of Secretariat, Director Carlos Sol. BGen Galvez and Dir. Sol were in Butig, Lanao del Sur accompanying members of the Independent Decommissioning Body (IDB) in a site visit<sup>1</sup> to Camp Bushra, an identified camp of the MILF. Ladiasan's message said:

***"Salam bro, firefight erupted between the AFP and the 105BC at Tukanalipao, Mamasapano. The AFP troops moved in without any coordination and this is difficult to control to avoid encounters between our forces when there is no coordination. This is clearly disregarding and violating the ceasefire. Now with that situation the only option is to ceasefire otherwise it will escalate further".***

GPH-CCCH verifies firefight with 1st Mechanized Infantry Bde, 601st Infantry Bde, G3, 6th ID and the Police Provincial Office (PPO) Maguindanao.

Contacts from the military units confirm the ongoing firefight, but deny the involvement of military troops.

PPO-Maguindanao informs the GPH-CCCH that troops belonging to the PNP-SAF were involved in the encounter. Their mission was to apprehend Zulkipli Bin Hir, alias "Marwan/Madz" and Basit Usman.



**6:42AM** Ladiasan sends SMS to Dir. Sol:

***"We have to ceasefire bro before its too late. Ano kaya bro kung puntahan natin sa area baka may staff kayo kasama at IMT bro ma invite mo sila" (We have to ceasefire, brother, before it is too late. What if we go to the area, you and your staff. Also the IMT, you can invite them.)***

## Organization of the Crisis Team



**7:30AM** Dir. Sol calls up Mr. William Hovland, IMT Chief Operations Officer to invite the IMT to join in forming a "Joint Ceasefire Crisis Team" whose mission would be to negotiate a ceasefire, separate the two contending forces, assist in the evacuation of casualties, assess the situation of internally displaced persons (IDPs), and help stabilize the situation.

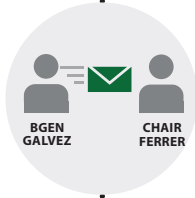
BGen Galvez and Dir. Sol leave Iligan City.

BGen Galvez proceeds to meet with AHJAG Chair Gen Orense and MGen Edmundo Pangilinan, Commander of the 6th ID, at the Tactical Command Post in Awang, Maguindanao to assess the situation in Mamasapano.

<sup>1</sup> The visit to Camp Bushra was part of the IDB's activities in preparation for undertaking its mandate of overseeing the process of decommissioning of MILF combatants and weapons, as provided for in the Annex on Normalization. The IDB is composed of three foreigners and four Filipinos. Camp Bushra is also among the six identified MILF camps that would be "transformed into peaceful and productive communities" under the Annex on Normalization.

**07:31AM** Atty. Dataya returns the calls and SMSs of BGen Orense. BGen Orense asks him if he could take action on the situation. Atty. Dataya says he would immediately call BIAF Headquarters in Camp Darapanan.

The two AHJAG chairs continue to communicate.



**07:33AM** BGen Galvez sends SMS to GPH Panel Chair Miriam Coronel-Ferrer informing her of the developing situation.



**9:00AM** The Joint Ceasefire Crisis Team or the "Crisis Team" composed of representatives from the GPH-CCCH, the MILF-CCCH, the Joint Ceasefire Monitoring Post (JCMP) posted in Kitango in Datu Saudi Ampatuan, and the IMT, assembles at the IMT Headquarters in Cotabato City.

They proceed to Brgy. Kuloy, Shariff Aguak, Maguindanao to meet with Ustadz Zacaria Goma, Base Commander of the 105thBC, BIAF-MILF, and Ustadz Wahid Tundok, Base Commander of the 118thBC, BIAF-MILF. Brgy. Kuloy is about 60 km from Cotabato City.

The Crisis Team plans how to convince the PNP-SAF and the BIAF-MILF to declare a ceasefire and end the hostilities.



**10:34AM** BGen Galvez, en route from Iligan City, texts Ladiasan that they already advised a ceasefire to the PNP, saying:

***"We already gave advise to the PNP to ceasefire. Request 105th BC to ceasefire also"***

## Meeting with the BIAF Commanders; Effecting the Ceasefire



**11:30AM** The Crisis Team arrives in Brgy. Kuloy and the meeting with the 118th and 105th BIAF Base Commanders begins around 12 noon at Ustadz Goma's residence.

TUKANALIPAO



**12:10PM** BGen Galvez arrives at the Tactical Command Post in Camp Awang and joins MGen Edmundo Pangilinan, Commander of 6th ID, and Gen Orense to assess the situation in Mamasapano.

Meanwhile, the Crisis Team in Kuloy agrees to immediately effect a ceasefire and allow the passage of the PNP-SAF from the encounter site to safe areas located in Tuka, Mamasapano. The goal was to create a reasonable gap between the two contending forces and allow the evacuation of casualties.

The Crisis Team divides into two groups. The first group--to be led by Ustadz Tundok Wahid and his men, proceeds to the actual encounter site in Tukanalipao to inform BIAF sub-commanders of the call for ceasefire, and implement the repositioning of both forces. The second group--headed by Rasid Ladianan with Ronnie Arap and Dave Jungco of the GPH-CCCH Secretariat; Butch Malang, and Toks Upham of the MILF-CCCH Secretariat; Suharto Elhad of the JCMP-Kitango, and Mr. Hovland of the IMT, all of whom were unarmed--proceeds to Tuka, Mamasapano where a tactical command post had been established by the PNP and AFP.

To ensure safety and coordination in their movements<sup>2</sup>, BGen Galvez informs Ladianan that MGen Pangilinan, Commander of 6th ID was already aware of the movement of the Crisis Team to the area of the 105th BC and the 45th IB.

Ladianan updates Dir. Sol, that the second group is moving toward the 45th IB and that Wahid's group is working on the pull-out of the 105th sub-commanders and men.

***"Papunta na kami sa military sa 45IB sila Wahid mag pull-out tropa ng 105BC, kami naman with IMT sa military para tumulong maextricate PNP SAF. Paalis na kami sa kuloy sa base ni Zacaria Goma. Paki inform lang wag ma alarm sa bahay ni Goma marami tropa security nya yon".***

Ustadz Goma stays in his house in Kuloy.

TUKA



**12:55PM** The second group arrives at Tuka at the position of the 45th IB. The group relays to PSup Henry Mangaldan and PSI Michael John Mangahis of the PNP-SAF and Lt Col Romeo Bautista of the 45th IB that a ceasefire has been agreed in the meeting with the two BIAF commanders in Kuloy.

Sporadic gunfire could be heard from the direction of Tukanalipao. The Crisis Team learns that Wahid's group came under fire while moving towards the encounter site to effect the ceasefire.

About 15 minutes later, while the PNP-SAF were disseminating the call for a ceasefire by phone, radio, and personal contact to the troops on the ground, gunshots were again heard coming from three different directions.

<sup>2</sup> All activities of the Crisis Team were also relayed to the Bde Commander of the 1st Mechanized Infantry Bde, 601stBde and the OIC, PNP PRO ARMM for their information and guidance.

The second group of the Crisis Team quickly takes cover at the roadside near the banana trees at the side of the irrigation canal. They wait for the go signal of Ustadz Tundok that they can already leave Tuka to proceed to the encounter site in Tukanalipao.



**1:15PM** The second group receives a radio call from Ustadz Tundok advising that the other members of the Crisis Team can enter the encounter area to assess the situation and determine what other assistance can be given to help resolve the problem.

The second group pulls out from Tuka and proceeds to the Office of the Municipal Mayor of Mamasapano Mayor Benzhar Ampatuan to request assistance from the Mayor and the Brgy. Chairman of Tukanalipao.



**2:04PM** While still in Awang, BGen Galvez calls Chair Coronel-Ferrer to update her on the situation and the steps the CCCH is undertaking. He leaves Awang with MGen Pangilinan shortly thereafter.

**2:20PM** BGen Orense was assured by his AHJAG counterpart, Atty. Dataya, that the BIAF chief of staff already ordered all MILF commanders not to move.



**2:30PM** In a subsequent text message to BGen Orense, Atty. Dataya said that the MILF-CCCH was already in the encounter site.



**3:00PM** BGen Galvez and MGen Pangilinan arrive in the Tactical Command Post of the 1st Mechanized Infantry Brigade at the Provincial Capitol, Shariff Aguak to closely monitor the situation.



## Entry to Tukanalipao



**3:30PM** The Crisis Team attempts to enter the encounter area in Tukanalipao. However, they observe movement of armed men in the area and could not push through.

Members of the community report 32 cadavers are in the area. The info is forwarded to PC Supt Napeñas of PNP-SAF and PS Supt Armilla, OIC Regional Director of the PNP PRO-ARMM, who, at that time, were staying at the Headquarters of the 1st Mechanized Infantry Brigade in Poblacion, Shariff Aguak, Maguindanao.



**4:00PM** Gunfire could no longer be heard. Members of the BIAF 105th BC have completely pulled out of the area.

Both groups of the Crisis Team, together with Tukanalipao barangay officials, enter the site where they found cadavers scattered on the ground and in the nearby river.

They notice a group of armed men in the immediate vicinity who were later identified as belonging to the BIFF under Commanders Bongos, Bisaya, and Indal.

The Crisis Team returns to the municipal hall and informs the Mayor about the situation and requests for equipment to retrieve the cadavers.

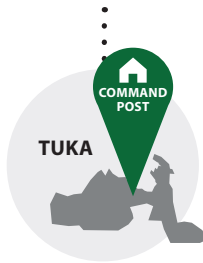


**5:20PM** The Crisis Team goes back to the engagement site with two Kuliglig tractors and an ambulance to start the retrieval operation. It was decided that the cadavers will be brought by the Team to the highway where PNP-SAF officers were waiting.

While retrieving the cadavers, the Crisis Team hears gunshots from the northeast direction more or less two (2) kilometers away from the encounter site.

At about the same time, Dir. Sol receives a phone call from BGen Galvez informing him that there remains another group of PNP-SAF being fired upon by an armed group nearby.

BGen Galvez calls the MILF-CCCH. Ladianan gives assurance that no more MILF-BIAF troops remain in the area and that the PNP-SAF were likely engaging the BIFF.



**5:40PM** The Crisis Team goes back to the tactical command post in Tuka. There, LTC Romeo Bautista, CO of the 45th IB explains to the MILF-CCCH the situation and the need to facilitate the rescue of the surviving PNP-SAF more or less one kilometer north-east of Tukanalipao. The elements of the 6th ID's Reconnaissance Company (DRC) were to assist in extricating the said PNP-SAF from the area.

Ladiasan agrees and advises all BIAF forces nearby not to hamper the movement of the PNP-SAF.

Twenty-eight surviving PNP-SAF officers with 11 wounded, were successfully extricated by the Army by dawn of the following day. One of the wounded died on the way to the Provincial Integrated Health Office.



**9:30PM** Mamasapano LGU officials inform the Crisis Team that five cadavers of PNP-SAF officers had been turned over to the PNP-SAF.

The Crisis Team suspends the retrieval operations due to darkness and security concerns.

**26** JANUARY 2015



**5:30AM** Retrieval operations resume and completed in the afternoon.

**6:00PM** The Crisis Team immediately deactivates and members return to the CCCH and IMT offices in Cotabato City in the afternoon of the same day.