

UN body to PH: Investigate EJKs

By Beting Laygo Dolor, Editor-in-Chief

MANILA -- Forty five out of the 47 member-states of the United Nations Human Rights Committee (UNHRC) gave the Philippines failing marks during the recent Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the country's rights situation.

The UN body's near unanimous call for the Philippines to investigate the extrajudicial killings (EJKs) that have taken place since Rodrigo Duterte assumed the presidency 10 months ago came after Senator Alan Peter Cayetano had defended the government's record in Geneva, Switzerland this week.

The UPR concluded that the Philippine report submitted to the UNHRC was inaccurate as it did not reflect what was happening on the ground.

Human rights violations in the country are "state sponsored, systemic, and have affected a great majority of the Philippine population," a statement released Monday, May 8, said.

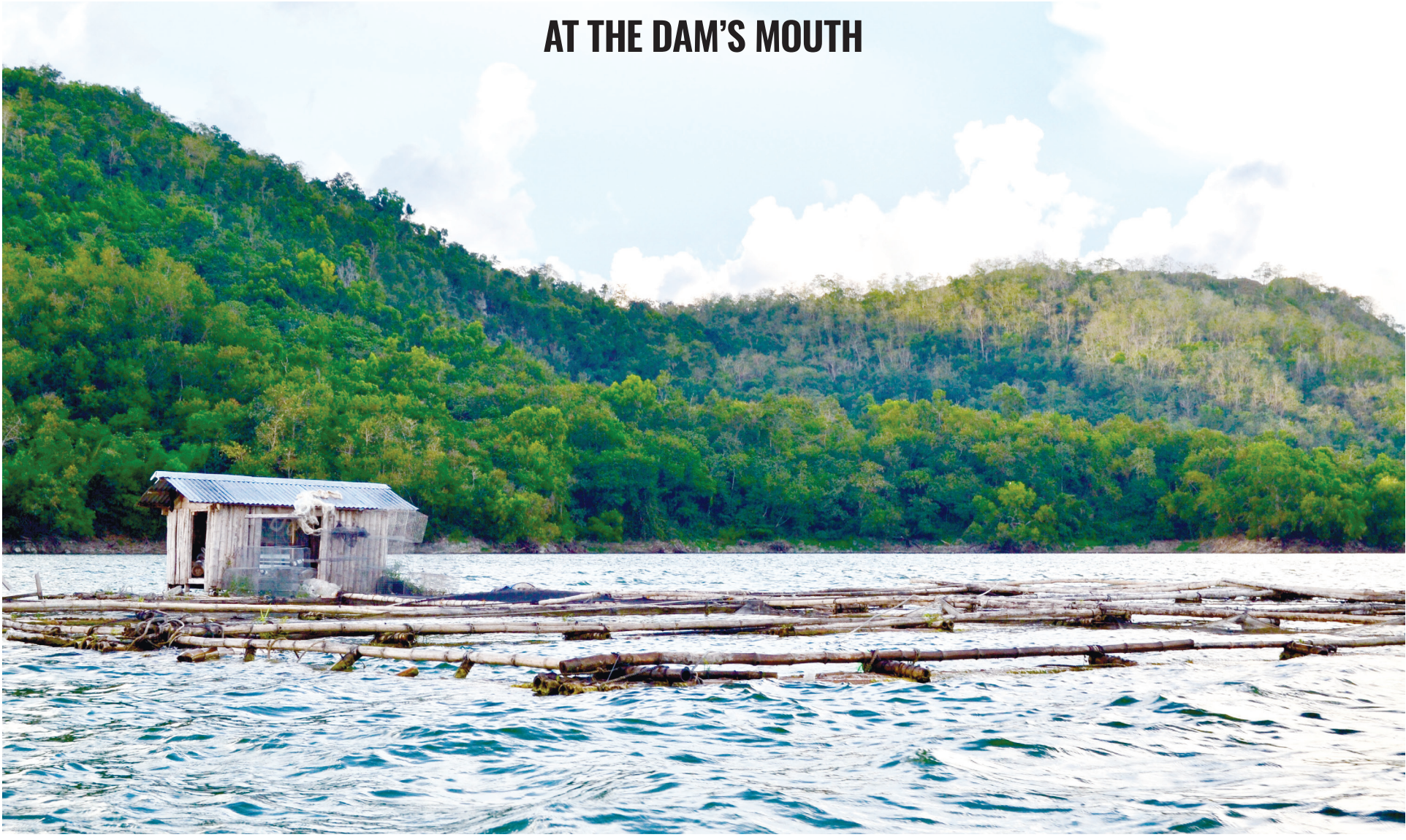
The worst of the human rights violations are the EJKs that are estimated to have reached 12,000, although the Philippine National Police contests this number as being overly bloated.

The Cayetano-led delegation was accused of glossing over the total of EJKs in the country since the first review in 2008.

The senator who ran as Mr. Duterte's running mate in last year's presidential elections was joined by lawyer Menardo Guevarra, deputy executive secretary for legal affairs.

During his presentation, Cayetano said most of the so-called EJKs were actually homicides and that it was not the policy of the Duterte administration to agree to EJKs perpetrated by the police or by "death squads" patterned after the Davao Death Squad that

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AT THE DAM'S MOUTH

A fish pen like this is one of the industries inside Magat Dam. The water that converges inside the dam are from Cagayan River, Nueva Vizcaya and Banaue. The reservoir is home to eels and fresh water shrimps. Once the biggest in Asia after its completion in 1981, rehabilitation efforts were done after it heavily deteriorated due to siltation and sedimentation, typhoons, slash and burn farming, illegal logging and fish caging. The stored water is enough to supply two months of normal energy requirements as it hydrates 85,000 hectares of farmlands.

PHOTO BY GILDA C. PASION-BALAN



From left: Consul Gen. Henry Bensurto Jr. and Assembly Member Phil Ting topbill event with journalists Lloyd LaCuesta and Frances Dinglasan.

Seniors official priority

By Cherie M. Querol Moreno
Editor at Large

SAN FRANCISCO -- Every day, Philippine Consul General Henry S. Bensurto Jr. and California Assembly Member (19th Dist.) Phil Ting advocate for their constituents behind closed doors at meetings and hearings. This time the diplomat and the legislator will step on stage and lead advocates, service and resource providers in promoting elder care and preventing elder abuse at a community event on the eve of Mother's Day.

The officials will headline 11th Annual Our Family, Our Future, a free event 1-3:30 pm, Saturday, May 13, at Grace United Methodist Church on 2540 Taraval St. in San Francisco. Open to the public, the event is staged purely on donations by ALLICE Alliance for Community Empowerment, a private nonprofit organization whose mission is to prevent and end family violence through education.

"We support and

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US embassy warns citizens against traveling to Palawan

MANILA -- The United States (US) embassy in the Philippines issued on Tuesday, May 9, a travel advisory for the province of Palawan.

"The US Embassy has received credible information that terrorist groups may be planning to conduct kidnapping operations targeting foreign nationals in the areas of Palawan Province, Philippines, to include Puerto Princesa City, and the areas surrounding Puerto Princesa Subterranean River National Park," read the travel advisory posted on the US Embassy website.

It added, "US citizens are advised to carefully consider this information as they make their travel plans and to review personal security plans, avoid large crowds and gatherings, and remain vigilant at all times."

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The pioneers, the 2nd-gen, and social media: Their role in elevating Philippine cuisine

By Cristina DC Pastor, The FilAm

NEW YORK CITY -- We love to eat, we have great tasting food, why not invite our American friends to enjoy our favorite food and have a captivating conversation about culture over servings of 'adobo' and 'balut'?

That seems to be the motivation behind Filipino Restaurant Week (FRW), a flagship project of the Philippine Consulate. From May 15 to 22, 18 restaurants in New York and New Jersey will offer their best dishes at a fixed price.

Grill 21 on East 21st Street will offer a Silog brunch for two people for

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'Bizarre Foods with Andrew Zimmern' featured the Philippines on the Travel Channel. 'Balut,' or fertilized duck egg, earned a special mention for being weirdly exotic.

PHOTO FROM THE TRAVEL CHANNEL

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Vatican says Philippine killings 'deeply troubling'

MANILA -- The Vatican condemned "deeply troubling" extrajudicial killings in the Philippines as the Southeast Asian country underwent a periodic United Nations (UN) review of its human rights record.

The Vatican at the UN headquarters in Geneva on Monday, May 8, also voiced concern over enforced disappearances as well as human trafficking in the Philippines.

The Vatican's representative, Monsignor Mauro Cionini, began his remarks by saying the Vatican delegation "recognizes the many positive steps that the Philippines has taken toward the elimination of trafficking in persons."

"However, there remain troubling reports of trafficking of Filipino men and women, and children, for labor exploitation. The perpetuation of extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances is also deeply troubling," Cionini said.

Cionini made these comments at the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the UN Human Rights Council, which the

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Pet Type	Percentage
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Other	4.3%
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Source: Xoom Survey, December 2016.

Tidbits

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eliminated criminals during the president’s time as mayor of the city.

The UN member states denied that they were interfering in the internal affairs of the Philippines. Still, they expressed concern at the country’s handling of its drug problem. Also, the administration’s plan to restore the death penalty and to lower the minimum age for criminal liability to 12 was deemed highly disturbing.

Unwelcome guest

Last week, UN special rapporteur Agnes Callamard visited the country and reached the same conclusion as the UNHRC.

For her efforts, she was lambasted by the administration for allegedly entering the Philippines unannounced and communicating only with opponents of the Duterte administration.

Callamard, however, clarified that she had informed the government of her planned visit.

Previously, President Duterte had invited, then uninvited, the UN special rapporteur to visit the Philippines because he said his administration had “nothing to hide.”

Mr. Duterte had also previously threatened to pull the country out of the UN.

EU backs PH’s anti-drug program

MANILA –The European Union (EU) is gearing up for rollout of a project designed to ensure that former drug addicts do not return to their old habit, as more countries continue to offer support for Duterte administration’s aggressive war against illegal drugs.

EU Ambassador to the Philippines Franz Jessen told reporters the project involves constructing half-way houses in barangays across Luzon.

“We call it half-way houses where you have people who are out of drugs but you want to make sure they are out of drugs so you work with their families, you work with the neighborhood. (This is) trying to make them understand that being drug-free is important. Imperative to that discussion is the provision of job opportunities, do what they used to do,” he said.

If such system becomes effective, Jessen said they would roll-out the project in other areas outside Luzon.

Jessen further said the EU is working with the Department of Health (DOH) and the World Health Organization (WHO) for the implementation of such project, as they incorporate the best experiences and introduce them in the Philippines.

“It is also strictly voluntary, if people (who are already out of drugs) are ready to do this, then we are ready to help,” he added.

More drug treatment and rehabilitation centers are expected to be completed before the year ends, which were funded through donations from local private sector firms and foreign agencies, including Chinese non-governmental organization Friends of the Philippines, Ministry of China and Japan International Cooperation Agency. **PNA**

De Lima accuses Duterte admin of entering into deal with Napoles

SENATOR Leila de Lima accused the administration of entering a deal with alleged pork scam mastermind Janet Lim-Napoles as part of President Rodrigo Duterte’s plan to “blackmail and threaten” his political foes.

De Lima issued the statement after the Court of Appeals (CA) acquitted Napoles in the serious illegal detention case filed against her by her former aide, Benhur Luy.

“In his desire for the absolute acquiescence of all politicians, it is not remote that Duterte will use Napoles to blackmail and threaten any remaining opposition in Congress,” De Lima said Tuesday.

GMA News Online is still getting Malacañang’s reaction as of posting time, but it previously said that the acquittal would not have any bearing on other cases pending against Napoles.

Napoles’ appeal received a boost from the manifestation of Solicitor-General Jose Calida, who filed a manifestation before the CA stating that the evidence presented by the prosecution did not support the conviction beyond reasonable doubt of Napoles for serious illegal detention.

The government’s top lawyer, however, said that Napoles’ illegal detention case is “totally different and independent from other” cases pending against her in relation to the multi-billion pork barrel scam, or the alleged misuse of the Priority Development Assistance Fund (PDAF) of several lawmakers.

Napoles will remain in detention over pending plunder and graft charges before the Sandiganbayan in relation to the pork barrel scam. —**GMA News**

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Vatican...

Philippines underwent on Monday at the UN headquarters in Geneva.

The UPR checks the human rights records of each UN member state. Created in 2006, it aims “to improve the human rights situation in all countries and address human rights violations wherever they occur.”

UN member states like the Philippines have to undergo the UPR every 4 years.

‘Maintain protection of life’

Senator Alan Peter Cayetano, co-head of the Philippine delegation, spoke on behalf of the Philippines during the UPR on Monday.

After Cayetano’s speech, UN member states took turns in making interventions.

The Vatican, or the Holy See, enjoys by choice a permanent observer status at the UN. It is the world’s smallest state, which keeps full diplomatic ties with 177 out of 193 UN member countries, including the Philippines.

The Vatican’s representative was the 37th UN member state to comment on the Philippines’ human rights record.

In his remarks, Cionini also offered at least 4 recommendations for the Philippines:

• “to increase efforts aimed at combating trafficking in persons and all forms of exploitation of children, but inter alia taking the necessary measures to prevent impunity for perpetrators”

• “to maintain the protection of the right of life from conception to natural death”

• “to sustain and promote the family-based marriage between a man and a woman, and the natural and fundamental unit of society”

• “to continue to announce laws and policies of access to education for the most disadvantaged learners as done through the alternative learning system program”

Like the Vatican, 44 other UN member states aired concern about the recent Philippine killings linked to President Rodrigo Duterte’s war on drugs.

China stood out, however, for hailing the Philippines for its “relentless efforts” to promote human rights.

China’s representative, Ma Zhaoxu, also urged the world to respect Philippine sovereignty and support the country’s anti-drug campaign. –**Rappler.com**

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Senior...

endorse ALLICE and this event to bring enlightenment and healing, especially to families,” said Bensurto, whose keynote address is expected to captivate with personal anecdotes and pearls of wisdom.

Longtime ALLICE allies and media pioneers Lloyd LaCuesta and Frances Dinglasan will reprise their roles as co-emcees.

“In my previous day job, I covered stories involving families struggling with violence,” said LaCuesta, retired South Bay bureau chief of KTVU Channel 2 News. “It is an issue facing every community, and yet many are uncomfortable reaching out, whether to friends, professionals or the faith community. Events like ‘Our Family, Our Future’ can help us recognize and learn to distinguish between healthy and abusive behaviors, and make adjustments to promote healthy relationships.”

“Our children are our future and we adults are their models,” Dinglasan, general assignment reporter with KGO Channel 7, explained the event objective. “How we behave toward our parents, elderly relatives, associates – and even strangers – is how our young will tend to behave toward us and older persons.

“Sometimes,” she added, “we are not aware that we are hurting

our elders. Maybe we copy what we see on TV or in the movies. Maybe we don’t realize that we are actually committing abuse, thinking such is always physical. Which is why the heart of the event – the skit depicting unhealthy interaction and the healthier alternatives – is a must-watch.”

Rev. Alex Cambe, pastor of Grace United Methodist Church, embraced the all-volunteer alliance and its efforts to foster wellness of the spirit on top of the body and mind.

“Being a faith community we set examples by practicing scripture as followers of Christ,” Cambe underscored. “The Holy Scripture teaches, requires us to seek justice, love kindness and walk humbly with God (Micah 6:8).”

Every spring the Kumares & Kumpares, as ALLICE members call themselves, focus on senior matters around May, Older Americans Month, in the first of their two major yearly events. In the fall, they zero in on intimate partner relationships in commemoration of October, Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

“2017 is the 14th year we have been staging free education presentations to address family issues,” said Jennifer Jimenez Wong, a licensed MFT and surrender ALLICE president. “This 11th spring event sheds light on issues

intersecting domestic violence. In homes where there is intimate partner violence – or violence between two people romantically involved with each other – chances are high there is abuse involving other members of the family including the elders, the subject of today’s event. Hearing from our experts enables us to recognize healthy and unhealthy behaviors and make changes as needed.”

Reinforcing the message are 15 service providers led HICAP of San Mateo that will be present to consult on their programs and services. Kaiser Permanente Filipino Association will provide free health screenings.

Pilipino Bayanihan Resource Center, Union Bank and Seton Medical Center are sponsoring the event with San Mateo Behavioral Health & Recovery Services, Philippine News, Philippines Today, Positively Filipino, GMA News Online, Rappler.com, The Filipino Channel, Lucky Chances, Moonstar, Noah’s Bagels, Chalet Ticino and Peninsula Family Service donating refreshments and raffle prizes.

For more information on the event, call Philippine Consulate General 415-433-6666, Grace United Methodist Church 415-731-3050, or Pilipino Bayanihan Resource Center 650-992-9110. See the psa elsewhere in this issue or visit www.allicekumares.com.

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US...

The travel advisory also reminded US citizens of a Worldwide Caution dated March 6, which warned about “an ongoing threat of terrorist actions and violence against US citizens and interests abroad, including the Philippines.”

The US embassy said extremists have targeted “public venues where large crowds gather,” such as sporting events, theaters, markets, and mass transportation systems, including airlines.

“Crowded nightclubs, shopping malls, buses and popular restaurants have also been targets. US citizens should be mindful of the importance of taking preventative measures to ensure their safety and security while traveling and residing in the Philippines,” the US embassy warned.

–**Rappler.com**

PH top geologist urges gov’t to focus on ‘rare’ elements

MANILA –One of the top geologist in the country and a mining expert has urged the government to focus on “rare” elements that can possibly be found in the country’s ores in order to give additional value to mineral exports.

According to Dr. Carlo Arcilla, a professor at the University of the Philippines’ National Institute of Geological Sciences, such rare elements like “scandium” can be used in manufacturing advanced batteries and as an alloy to aluminum in order to enable the latter to be welded with other metals and be utilized in producing plane parts.

“The price of scandium can reach USD170 per gram. China is the biggest producer of scandium and we should know how many percent of that we are bringing in to them without our knowledge. If you mix scandium with aluminium, it will become heat resistant yet still lightweight,” said Arcilla in an interview over the weekend.

It can be noted that majority of the country’s nickel shipments is brought to China and scandium can be found in nickel ores.

“If you wash the ores using acid, nickel will be melted but scandium will be dissolved. So, what we will do is to discover how we can separate scandium from nickel since the rare earth element is not pannable,” he said.

For this year, Arcilla said he would partner with a Japanese scientist and will explore nickel mining areas in the country to collect samples and quantify the level of scandium concentrates as well as to discover other potential elements, an effort wherein the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) has allotted a Php 10 million funding.

He, however, said that they still had not identified yet the locations for the exploration but will initially collect samples in Palawan, Surigao and Zambales, and later on finding a way to effectively extract scandium from nickel ores.

The geologist also claimed that there were already talks between DOST and the Chamber of Mines of the Philippines (COMP) on researches where they could jointly fund to further improve the country’s mining industry.

“We have a very good chance of becoming big (supplier) on scandium. We also really need to develop nickel for us to have local steel as all of its raw materials are being imported,” he said. **PNA**

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The pioneers...

\$25, a lunch choice of Bistek, Grilled Pork Belly, or Dinuguan for \$25, and a dinner choice of Crispy Pata, Pancit, Bulalo, or Kare-Kare for \$35. Appetizers, rice, and soda come with the price.

Ugly Kitchen in the East Village has a Kamayan Night for \$35 per person. Imagine how much more enthused your conversation is going to be if you have to explain to your guests why eating with the hands is perfectly OK. And why this dining tradition, at one time considered socially taboo, is now given a trendy revival by some Filipino restaurants in NYC.

Swell Dive will be hitting the ground running, opening FRW for breakfast. This taco joint in Brooklyn will be serving Breakfast Tacos, Chips and Queso and non-alcoholic drinks for \$25.

Jeepney in the East Village is including Balut in its \$25 per person brunch offering, together with Fried Tripe, Lumpia, Silogs, and its famous Chori Burger, which won NYC’s Battle of the Burger in 2014. For dinner at \$38 per person, the meal is a choice of Bicol Express, Inasal Manok or Pancit Malabon.

In Brooklyn, Purple Yam’s FRW menu does not sound like your mother’s everyday home-cooked dishes. Bacalao with Laing, Duck Leg Adobo, Noritaco with Heirloom Rice, Grilled Pork Chop Waray, are just some of them.

“There are now a variety of platforms that showcase street food, home-cooked comfort food, Filipino fusion, or culinary heritage cuisine,” said Consul General Tess Dizon-De Vega during the media launch on May 3 attended by chefs and restaurant owners.

Just as important, she added, are the different chefs “who put their personal stamp, their own creative twist on Philippine cuisine thereby transforming it, making it reach a larger or a more diverse audience.”

The debate over who and what started the so-called Philippine food revolution of the last five or six years continues. Food author and researcher Clang Garcia believes it may have started in San Francisco by a group of second-generation FilAms who gathered chefs around America and served what she called “curated cuisine.”

“They managed to win a lot of attention,” she said at the launch event.

Dizon-De Vega noted that Philippine food may have been elevated before the mainstream by the likes of Andrew Zimmern and Anthony Bourdain, both celebrity chefs and TV personalities. But credit for the explosion in the popularity of Philippine cuisine goes equally to pioneers, such as Romy Dorotan and Amy Besa of 1990s Cendrillon in Manhattan (and now Purple Yam

in Brooklyn), the second-generation restaurateurs like Nicole Ponseca of Jeepney and Maharlika who promoted Balut through an eating contest, and Aris Tuazon of Ugly Kitchen.

“These are the second-generation FilAms who sort of took Filipino cuisine and said, we want to do this, we want to promote, we want to represent (Filipino food),” she said.

Not to be taken for granted are the restaurants, like Max’s in Jersey City, that root for well-loved traditional comfort food. They are equally a big part of the food movement, she said.

Social media has made a huge impact in raising the profile of Filipino food, said Philippe Garcesto, who represented Jeepney and Maharlika at the media launch.

“We’re getting Snapchatted, we’re getting Instagrammed,” he said. “It’s good to see that, good to see our cuisine everywhere.”

Other participating restaurants –

Kuma Inn
Lumpia Shack
Snack Bar
Maison Hugo
Megu
Payag Restaurant
Tito Rad’s Grill
Phil-Am Kusina
Noodle Fan
Pinoy Filipino Restaurant
Calesa Restaurant
Sisig City Food Truck

AFP chief Año is next DILG chief – Duterte

MANILA – Armed Forces chief General Eduardo Año is the next interior and local government secretary, President Rodrigo Duterte announced on Wednesday, May 10.

Duterte made the announcement in response to questions in a news briefing before he left for Cambodia to attend the World Economic Forum.

“You really want to know, who’s the next? May I call upon the Chief of Staff?...You are now facing the next DILG secretary,” the President said.

When asked, Duterte said Año will serve as AFP chief until he retires in October because he has to see through some programs at the AFP.

Former senator Ferdinand “Bong-bong” Marcos Jr was widely believed to be the next DILG chief because the President initially wanted him for the post.

But Duterte himself said in February that Marcos was not interested. The defeated vice presidential bet is in the middle of an electoral protest against Vice President Leni Robredo.



Armed Forces chief General Eduardo Año

Military generals in departments

A 1983 graduate of the Philippine Military Academy, Año is a veteran intelligence officer who was named military chief only last December 2016.

His appointment to the DILG would be a second for a retired military general in a department that deals with elected

local officials and the civilian Philippine National Police (PNP).

The late Angelo Reyes, himself a former armed forces chief, also served as DILG secretary under the Arroyo government – from 2004 to 2006.

The PNP is headed by Año’s underclass at the academy, Ronald dela Rosa, who graduated from the PMA in 1986.

Talk about Año’s impending appointment began to circulate in military circles last week. It came at the height of tension between the military and the PNP over operational issues involving the hunt for terrorists in Bohol, in the aftermath of a foiled terror attack on the tourist spot.

Año is also the second military general to be named to a department post this week. On Monday, May 8, the President appointed former armed forces chief Roy Cimatu as head of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, replacing environmental advocate Gina Lopez who was rejected by the Commission on Appointments. –**Rappler.com**