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Accused Philippines Massacre Ringleader Back in Court

BY CARLOS CONDE
THE NEW YORK TIMES

MANILA - A witness to the massacre of 57 people in the southern Philippines testified yesterday that the principal suspect in the case, a town mayor, shot several of the victims himself and that the mayor's father, the patriarch of a powerful political clan once allied with President Gloria Arroyo, had personally directed his son to carry out several of the killings.

Rasul Sangki, the vice mayor of the town of Ampatuan, in Maguindanao Province, told the court that Andal Ampatuan Jr killed at least three of the victims and ordered his supporters to shoot others to make sure they were dead. One of them, Sangki said, was a journalist who was begging for his life. The mayor, Sangki testified, shot the man with an M-16 rifle.

Ampatuan, the only person indicted in the massacre so far, pleaded not guilty earlier this month to 41 murder charges against him. The hearing yesterday was held principally to hear his petition for bail, a move that was denounced by the victims' relatives and several media groups in the Philippines.

In a brief interview with reporters—his first since he was charged—Ampatuan denied any role in the carnage. "Allah knows that I am innocent," he said.

Dante Jimenez, chairman of the watchdog group Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption, called Sangki's testimony "very explosive and credible."

Sangki was the first person to testify about the massacre on



Protestors hold placards while shouting anti-government slogans during a protest outside the police headquarters in Manila yesterday. Andal Ampatuan Jr, a local mayor of Maguindanao province, appeared in court yesterday on charges that he led a massacre of 57 people in November.

Nov 23 last year—the worst act of political violence ever in the Philippines. Among the victims were 30 reporters and media workers, making the incident the worst known attack on journalists, according to international media groups.

The massacre occurred when a convoy was making its way to Shariff Aguak, the provincial capital of Maguindanao, to file candidacy forms for Esmael Mangudadatu, the deputy mayor of a small

town called Buluan. His wife, three sisters and an aunt were in the convoy, and they were heading to an election office to enter him as a candidate for governor in this year's election, thereby posing a direct challenge to Ampatuan.

According to Sangki, Ampatuan personally directed dozens of his armed supporters to bring the victims to a hilltop where they were killed and later buried. The graves were report-

ed to have been dug with a backhoe belonging to Maguindanao's provincial government.

Sangki, the first of several witnesses that prosecutors said they would produce, said that apart from the journalist, whom he identified as Jimmy Cabillo, Ampatuan shot the wife and one sister of Mangudadatu. "He shot the victims as soon as they were brought to him," Sangki testified.

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Malaysian Christian Goes to Court To Get 'Allah' CDs Back

REUTERS

KUALA LUMPUR - A Christian is challenging the confiscation of CDs referring to "Allah," church officials said on Tuesday, a case that could deepen a row over Christians' use of the word to refer to God in mostly Muslim Malaysia.

Rising religious tensions could threaten Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak's efforts to rebuild a ruling coalition hit by big

losses in 2008 elections as well as Najib's efforts to put Malaysia back on the global investment map, analysts said.

The latest case follows a recent court ruling that allowed a Catholic newspaper to use "Allah" in its Malay-language edition which prompted Muslims to protest at mosques and sparked arson attacks on nine churches and a Catholic school.

Jill Bill, a member of Sidang Injil Borneo, the Borneo Evangelical Church, is seeking a court declaration that it is her right to possess the material.

"It is our right to continue to use the word, we have been using it from even before Merdeka (Independence)," Daniel Raut, president of the church in mainland Malaysia, told reporters outside the court

in Kuala Lumpur.

The church filed a suit in 2007 to challenge the confiscation of six boxes of Sunday school religious reading material that also contained the word "Allah." That case is also awaiting a hearing.

The use of "Allah" is common among Malay-speaking Christians, who account for 9.1 percent of Malaysia's 28 million popula-

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REGIONAL

Express Yourself in Singapore, But Don't Do it With Graffiti

Islamic Police Tighten Grip On Indonesia's Banda Aceh

REUTERS

SINGAPORE - A graffiti publicity stunt by Singapore's postal services firm has backfired and sparked a hunt for a mysterious masked artist in a city-state known for being immaculately clean and trouble-free.

SingPost's "Express Yourself" campaign, involving a graffiti artist called Inkman spray painting six mail boxes over the New Year, was a shock for Singapore, where vandalism can lead to three years in jail or up to eight strokes of the cane.

The stunt was meant as a teaser for the launch of a post box art competition to mark Singapore's hosting of the first Youth Olympic Games in August. SingPost is a sponsor of the games, but police were not amused.

"Police will be taking the matter up with SingPost, as this whole episode has caused unnecessary public alarm and wasted valuable resources," Singapore's police said.

In 1994, teenage American Michael Fay was caned in Singapore for spraying paint on

cars, a sentence which attracted worldwide publicity and triggered a minor diplomatic row between Singapore and the US.

A SingPost spokeswoman said the company was concerned for the safety of Inkman. CEO Wilson Tan was forced to apologize to the public at a widely viewed news conference.

"I find it unacceptable," said a retired civil servant who gave his name as Foo, sounding profoundly disgusted. "I find it really an eyesore."

Attitudes among the young were more forgiving, highlighting a generational divide in a country that has seen decades of economic success but is now trying to boost arts, increase debate in Parliament and teach creative thinking in schools.

"I personally see it as a form of art and not vandalism if approval has been given by the authorities," said Alvin Tan, a 29-year-old marketing executive.

"It is about time that we break the culture and learn to accept that graffiti is an art and can be done anywhere."

REUTERS

BANDA ACEH, Indonesia - It looks like a typical day at the beach: children frolic in the waves, girls chat by the beach front and music blares from a radio perched by a group of young men.

But this is Banda Aceh, the only province in majority Muslim Indonesia that uses Islamic sharia law as its legal code, and the mood at the beach becomes instantly tense as a group of policemen who strictly enforce this law pull up in pick-up trucks.

The police unit, called the "Wilayah Hisbah", is looking for unmarried couples, Muslim women without headscarves or those wearing tight clothes, and people drinking alcohol or gambling.

Amid the throngs of people at the beach, there are always couples. The young men and women sit modestly apart, but they are still targets of the sharia police.

"You are not married, you should not be here together. You must leave now," says one officer to a couple, who sullenly walk to the parking lot as crowds silently watch.

Girls wearing tight trousers are

also reprimanded.

"You should be ashamed of yourselves for dressing this way," says the officer to two youngsters in jeans. "Go home and change into something more modest."

Indonesia is the world's most populous Muslim nation, but nowhere is the faith more strictly interpreted than in Aceh, sometimes referred to as the "verandah of Mecca" because it was one of the first parts of the archipelago to turn to Islam.

Aceh won the right to use sharia law - Indonesia is officially secular - as part of a 2002 autonomy deal intended to end a decades-long conflict between Muslim separatists and the military in which thousands died.

Since then, the devout province has tried to counter the Western influences brought in by foreign aid workers.

It has also ramped up its efforts to enforce a strict version of Islam recently, including proposing a law that calls for adulterers to be stoned to death as well as plans to introduce a regulation forcing women to wear modest clothes that do not reveal the shape of their body.

CDs...

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

tion, especially in the Borneo states of Sabah and Sarawak that are electoral strongholds for the coalition that has ruled Malaysia for 52 years.

"The government will face a backlash from Christian native groups in Sabah and Sarawak as this issue is no longer seen as religious or civilizational, but as a political issue," said James Chin, political science professor at Monash University in Kuala Lumpur.

The arson attacks are also raising concerns among investors at a time when Najib has pledged to woo back investment to Malaysia which has lagged behind neighboring Thailand and Indonesia.

"The political and security risk premiums attached on the market as 'perceived' by foreign investors would have moved up another notch, and this is negative for the market longer term," said Deutsche Bank in a Jan 11 report.

Malaysia saw portfolio investment outflows totaling \$34.15 billion between the second quarter of 2008 and the second quarter of 2009, according to central bank data, as sentiment was hit by political uncertainty and the global economic downturn.

Money only began to trickle back in the third quarter, with an inflow of 8.8 billion ringgit.

Malaysia, which between 1990-2000 accounted for half all foreign direct investment into it, Thailand and Indonesia has now lost its leading position and Najib has tried to woo back investors with economic liberalization measures.

"This is not a healthy thing for perceptions of Malaysia," Nicholas Jeffreys, president of the American Chambers of Commerce in Malaysia said at a business conference on Tuesday.

"Any negative news for any country doesn't play well in terms of investors. Recognize that there are some people who have never been to Malaysia," he said.

Ringleader...

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"They were on their knees, crying and shouting for mercy."

Sangki also said that before the victims were herded to the hilltop, he heard Ampatuan talking to his father on a two-way radio in the Maguindanao dialect. At the time, Andal Ampatuan Sr was the governor of Maguindanao Province.

"Father, they are here," the son said, according to Sangki, who said he heard this reply: "You know what to do."

Ampatuan Sr, as governor of the province, had been a close political ally of Arroyo and delivered crucial votes for her in the 2004 elections. Political analysts say it was this connection that allowed the Ampatuan clan to govern Maguindanao with an iron hand while developing a large private militia that reinforced their position.

The governor was the patriarch of a political dynasty that has ruled the southwestern wedge of the island of Mindanao

for much of the past decade. He named Ampatuan town after his family, and several other towns were named after his sons.

The Ampatuans were expelled from Arroyo's political party soon after the massacre. The president vowed to investigate the massacre and last month set up a commission tasked with dismantling the private armies in the country.

Ampatuan Sr is currently in the custody of the military, while three other sons are in police custody. Only Andal Ampatuan Jr has been formally charged so far, although prosecutors have said they are still investigating and preparing cases against numerous other suspects.

Meanwhile, media advocacy groups have asked the court to allow live coverage of the trial and to remove restrictions on journalists covering the proceedings. Security at yesterday's hearing was tight, and only a limited number of journalists were permitted in the court. Phones, recording devices and laptops were not allowed inside.

INTERNATIONAL

Google Stops Cooperating With China, Threatens Pullout

By ANDREW JACOBS
AND MIGUEL HELFT
THE NEW YORK TIMES

BEIJING - Google said Tuesday that it would stop cooperating with Chinese Internet censorship and consider shutting down its operations in the country altogether, citing assaults from hackers on its computer systems and China's attempts to "limit free speech on the Web."

The move, if followed through, would be a highly unusual rebuke of China by one of the largest and most admired technology companies, which had for years coveted China's 300 million Web users.

Since arriving here in 2006 under an arrangement with the government that purged its Chinese search results of banned topics, Google has come under fire for abetting a system that increasingly restricts what citizens can read online.

Google linked its decision to sophisticated cyberattacks on its computer systems that it suspected originated in China and that were aimed, at least in part, at the Gmail user accounts of Chinese human rights activists.

Those attacks, which Google said took place last week, were directed at some 34 companies or entities, most of them in Silicon Valley, California, according to people with knowledge of Google's investigation into the matter. The attackers may have succeeded in penetrating elaborate computer security systems and obtaining crucial corporate data and software source codes, though Google said it did not itself suffer losses of that kind.

While the scope of the hacking and the motivations and identities of the hackers remained uncertain, Google's response amounted to an unambiguous repudiation of its own five-year courtship of the vast China market, which most major multinational companies consider crucial to their growth prospects. It is also likely to enrage the Chinese authorities, who deny that they censor the Internet and are accustomed to having major foreign companies adapt their practices to Chinese norms.

US Secretary of State Hilary Clinton said in a statement: "We have been briefed by Google on these allegations, which raise very serious concerns and questions. We look to the Chinese government for an explanation. The ability to operate with confidence in cyberspace is critical in a modern society and economy."

Clinton added that she "will have further comment on this matter as the facts become clear." She spoke in Honolulu, Hawaii before leaving



A security guard walks in front of the Google China headquarters in Beijing yesterday.

on an Asian tour that will take her to Papua New Guinea, New Zealand and Australia.

Google said it would try to negotiate a new arrangement to provide uncensored results on its search site, google.cn. But that is a highly unlikely prospect in a country that has the most sweeping Web filtering system in the world. Google said it would otherwise cease to run google.cn and would consider shutting its offices in China, where it employs some 700 people, many of them highly compensated software engineers, and has an estimated \$300 million in annual revenue.

Google executives declined to discuss in detail their reasons for overturning their China strategy. But despite a costly investment, the company has a much smaller share of the search market here than it does in other major markets, commanding only about one in three searches by Chinese. The leader in searches, Baidu, is a Chinese-run company that enjoys a close relationship with the government.

Google executives have privately fretted for years that the company's decision to censor the search results on google.cn, to filter out topics banned by Chinese censors, was out of sync with the company's official motto, "Don't be evil."

"We have decided we are no longer willing to continue censoring our results on google.cn, and so over the next few weeks we will be discussing with the Chinese government the basis on which we could operate an unfiltered search engine within the law, if at all," David Drummond, senior vice president for corporate development and the chief legal officer, said in a statement.

Wenqi Gao, a spokesman for the Chinese Consulate in New York, said he did not see any problems with google.cn. "I want to reaffirm that China is committed to protecting the legitimate rights and interests of foreign companies in our coun-

try," he said in a phone interview.

In China, search requests that include words like "Tiananmen Square massacre" or "Dalai Lama" come up blank. In recent months, the government has also blocked YouTube, Google's video-sharing service.

While Google's business in China is now small, analysts say that the country could soon become one of the most lucrative Internet and mobile markets, and a withdrawal would significantly reduce Google's long-term growth.

"The consequences of not playing the China market could be very big for any company, but particularly for an Internet company that makes its money from advertising," said David Yoffie, a Harvard Business School professor. Yoffie said advertising played an even bigger role in the Internet in China than it did in the US. At the time of its arrival, the company said that it believed that the benefits of its presence in China outweighed the downside of being forced to censor some search results here, as it would provide more information and openness to Chinese citizens. The company, however, has repeatedly said that it would monitor restrictions in China.

Google's announcement Tuesday drew praise from free speech and human rights advocates, many of whom had criticized the company in the past over its decision to enter the Chinese market, despite censorship requirements.

"A transnational attack on privacy is chilling, and Google's response sets a great example," said Arvind Ganesan, director of Human Rights Watch's corporations and human rights program. "At the same time, this incident underscores the need for governments and companies to develop policies that safeguard rights."

"I think it's both the right move and a brilliant one," said Jonathan Zittrain, a legal scholar at Harvard's Berkman

Center for Internet and Society.

Rebecca MacKinnon, a fellow at the Open Society Institute and an expert on the Chinese Internet, said that Google had endured repeated harassment in recent months and that by having operations in China it potentially risked the security of its users in China. She said many Chinese dissidents used Gmail because its servers are hosted overseas and that it offered extra encryption.

"Unless they turn themselves into a Chinese company, Google could not win," she said. "The company has clearly put its foot down and said enough is enough."

In the past year, Google has been increasingly constricted by the Chinese government. In June, after briefly blocking access nationwide to its main search engine and other services like Gmail, the government forced the company to disable a function that lets the search engine suggest terms. At the time, the government said it was simply seeking to remove pornographic material from the company's search engine results.

Some company executives suggested then that the campaign was a concerted effort to stain Google's image. Since its entry into China, the company has steadily lost market share to Baidu.

Google called the attacks highly sophisticated. In the past, such electronic intrusions have either exploited the practice of "phishing," to persuade unsuspecting users to allow their computers to be compromised, or exploited vulnerabilities in software programs permitting the attacks to gain control of systems remotely. Once they have taken over a target computer, it is possible to search for specific documents.

People familiar with the investigation into the attacks said they were aimed at source code repositories at high-tech companies. Source code is the original programmer's instructions used to develop software programs and can provide both economic advantages as well as insight into potential security vulnerabilities.

In its public statement Google pointed to a US government report prepared by the US-China Economic and Security Review Commission in October and an investigation by Canadian researchers that revealed a vast electronic spying operation last March.

The researchers discovered that digital documents had been stolen via the Internet from hundreds of government and private organizations around the world from computer systems based in China.

OPINION

For Advice on Afghanistan See Russia's History

BY BORIS GROMOV
AND DMITRY ROGOZIN
THE INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE

The length of the NATO operation in Afghanistan will soon become comparable to that of the Soviet involvement there. But the military actions we conducted 20 years ago differed fundamentally from those of today.

We were fighting against the fathers of today's Taliban militants face-to-face, whereas Western armies prefer to fight from the air. This allows them to save soldiers' lives, but does not secure them from tragic mistakes that kill civilians.

It is not only the nature of war and its means that have changed; the whole world has evolved. So it is wrong to compare these two operations in terms of death tolls or material and moral damage. A more challenging issue is to understand the political ramifications for NATO, Western security and the future of Central Asia. It is imperative for all three that NATO keep to its commitment in Afghanistan.

Recently there have been numerous appeals in Europe to curtail the presence of NATO's International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan as soon as possible. The arguments underpinning such appeals are essentially both pacifist and completely irresponsible.

The national selfishness of peace-loving Europeans is understandable. There is a persistent flow of bad news from Afghanistan—military losses, scandalous incidents involving NATO soldiers, terrorist activity and the suffering of civilians.

No one likes bad news, especially if it comes from the provinces where one's country's soldiers are deployed. The Afghan problem causes growing irritation, fatigue and misunderstanding on the part of the public. Moreover, the state of their troops in the Afghan swamp does little credit to NATO's image as "the most successful alliance in the world."

The logical question arises: "Why on earth should we be taking part in all of this?" While the main NATO power—the US—sees the mission in Afghanistan as essential, the alliance includes 27 other member states, some of which have joined for reasons that have little to do with displaying heroism in far-away wars.

That is precisely why the ISAF operation in Afghanistan is the moment of truth for NATO. If the alliance does not accomplish its task, the mutual commitments of its 28 member-states would be undermined and the alliance would lose its moral foundation and raison d'être.

We know all too well what happens to unions that become meaningless. The war in Afghanistan was one of the major factors in the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Officials in Brussels and Washington who are thinking of a rapid exit strategy for the ISAF mission are engaged in elaborating on a suicide plan. Withdrawal without victory might cause a political collapse of Western security structures.

This troubles Russia far less than the consequences for the region itself. The Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989 was not a shameful escape accompanied by the hooting of the mujahadeen. The Soviet Army entered the country, accomplished its tasks—unlike the US in Vietnam—and returned to its motherland.

In fact, we were the first to defend Western civilization against the attacks of Muslim fanatics. No one thanked us. On the contrary, everyone was impeding our actions: The United States, NATO, Iran, Pakistan, even China. After the withdrawal of the Soviet Army, the Najibullah government that we left behind in Kabul remained in power for another three years.

It is true that Soviet troops committed serious and fatal errors in Afghanistan. We had no teachers.

How long would the Afghan government endure today if it were left alone to face the Taliban? A rapid slide into chaos awaits Afghanistan and its neighbors if NATO pulls out, pretending to have achieved its goals. A pullout would give a tremendous boost to Islamic militants, destabilize the Central Asian republics and set off flows of refugees, including many thousands to Europe and Russia.

It would also give a huge boost to the illegal drug trade. Opium production in Afghanistan in 2008 came to 7,700 tons, more than 40 times that of 2001, when international forces arrived. Even if the ISAF presence could not prevent the explosive growth of Taliban drug dealing, than it is not difficult to understand what a NATO pullout would lead to. As people in the West count the coffins of NATO soldiers from Afghanistan, let them not forget to include the coffins of Americans and Europeans who were killed by Taliban heroin in their own countries.

A "successful end" to the operation in Afghanistan will not come simply with the death of Osama bin Laden. The minimum that we require from NATO is consolidating a stable political regime in the country and preventing Talibanization of the entire region.

That is the Russian position. We insist that NATO troops stay in the country until the necessary conditions are provided to establish stable local authorities capable of independently deterring radical forces and controlling the country. That is why we are helping NATO by providing transit for goods and training personnel for Afghanistan, including anti-narcotics officers.

Nevertheless, our cooperation with NATO is substantially limited since we are not sending our own troops to Afghanistan. We've been there before and we did not like it. That said, we are training CSTO Rapid Reaction Forces—an operational formation of elite units from Russia and our allies in Central Asia—in case of a NATO fiasco.

Meanwhile, NATO should get down to studying our war in Afghanistan, in which the Soviet Union managed to deter the onslaught of Islamic fundamentalists for a full 10 years.

Boris Gromov, governor of the Moscow region, commanded the 40th Soviet Army in Afghanistan. Dmitry Rogozin is Russia's ambassador to NATO.

An Appreciation Of Anne Frank's Kind Protector

*Generosity and
humility were Miep
Gies great gifts and
are will be her legacy*

EDITORIAL
THE NEW YORK TIMES

"I am not a hero," insisted Miep Gies. "I was just an ordinary housewife and secretary." It was Mrs. Geis's habit to deflect accolades for defying Nazi occupiers of Amsterdam by helping to hide Anne Frank, her family and three other doomed Jews in a secret annex to the business office of Anne's father, Otto Frank.

But to accept that self-description would be to overlook the remarkable selflessness and courage Gies demonstrated, an example so powerful that it continues to inspire after 70 years.

Gies, who died on Monday at age 100, was a trusted employee of Otto Frank in 1942. His family went into hiding that year in unused rooms that were hidden behind a movable bookcase, seeking to avoid the fate of thousands of Dutch Jews being deported to concentration camps. Asked by Frank to help hide them, and to bring them food and supplies, she readily agreed, even though it meant risking her life.

Working with her husband, Jan Gies, a member of the Dutch resistance, and three other employees of Frank's business, she provided books, emotional support and nourishment. She traveled on her bicycle to spread her food purchases among different grocers in order to avoid suspicion. After the Gestapo raided the hiding place in August 1944, Gies made a bold but unsuccessful attempt to bribe Gestapo officials to spare the lives of the eight arrested Jews. She is owed the world's debt for preserving Anne's diary, which she hid unread in the hope that its young author would survive and return to claim it.

Gies was the last surviving member of Anne Frank's protectors. Their collective story is an enduring reminder that human beings always have a choice, even when millions were acceding to unspeakable evil.

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