

### 3 'NPA child soldiers' captured in Surigao

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MANILA, Philippines – Three child soldiers were rescued by Army troops Monday after a firefight against New People's Army (NPA) rebels in Barangay Pung-on, San Agustin, Surigao del Sur, the military said.

In a press statement, Col. Romeo Gan, commander of the Army's 401st Infantry Brigade, said the minors are "concrete evidence that NPA has been recruiting children and using them as warriors in the frontlines."

Authorities said the children were recruited by rebels by offering them guns and money.

The youths were allegedly tasked to operate landmines.

Two NPA guerrillas were also killed in the firefight, the military said.

Major General Victor Felix, in a press statement, condemned the NPA's recruitment of children. He called the practice "inhumane."

"Under the Geneva Convention, children should be protected and deserve to live a life away from violence. I again call upon the rebel group to spare our children and let them grow in peace, kids are supposed to be in school and learning with the rest of its peers. What they are doing is inhumane," said Felix.

Army Major Eugenio Julio Osias IV, division spokesperson and commanding officer of the 4th Civil-Military Operations, said the NPA is getting desperate in its recruitment measures.

"The rebels are running out of options in its recruitment campaign. We are asking the help of our communities to immediately report to authorities about such recruitment activities," Osias said. (abs-cbnnews)