

Suspected NPA rebels raid Surigao jail — military

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Hours before the government declared a holiday truce with communist rebels, suspected New People's Army (NPA) rebels raided on Thursday morning a municipal jail in Surigao del Sur, a military spokesperson said.

About 15 NPA members clad in camouflage uniforms and on board a white van swooped down at the Surigao District Jail Annex in Lianga town at 8:40 a.m. Thursday, Major Eugenio Osias of the Philippine Army's 4th Infantry Division said.

"The NPAs gained entry through deception," he told reporters, adding that no one was reported killed or injured during the incident.

A few hours before the raid, another group of rebels clashed with some members of the 75th Infantry Battalion blocking the way to the jail, according to Osias.

"We believe they are the support elements. Another went inside (the jail)," he said.

He likewise said that the rebels carted away from the jail several weapons such AK 47 rifle, a shotgun, a 9-mm. pistol and two cal. 38 revolvers, as well as combat boots, pistol belts and cellular phones.

Osias added that the military is currently coordinating with troops to prevent any similar incident.

Col. Leopoldo Galon, Eastern Mindanao Command spokesperson, meanwhile said that the troops are currently conducting pursuit operations to capture the rebels. He added that the Philippine Army is asking for an available aircraft from the Philippine Air Force to support the troops.

President Benigno Aquino III approved on Friday an 18-day holiday truce with the NPA, in an apparent bid to boost the peace process between the government and the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP). The NPA is the armed wing of the CPP.

source: <http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/story/241780/news/regions/suspected-npa-rebels-raid-surigao-jail-mdash-military>